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**Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at a Jefferson-Jackson
Day Dinner, Des Moines, Iowa**

Edmund S. Muskie

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1 REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE EDMUND S. MUSKIE
2 DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES
3 AT A
4 JEFFERSON-JACKSON DAY DINNER

5 - - -

6 Veterans Memorial Auditorium
7 Des Moines, Iowa
8 September 28, 1968
9 9:05 o'clock p.m.

10 (Introduction)

11 There was a time when it didn't take that long to list
12 the Democratic office holders in either Maine or Iowa, but that
13 has changed.

14 (Applause)

15 You have made Jane and me feel very much at home today --
16 until we got to that very generous introduction of your great
17 Governor -- Harold Hughes.

18 (Applause)

19 Gene McCarthy and I were elected to the Senate in the
20 same year. I had admired him from afar and apparently he had
21 watched my activities from afar. And we became, I think, the
22 closest of the 15 new Democrats who were elected to the Senate
23 in 1958.

24 I remember his telling me, after we got friendly
25 enough to be frank with each other, that he had watched my
election as Governor in 1954 and in 1956, and my election in
1958. You will remember all of those were in September when we
still had the early September elections. And he said he and all
of the Democrats in Minnesota were impressed and took heart from
those victories and were impressed by the man who achieved them.
But he said, "After I met you, Ed, I think that all you proved
was that anyone could get elected in Maine."

(Laughter)

Well, I think that with the help of Harold Hughes in
Iowa, and the work that we have done in Maine, maybe we have
almost made that possible. That almost any Democrat can get

1 elected in either state, provided he has the qualifications.

2 (Applause)

3 Adlai Stevenson years ago was interrupted at the close
4 of an eloquent speech by an enthusiastic supporter in the rear
5 of the room, who jumped to his feet and said, "Governor, every
6 thinking man and woman in America will vote for you." He said,
7 "I am sorry, but that isn't good enough, I need a majority."

8 (Laughter)

9 Well, we are looking for thoughtful majorities in this
10 election campaign. Because if ever America needed thoughtful
11 majorities, this is the year.

12 So I have enjoyed the opportunity for the first time
13 to travel as part of a national ticket, soliciting support for
14 myself as well as our great Vice President in states outside
15 my own. It has been a very reassuring experience, notwithstand-
16 ing the story that the Poles tell us about the present prospects
17 of the Democratic Party. Because I found that you can talk to
18 people in Iowa, or California, or Texas in the same way that I
19 can talk to them in my own state. That is reassuring, it is
20 heartwarming, and I must say uplifting.

21 Oh, yes, there are different accents, different cus-
22 toms, and different circumstances. There is the story of the
23 Texas rancher who was traveling in Maine and he wanted to com-
24 pare Maine farming with Texas ranches. So he met a Maine
25 farmer and said to him, "Just how big is your farm?"

The farmer said, "Well, it begins down near the end
of the brook and goes along the brook to that fence, along the
fence -- you can see it from here, over that line of trees --
along the trees to the road, and along the road back to the
brook."

"Well," the rancher said, "That isn't very big, is it?"
He said, "If I were to get in my car at 7:00 o'clock in the
morning down at my ranch in Texas, and travel all day, by sunset
I might just get to the other end of my ranch." He said, "What
do you think of that?"

"Well," the farmer said, "I had a car like that once."

(Applause)

Well, I find that that Maine talk is at least as
popular as that kind of Texas talk in the country today.

1 (Applause)

2 One of the most frequent questions I face as I travel
3 around the country is this: "What do you think of your chances
4 on November 5, in view of the polls?"

5 The question frequently comes from reporters. Too
6 often it comes from Democrats. So I pulled out something that
7 Winston Churchill said during the crisis of World War II, on
8 the subject of polls. He said:

9 "Nothing is more dangerous . . . than to live in the
10 tempermental atmosphere of a gallup poll, always feeling ones
11 pulse and taking ones temperature . . . there is only one duty,
12 only one safe course, and that is to try to be right and not
13 to fear to do or say what you believe to be right."

14 (Applause)

15 Harry Truman put it with fewer words.

16 (Laughter)

17 The other day in Independence, when Hubert and I were
18 down there talking to him, trying to get some of that 1948 magic
19 to rub off on us, we asked him for his advice. He said, "Tell
20 the truth."

21 Then I said, "Well, Mr. President, I don't have the
22 same way of telling the truth that you had in 1948." He said,
23 "Don't try to do my way, just be yourself."

24 So telling the truth and being yourself, I think, are
25 the best conceivable ingredients for Democratic victory on
November 5.

(Applause)

That is the approach the Vice President has taken, that
is the approach that Harold Hughes has always taken, --

(Applause)

-- that is the approach that these congressmen are
taking.

It is an approach that Dick Nixon doesn't seem to
understand. He is doing his best with this campaign to conceal
the real Nixon. Because he understands that the real Nixon has
a tendency to panic under pressure, as he did when he made his

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1 deal with Strom Thurmond. He has a tenency to panic as he did
2 in the California Gubernatorial campaign a few years ago. He
3 has a tendency to put his foot in his mouth when he is under
4 pressure.

