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Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Speech Notes - Senator Edmund S. Muskie Possible "One Liners"

Edmund S. Muskie

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SENATOR MUSKIE POSSIBLE "ONE LINERS" - SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

20 APRIL 1971

I UNDERSTAND THE WHITE HOUSE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHY PEOPLE AREN'T SPENDING THEIR MONEY ON CONSUMER ITEMS THESE DAYS. IT'S NOT TOO HARD TO FIGURE OUT. THE 6 MILLION UNEMPLOYED AMERICANS DON'T HAVE THE MONEY TO SPEND, AND THE REST OF US ARE SAVING UP TO HELP ELECT A DEMOCRAT NEXT YEAR.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS PLANNING TO CHANGE THE NAME OF ITS "INFLATION ALERT". THEY'RE GOING TO CALL IT "LABOR BEWARE".

IT SEEMS STRANGE THE PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE NO IDEA OF THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY THESE DAYS. WITH ALL OF THE INFORMATION GATHERING GOING ON IN WASHINGTON, HE OUGHT TO HAVE SOME SORT OF CLUE.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE ASKED WHY THE CONGRESS HAS BEEN SO GENEROUS IN PROVIDING RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR FORMER PRESIDENTS. I THINK MOST OF US WOULD AGREE THAT IT'S WORTH THE INVESTMENT TO CONVINCE MR. NIXON TO BECOME ONE.

OF AMERICANS LOSE THE RIGHT TO EARN A DECENT LIVING. FOR 27 MONTHS, THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS LET MILLIONS MORE FALL ON HARD TIMES BECAUSE OF RISING PRICES.

THEY KEEP TELLING US THEY HAVE A GAME PLAN FOR THE ECONOMY, BUT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN DO ANY SCORING ARE THE BANKERS. THAT'S NO GAME PLAN. THAT'S A GAME THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN PLAYING WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WE MUST TELL THIS ADMINISTRATION IN PLAIN LANGUAGE: STOP PLAYING GAMES. STOP PUTTING ALL THE BLAME FOR INFLATION ON THE BACKS OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

HARRY TRUMAN KEPT A SIGN ON HIS DESK. IT SAID, "THE BUCK STOPS HERE". THAT SIGN BELONGS BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

WHEN SYRACUSE AND ONONDAGA COUNTY BECOME AN AREA OF SUBSTANTIAL UNEMPLOYMENT, IT IS NOT A GAME. WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THIS AREA CLIMBS 69 PERCENT IN TWO YEARS, IT'S NOT A GAME. IT'S 6700 MORE MEN AND WOMEN LOOKING FOR JOBS. IT'S VETERANS COMING HOME FROM VIETNAM WITH NOTHING TO DO WHEN THEY GET HERE. IT'S FAMILIES GOING ON RELIEF, NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO, BUT BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO.

THE OTHER DAY I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A LADY IN FLORIDA. SHE SAID HER HUSBAND HAD BEEN LAID OFF FROM WORK AFTER 25 YEARS WITH THE SAME COMPANY. "WE SPENT THE PAST YEAR," SHE WRITES, "FILLING OUT COUNTLESS EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS, SENDING OUT COUNTLESS RESUMES, AND LAST SUMMER, TRAVELING 11,000

MILES THROUGH TWENTY-THREE STATES SEEKING EMPLOYMENT. FINALLY LAST FALL MY HUSBAND OBTAINED A POSITION AT HALF HIS FORMER SALARY. WE CAN ONLY AFFORD RENT, UTILITIES, FOOD, AND MEDICINE. OUR PLANNED PURCHASES OF A TELEVISION, SEWING MACHINE, CAR, HOUSE, FURNITURE ITEMS, ARE NOW IMPOSSIBLE."

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS SHE DOES THAT THE NIXON ECONOMIC RECORD OF THE LAST 27 MONTHS IS IMPOSSIBLE TOO. IT'S DISMAL. IT'S UNACCEPTABLE.

THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THIS YEAR THAT HE WAS SENDING A "FULL EMPLOYMENT BUDGET" TO THE CONGRESS. THAT'S A POLITE, REPUBLICAN TERM FOR DEFICIT SPENDING. BUT SO FAR ALL HE IS GIVING US IS THE DEFICIT, WITHOUT PUTTING THE MONEY WHERE IT WILL PRODUCE JOBS.

LAST YEAR, A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS APPROPRIATED 600 MILLION DOLLARS FOR HOUSING AND MASS TRANSIT AND WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES. THAT MONEY WOULD PUT 60,000 PEOPLE TO WORK. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN WITHHOLDING THAT MONEY. BY HOLDING IT BACK, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS DENIED YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITIES NEEDED FACILITIES AND NEEDED JOBS. THAT'S NOT WHAT I CALL A "FULL EMPLOYMENT" BUDGET PLAN.

