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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the College Station Community Multi-Purpose Center

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE
DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY
OF THE UNITED STATES

- - -

Saturday, September 21, 1968

Little Rock, Arkansas

WARD & PAUL
OFFICIAL REPORTERS
25 K STREET, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

(202) 628-4266

1 REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE
2 DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES

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4 College Station
5 Community Multi-Purpose Center
6 Little Rock, Arkansas
7 Saturday, September 21, 1968
8 3:10 p.m.

9 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and ladies and
10 gentlemen:

11 First of all, I would like to express the appreciation
12 that Mrs. Muskie and I feel for your warm welcome this afternoon

13 This is the first time we have ever campaigned for
14 votes outside Maine and to be welcomed so warmly by new friends
15 so far from home is a wonderful feeling indeed.

16 I appreciate the attendance of these young ladies in
17 the background, who I understand were bussed here from another
18 area.

19 I would like to tell you folks down here a Maine story
20 that sort of typifies my fellow citizens in Maine.

21 An out-of-stater crossed into Maine over the New Hamp-
22 shire border and within a few hundred yards came to an inter-
23 section with two roads pointing north. And each road had a
24 sign pointing to Portland.

25 The out-of-stater was puzzled as to which road to take
to get to Portland. So he stopped his car and asked a native,
"Does it make any difference which road I take to get to Portland"
The native's reply was, "Not to me it don't."

(Laughter)

Well, that story is supposed to indicate something
about my fellow Mainiacs. But it really isn't fair to them,
because we have learned long ago in this country, and in my
State, that it does make a difference to each of us what happens
to the rest of us.

(Applause)

1 And that is the principle reason I am so delighted
2 to be here today.

3 We don't have many black Americans in Maine. I think
4 out of a million people, we may have as many as four thousand.
5 And Maine is relatively peaceful State. We have a few economic
6 problems from time to time, but other than that, and aside from
7 the fact that at one time Democrats had a little problem getting
8 ahead in the State, we lived together pretty well.

9 But we consider ourselves part of this great country
10 of ours, and we are disturbed. We are disturbed by the fact
11 that people in other parts of the country are dissatisfied with
12 life as they find it, dissatisfied with the opportunities they
13 do not have, and are searching for ways to improve their lives,
14 the lives of their children, and we can understand that in my
15 State.

16 Because with the economic problems that we have known,
17 we understand the basic urge of human beings everywhere to find
18 something better for themselves, but even more important, for
19 their children.

20 As we consider this situation throughout the country,
21 I think there are certain reactions to it that we have.

22 First of all, we believe that there is opportunity
23 available in this country. There always has been. Secondly,
24 that it isn't available to everyone alike. It has been our
25 objective in this country to create a society in which everyone
has an equal chance, but I think we understand we have not yet
reached that point to the degree that we would like.

We believe, thirdly, that people ought to have an
opportunity to do something about this themselves.

(Applause)

That they ought to have the right to express their
views on it, that they ought to have an opportunity to work
effectively in improving their own lives.

(Applause)

So I see in this experiment, in this project here,
College Station Center, so much of what is typically American.
First of all, it demonstrates -- and this is most important --
That people care about each other in this community.

(Applause)

1 And you can't get anywhere unless you have that.

2 (Applause)

3 Secondly, it demonstrates that the people in this
4 community are willing to work themselves at improving, and you
5 can't get anywhere unless you have that kind of spirit in any
6 community.

7 (Applause)

8 But thirdly, we have here in this community an oppor-
9 tunity for the rest of us in other parts of the country to be
10 of assistance through federal programs that were created for
11 that purpose. I have learned about the application you have
12 made for federal help, not do the whole job for you, but to
13 help you do the job of creating here in this Center meaningful
14 agencies to help you with the problems of your people.

15 (Applause)

16 That is what this program was created to do, and I
17 have assured Sonny Walker and the others here that I will do
18 what I can to be of help when I get to Washington.

19 We have had to bird-dog some of these programs for
20 our own people in our own state. We have developed some skill
21 at doing that. We would be happy to do what we can to use our
22 skills to help you.

23 This is a project which in my judgment is in the great
24 American tradition. We have got a great deal to do before we
25 make this country truly a place for every member of it, where
every citizen has an equal chance to improve his life.

26 (Applause)

27 As far as I am concerned, this is the principle
28 objective of my whole career in public life and we are not going
29 to end it here.

30 (Applause)

31 We are going to go on from here.

32 (Applause)

33 So to these youngsters I see around here, to this
34 tremendously impressive choir from Shorter College, to the

1 people who have given of their productive years, working toward
2 something they hoped would be better, and to all of the rest
3 of you who sympathize with the objectives of this Center, and
4 with the hopes of these people, may I say that I have always
5 been fully committed to working for the things that occupy you
6 here.

7 And as for as long as I have an opportunity, I will
8 work toward the same objectives. You have my promise.

9 (Applause)

10 Thank you once again for making me feel at home, and
11 may I have the opportunity at some point to make you feel at
12 home in that far Northeastern corner of the country where I
13 think you would find yourselves welcome.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause)

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