5 (Applause)

6 He was here in Iowa not so long ago and put on a farm
7 act.

8 (Applause and laughter)

9 Now, when you come on the stage after a fellow who
10 can ride the fence while keeping both ears on the ground, you
11 are in trouble.

12 (Laughter)

13 I would like to talk for just a few minutes about
14 trouble -- about trouble on the farm, trouble with farm prices
15 and trouble with income. I would like to do it with this first
16 acknowledgement -- that I am not a farm expert. But I think in
17 that respect, I stand about even or maybe a little ahead of Mr.
18 Nixon.

19 (Applause)

20 And let me make another disclaimer. I didn't come to
21 Iowa to tell you that farmers never had it so good. I came here
22 to remind you that although none of us is satisfied with the
23 agricultural economy, farm income for the past four years has
24 been better than it was in any of the Nixon years.

25 I came here to remind you that Democrats care, and
that since 1910, farm income has turned for the worse in every
Republican Administration, and it has turned for the better
every time the Democrats have taken the wheel.

(Applause)

Now, that isn't to say that times are always good under
Democratic administrations. Because there are forces at work
which even Democrats can't control. But I don't think a farmer
concerned about his future and concerned about his community
can afford to forget that lesson of farm history -- or he is
going to get it in the neck next January 20.

He should not forget the years of "bondage with
Sensenbrenner."

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Those were long years:

Years in which net farm income fell 17 percent; years in which farm surpluses piled up to the sum of 8 billion dollars costing the taxpayers more than one million dollars a day for interest and storage. Those were the Nixon-Benson years.

Mr. Nixon has promised it won't happen again, and he has issued five pages of what he calls "specific policy" directions for agriculture so it won't happen again. He did it right here in Des Moines.

I have seen his list. It is studded with words and phrases like these: "Vigorous expansion," "dedicated efforts," and "adequate funding."

But no where in this eloquent list does he get specific. No where does he say what he would do and how, and that is understandable in view of his record.

But perhaps a little reminder of that record might not be bad. Mr. Nixon, the campaigner, pledges for example, "assistance to farm cooperatives, including adequate funding of the rural electric and telephone programs."

Now, that has a nice sound, but Mr. Nixon, the legislator, voted against a 250 million dollar appropriation for REA. He voted twice against expansion of TVA. He voted against legislation to expand rural telephone service and he voted to deny authorization for REA power lines in Minnesota and Iowa.

That is his record.

Mr. Nixon, the campaigner, is for "vigorous expansion of soil and water conservation programs."

But Mr. Nixon, the legislator, voted against a measure to increase soil conservation funds, and announced support for another bill to cut soil conservation funds. And Mr. Nixon, the Vice President, declined to break a tie in the Senate which involved 30 million dollars in soil conservation funds, which were consequently rejected.

Mr. Nixon, the campaigner, suddenly discovered again, right here in Des Moines, that "74 percent of parity is intolerable." But Mr. Nixon, the legislator, cast one of his early votes against 90 percent of parity supports for wool.

Mr. Nixon, the Vice President, broke a Senate tie by voting to eliminate 90 percent supports on millable wheat.

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The contrast between Mr. Nixon and Vice President Humphrey is dramatic.

From the time he entered the Senate in 1949, Hubert Humphrey fought for REA funds, conservation funds, higher farm price levels, world development funds, more help for the rural poor, and expanded world trade.

He conceived the idea of food for peace.

He is the father of the food stamp program. He was one of the originators of area redevelopment.

When he talks to farmers, he says what he means and he means what he says, when he promises to give the farmer a chance for his share of the abundance he has helped to create.

Since the last year of Nixon-Benson, net farm income has increased by almost 30 percent. Net income per farm has increased by almost 55 percent. Farmer's networth has increased by 31 percent. Farm exports have increased by almost half.

The inventory of government-owned stocks has been whittled to under 900 million dollars -- less than 15 percent of the Nixon-Benson surplus legacy.

Hubert Humphrey and I are not satisfied with this -- nor should we be. We want to bring the farmer into full economic partnership with this nation's economy, and we pledge to try to do it by improving and strengthening existing programs and by developing new programs to improve the world economy.

Farm and rural economic policy have a dual importance.

First, the world-wide population growth threatens to outstrip food production. Our capacity to provide food, economically, can play a critical role in reducing famine and in reducing tensions caused in hunger-ridden nations, and in the process find the place to use the tremendous productive capacity of our farmers.

In the second place -- and I know that this is a message which Harold Hughes has spread far and wide, not only in your state, but throughout the country -- rural poverty -- 10.7 years of school in the central city and 10.6 years in rural farm areas -- or that school dropout rates are identical in both areas -- 20.6 percent in the central city and 20.8 percent in the rural non-farm areas.

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1 These are indicators of the social crisis which has
2 increased the problems of crime and racial tensions in our
3 cities.