LAST YEAR, THE PRESIDENT VETOED PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS ON THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL. HE SAID PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS WERE LIKE THE DOLE. IF THAT IS SO, THEN I'VE BEEN ON THE DOLE FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, AND THE PRESIDENT IS ON IT NOW.

THE DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS ARE PUSHING AGAIN THIS YEAR FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT. LABOR SUPPORTS THAT LEGISLATION. I SUPPORT THAT LEGISLATION. BUT IT SEEMS AS IF THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD RATHER FIGHT THAN SWITCH.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS FIGHTING FOR THE WRONG THINGS. IT IS FIGHTING TO GIVE BUSINESS THE KIND OF TAX BREAK BUSINESS DOESN'T NEED, THE ECONOMY DOESN'T NEED, AND WE DON'T NEED. THE ADMINISTRATION SAYS IT WANTS TO LET BUSINESSMEN DEPRECIATE THEIR EQUIPMENT FASTER. THAT WOULDN'T MAKE THEM BUY NEW EQUIPMENT, NOT WHEN THEY'RE OPERATING AT ONLY 72 PERCENT CAPACITY WITH THE EQUIPMENT THEY ALREADY HAVE. BUT IT WOULD MAKE THE TREASURY LOSE THREE BILLION DOLLARS IN BUSINESS TAXES THIS YEAR ALONE, AND UP TO THIRTY BILLION DOLLARS OVERALL BY 1980.

~~THAT'S DEFICIT FINANCING WITH A VENGEANCE, WITH THE~~
~~MONEY GOING DOWN A DRY HOLE.~~ HOW MANY AMERICANS WOULD VOTE TO SPEND THREE BILLION DOLLARS ON ACCELERATED DEPRECIATION, INSTEAD OF ON EDUCATION, OR HEALTH CARE, OR TO HELP STATES AND CITIES MEET THE GROWING NEED FOR PUBLIC SERVICES? YOU KNOW THE ANSWER AS WELL AS I. YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I THAT

THREE BILLION DOLLARS COULD PUT AS MANY AS HALF A MILLION PEOPLE TO WORK, WHERE WE NEED PEOPLE TO WORK.

HOW MUCH SUFFERING DOES IT TAKE TO FORCE THIS ADMINISTRATION TO ACT? HOW MANY MEN AND WOMEN HAVE TO BE THROWN OUT OF WORK? HOW MANY BUSINESSES HAVE TO CLOSE DOWN? HOW MANY COMMUNITIES HAVE TO GO BANKRUPT?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO TURN THIS ADMINISTRATION AROUND, BUT I DO KNOW THE TIME TO TURN OUR ECONOMY AROUND IS LONG OVERDUE. THERE MIGHT BE SOME POLITICAL GAINS FOR THE DEMOCRATS IN LETTING THIS ADMINISTRATION CONTINUE TO MISMANAGE THE ECONOMY. THERE MIGHT BE, BUT I DON'T THINK THE COUNTRY CAN AFFORD IT. THE TIME TO TURN THE ECONOMY AROUND IS NOW, NOT 1972 OR 1973.

NOW IS THE TIME TO PUT PEOPLE TO WORK BUILDING HOMES AND SCHOOLS.

NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE OUR YOUNG MEN A CHANCE TO BUILD A BETTER AMERICA, NOT KEEP THEM TIED DOWN IN THE JUNGLES OF INDOCHINA.

NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE AMERICANS A BIGGER OPPORTUNITY TO USE THEIR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS, TO LIVE IN DECENT HOUSING, TO SEE THEIR CHILDREN LEARNING IN BETTER

SCHOOLS, TO KNOW THEIR PARENTS CAN GET BETTER MEDICAL CARE WITHOUT GOING BANKRUPT, TO LIVE IN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY AREN'T AFRAID TO WALK THE STREETS.

WE CAN'T DO THESE THINGS AS LONG AS THIS ADMINISTRATION INSISTS ON PUTTING MONEY IN THE WRONG PLACES AT THE WRONG TIMES.

I THINK WE CAN TURN THIS ECONOMY AROUND. WE DID IT IN THE EARLY 1960'S UNDER PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S LEADERSHIP. WE CAN DO IT AGAIN, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO DO IT TOGETHER.

I COULD STOP RIGHT THERE. I COULD END BY TELLING YOU THE ANSWER TO ALL OUR TROUBLES IS TO GET RID OF THE TERRIBLE NIXON ECONOMIC POLICIES. THAT WOULD HELP, BUT IT WON'T DO THE WHOLE JOB. WE HAVE SOME PROBLEMS THAT WON'T GO AWAY, EVEN IN A FULL EMPLOYMENT ECONOMY.

OUR COUNTRY IS CHANGING RAPIDLY. NEW TECHNOLOGIES ARE GIVING US NEW PRODUCTS AND NEW WAYS OF PRODUCING GOODS AND SERVICES. NEW TECHNOLOGIES ARE ALSO CAUSING JOB DISLOCATION.

