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MUSKIE News

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

NEBRASKA CANDIDATES' DAY

I have looked forward to my time in this state. . . the home of the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers. . . the number one football team in America. I only hope the Democratic Party does as well in 1972 as the Big Red did in the Orange Bowl in 1971.

Any state which could send the Cornhuskers 2000 miles to Miami and Johnny Carson 2000 miles to New York . . . surely, that state can help put a Democrat back in the White House.

And if you think I'm exaggerating just a little about the chances of carrying this state in November, 1972, let me tell you the real reason I'm here. I've spent most of my life in the cold weather of Maine. How could I pass up an opportunity to visit a place which boasts the mildest climate in all the world?

I am here to speak with you about the prevailing climate in our country today. . .

About promises made and promises broken. . .

About an Administration which is playing politics with prosperity. . .

And about Nebraska, which truly is number one.

A decade ago, John Kennedy told us that we could be better than we thought we were. . . that a new generation of

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Americans could build a country worthy of all that had gone before. . . that we could make peace in the world and build prosperity in our own land.

With that expression of faith, President Kennedy inaugurated not only a new Administration, but a new time. . . a time of hope and trust and confidence in our country and ourselves.

But Americans have changed since 1961. Bit by bit, hope died near an underpass in Dallas and on a kitchen floor in Los Angeles. . . in a war half a world away and outside a closed factory just down the street.

And so today, Americans are living with doubt. . . doubt about our political leaders. . . doubt about our public institutions. . . doubt about each other. And we doubt increasingly that these doubts can ever be resolved.

That is the mood of this nation in 1971.

You can see it in the shrug of an unemployed meatpacker whose children ask why he stays at home.

You can hear it in the discouraged voice of a farmer who spends half his time working another man's field.

And you can sense it in the questions we all ask about the future and the fate of America.

Most of all, we want to know the truth . . . from our government and from each other . . . about our collective wisdom and our collective shortcomings. . . about the strengths we still have and the tasks we must all face. We want a politics of truth to guide our destiny in the years ahead. That is the only way to keep this country -- to keep it free -- to make it as good and as great as it can be.

One place to start looking for the truth is in the state of the economy. In 1968, I warned that Richard Nixon represented policies that could lead us into recession and economic decline. I remember his reply -- that the only unemployment which would follow when he took office was the unemployment of President Johnson's Council of Economic Advisors. And what is the truth in that?

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Unemployment in this country has climbed from three-and-a-half percent to more than six percent -- and it has doubled in Nebraska in the past three years.

And what was the President's response, a third of a decade and five million jobless workers later? He told us that he was instituting the biggest economic program since the nineteen-thirties. And no wonder. That's what it will take to pull us out of the biggest economic mess since the Great Depression.

Surely, we can do better than this. I would trust Bob Devaney to do better than this . . . better than an Administration which pledged prosperity, produced recession, and now promises the economic miracle of getting us back where we were when they started.

How have we ended up with that as our best hope? Because this Administration simply does not believe in the capacity of the American people to hear and face the truth.

We have had, now, four different economic policies since 1969. And after each one, the press has said to me, "Well, Senator, now that President Nixon has solved the economic problem, what issue are you going to have in 1972?" And I say to you here today that the issue will be the same as it was after the last three economic policies failed . . . For the hard truth is that the Administration which was doing nothing has just done the wrong thing.

The President has proposed the largest single corporate tax cut in any year in the history of this country. At the same time, social security tax increases may wipe out even the very modest gains he promises for middle income families. I did not support -- and I will never support -- a program like this . . . with approximately \$14 billion in benefits for big business and only \$5 billion for America's workers and consumers.

That is not right. It is not good economics. It is not good social policy. And it is not fair.

What we need is a policy that trusts and respects all of our people. Whoever heard of Jerry Tagge calling a play which has

assignments for only a few of the players in the huddle? For some reason, the others just aren't used in the formation. The result would be a twenty-yard loss.

The economy measures its losses in jobs and dollars and dignity, and right now we're pretty low in the standings. That is why I have proposed the adoption of a Consumer Tax Credit as an alternative to the President's plan. Such a credit would return seven billion dollars to the American people . . . instead of pumping more and more money into big business in the hope that some of it will eventually trickle down.

That is the fair way to create growth -- the way the Democratic Party has always tried to build prosperity . . . by putting money in the wallets and pocketbooks of families -- not just in the coffers of corporate treasuries.

It is not fair to let just a handful of well-off Americans find out what their country can do for them. We must turn away from the Nixon game-plan . . . toward a policy to serve all our people.

And what of the President's response to a crippling inflation?

For three years, he told us that things would get better if we left them alone. You remember in June of this year, after a well publicized review of economic policy by the President, by Secretary Connally, by the Cabinet, by all the economic advisors . . . a review designed to set us on the right course, Secretary Connally announced that the President was satisfied with his present economic policies.

So what happened between July 1st and August 14th to change that? What happened to make so wrong in August what they said was so right in June? There is only one conclusion to draw . . . the Administration didn't know what was going on in June . . . and the probability is that it didn't know what it was doing in August either. The great economic blockbuster was so unplanned that the government issued four different and conflicting rulings on teacher salaries within the first week.' -- more --

And you remember the Second American Revolution, which the President announced in his State of the Union message last January? You remember it . . . Welfare Reform and Revenue Sharing. That revolution ended on August 14th. If the first one had ended that soon, we'd all be British subjects in 1971.

There is much wrong in the President's response to economic despair. And Cornhuskers know that there is much missing as well.

What has the President done to assist economic conversion -- to help meat-packing plants relocate or their employees find new jobs? Nothing.

What has the President done to remove the staggering burden of property and income taxes from the shoulders of Nebraska's people? Nothing.

What has the President done to narrow the \$3000 gap between farm and non-farm incomes? To bring parity to incomes as well as to prices? To halt the disappearance of family farms from Nebraska's plains? To keep farmers working in their own fields? Absolutely nothing.

The President celebrated Salute to Agriculture Day by throwing a big dinner at the White House. There were a hundred people on the guest list -- but only sixteen of them were farmers.

And Richard Nixon is the first President since Herbert Hoover who has not sent a farm message to Congress . . . and the only President who has ever tried to abolish the Department of Agriculture.

What it all adds up to is a record of neglect . . . neglected farmers, neglected workers, and neglected consumers.

Telling the truth has always been a fundamental precept of the American heritage. The architects of our country painfully structured a society in which truth could be pursued without suppression and honesty would be respected and admired.

The people of this nation want leaders who can recapture
-- more --

that heritage -- leaders who believe in the people, in their capacity to hear the good and the bad, in their wisdom and their strength.

Leaders who know that challenges are not overcome by wishing them away . . .

-- That the plight of the farmer will not disappear after a county fair on the White House lawn

-- And that even after business has pocketed its \$14 billion bonus, the Omaha meat-packer will still have no job.

Only when the people and their government work together -- facing problems openly -- sharing visions of a better time -- can we begin to move our country forward once again.

Any President who fails to learn that lesson deserves to be called a "one-term President."

We can give him that title -- together -- in 1972.

And then every American can stand with Nebraska and proudly say: "We are number one."

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