THE DEMANDS FOR A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT ARE GIVING US A CHANCE FOR BETTER HEALTH AND MORE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS. THEY MAY ALSO CAUSE JOB DISLOCATION.

ENDING THE VIETNAM WAR -- AS I BELIEVE WE MUST, THIS YEAR -- AND ENDING THE ARMS RACE WILL BOTH

GIVE US MORE RESOURCES TO IMPROVE OUR LIVES. THOSE STEPS WOULD ALSO CAUSE JOB DISLOCATION.

WE WANT TO MAKE CHANGES, BUT WE SHOULDN'T PUT THE COST ON THE BACKS OF WORKING MEN AND WOMEN ALONE. WE'VE HAD TOO MUCH OF THAT KIND OF POLICY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

THIS PROBLEM ISN'T SOMEWHERE OFF IN THE FUTURE. IT'S HERE NOW.

SEVERAL THOUSAND MEN AND WOMEN WERE LAID OFF LAST MONTH, BECAUSE WE DECIDED TO END GOVERNMENT SPENDING FOR THE SST. THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE SST SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONTINUED, BUT IT DOES MEAN SOMETHING SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOST THEIR JOBS. THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOTHING LAST MONTH TO CREATE NEW JOBS AND HAS DONE NOTHING SINCE.

I INTRODUCED A BILL TO PROVIDE JOBS IN IMPROVING AIR SAFETY, IN DEVELOPING SHORT-HAUL AIRCRAFT, IN DESIGNING AND BUILDING HIGH-SPEED TRANSPORTATION ON THE GROUND. THESE ARE USEFUL PROGRAMS. THEY WOULD USE THE TALENTS OF THE WORKERS IN THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY FOR HIGH PRIORITY GOALS. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD SUPPORT THESE PROGRAMS.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS NOT JUST A SINGLE PIECE

OF LEGISLATION FOR A SPECIAL CASE. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE COMMITMENT TO CREATE NEW AND MEANINGFUL JOBS. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE COMMITMENT TO HELP THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF WORK BECAUSE OF A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY OR A CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY ITSELF.

I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS ALIKE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THE WORKERS THEY DISPLACE, AND GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE THE LEAD.

FIRST, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF MANPOWER TRAINING AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE TO HELP PEOPLE MOVE TO NEW JOBS. AND WE HAVE TO STOP THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION FROM DISMANTLING THE MANPOWER TRAINING WHICH ALREADY EXISTS.

SECOND, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD PROVIDE A LIVABLE INCOME FOR THOSE WHO ARE LOOKING FOR WORK, OR BEING TRAINED FOR NEW JOBS. WE HAVE TO IMPROVE OUR SYSTEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE. WE HAVE TO INCREASE THE BENEFITS AND THE PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH THOSE BENEFITS CAN BE RECEIVED.

THIRD, I BELIEVE WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE LAID OFF KEEP THEIR PENSION RIGHTS AND FRINGE BENEFITS AS THEY MOVE TO NEW JOBS.

FOURTH, I BELIEVE WE HAVE TO MAKE OLDER WORKERS ELIGIBLE FOR EARLY RETIREMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY, WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN PERMANENTLY DISPLACED AND CAN'T FIND NEW JOBS.

I AM DEVELOPING LEGISLATION TO DEAL WITH THESE MATTERS. BUT OUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS MUCH BROADER.

IF THE AMERICAN DREAM MEANS ANYTHING, IT MEANS A JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY MAN AND WOMAN WILLING AND ABLE TO WORK. IT MEANS A SHARE IN A GROWING ECONOMY FOR EVERY AMERICAN. THAT'S THE GOAL OF ANY POLITICAL PARTY WORTHY OF THE NAME. THAT'S MY GOAL.

WHEN BLUE COLLAR AND WHITE COLLAR WORKERS SUFFER IN AMERICA, THEN AMERICA SUFFERS. WE CAN'T END POVERTY IN A WEAK ECONOMY. WE CAN'T LICK HARD-CORE UNEMPLOYMENT IN A WEAK ECONOMY. WE CAN'T EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN THE WAY WE WOULD LIKE, OR CLEAN UP POLLUTION, OR IMPROVE LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR REBUILD OUR CITIES, UNLESS THE ECONOMY IS GROWING AND PEOPLE HAVE JOBS.

THAT'S WHY WE NEED A GOVERNMENT WHICH CARES, NOT ABOUT WHAT IT CALLS A SILENT MAJORITY, BUT ABOUT A WORKING MAJORITY. WE NEED TO TURN THIS ECONOMY AROUND TO MAKE IT SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THIS LAND. AND TOGETHER WE CAN DO JUST THAT.

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