4 These are indicators of the need for more investments
5 in education, in community facilities, and in economic develop-
6 ment -- investments which can be made with Democratic policies
7 but are unlikely in a Nixon administration.

8 And so, as I relate the problems of rural America
9 with those of urban America, I would like to take you back to
10 the words of the early American agrarian, who also was one of
11 the founders, if not the key founder of our free democratic
12 system in this country -- Thomas Jefferson. He made the point
13 many times about what this system was all about, what its
14 objectives were, and what its methods must be.

15 First of all, he made it clear that what we were
16 trying to establish here was a society based upon the full
17 participation of all of its members. He emphasized that they
18 could do so only if they were enlightened by education, and that
19 if they were so enlightened, land thus found it possible to ful-
20 fill their own lives, that they would make possible the fulfill-
21 ment of society itself.

22 And in that connection, he said this:

23 "The only way to build a safe and secure society is
24 to give its people a stake in law and order, a stake consisting
25 of a fair share of the opportunities to improve themselves and
those who follow after."

 He made the point in the most eloquent words that I
think he ever wrote, that "You can't build law and order on
indigence, ignorance, and oppression."

(Applause)

 Now, he was confident that this kind of a society
could work when it was agrarian, when it was relatively sparsely
populated, when it had great wide open spaces in which the
individual had a certain amount of control over the forces
which shaped his own life. But he had real doubts about what
would happen when we became crowded. He put it in these words,
which were more earthy than the words he usually used. He said,
"When we pile ourselves onto one another, as they do in Europe,
we will begin to eat one another as they do in Europe."

 So, he understood what the entire history of man teaches,
that when human beings of many different kinds become crowded into

1 urban environments where living conditions are unacceptable for
2 too many of them, where environment itself has deteriorated,
3 where the individual feels insignificant, where he feels that
4 he has no impact upon the institutions and the policies which
5 control his own life, that we then get the kind of unrest and
6 instability which threaten every member of the society.

7 Jefferson isn't the only one who warned about this.
8 DeTocqueville, that great French observer in the 1830's pre-
9 dicted that we would face this predicament. And so now we face
10 it. Now we face it.

11 We have stimulated its onslaught by opening up to all
12 Americans the hope of improvement. It has been called "rising
13 tide of expectations." But its origins are in the human con-
14 dition and we are faced with a human condition which no society
15 in the entire history of man has ever solved.-- the problem of
16 making it possible for multitudes of different kinds of people
17 to live together in harmony. I say no society in the entire
18 history of man has ever solved this problem.

19 We thought for 180 years that we had found the answer,
20 but now when we are all so crowded, we find even our system
21 tested by this old problem.

22 What is the answer of some people to this problem?
23 It is the same answer which has been tried over and over again
24 in the past by the French kings, whose reign was finally brought
25 to an end with the French revolution; by the Russian Czars,
whose reign was finally brought to an end by a revolution. The
club, toughness, the building of walls between one segment of
Americans and another segment of Americans. The building of
walls around those who are privileged to enjoy America's
blessings, to shield them from those who do not.

This is an answer that has been tried historically
over and over and over again, and it has never brought safety
and security even to the rulers of the society which had tried it.
We have learned in America that there is only way to build safety
and security, and it is Jefferson's way to create a society in
which every member of it can have some hope, some hope for
improving his life.

And when a significant number of our people lose that
hope, there is only one way to deal with the unrest that follows.
That is to correct the conditions which seem hopeless to them.

(Applause)

Yes, there are some risks in all of this. Because
there are people who will do others injury, for whatever reason,

1 because of misunderstanding, because they have had no experience
2 in compassion and understanding extended to them by others.
3 Because they are evil, just as there are evil people among even
4 privileged groups in our society.

5 There are risks involved in trusting strangers in
6 trusting unfamiliar people, in trusting different kinds of
7 people. But if any society has ever proven that it is possible
8 to bring under one roof many different kinds of people who would
9 live together in harmony, surely we have.

10 (Applause)

11 At the turn of the century, we began a movement of
12 people into this country from abroad which brought 40 million
13 people into America from other countries. Most of them not
14 speaking the English language, most of them without any experi-
15 ence in freedom, or the use and operation of the institutions
16 of a free society, with different cultures, different backgrounds,
17 many of them without the skills, necessary to take full advantage
18 of the opportunities of a free society. And they came when our
19 total population was much less, so that the 40 million was a
20 much larger proportion of the whole.

21 And they were absorbed, they learned our language,
22 they learned our customs, they learned how to be free and how
23 to use freedom. So that they are all regarded today as Americans
24 first, and as descendants of the countries of their origins
25 second.

26 We all remember the struggles of Labor in the 30's to
27 get a fair share of the fruits of our resources and our indus-
28 try.-- the strikes, the sitdown strikes in Michigan, the strikes
29 which led to disorder and sometimes violence, the struggle to
30 make a place for themselves, a respected place in the American
31 life. - And they won that struggle.

32 It is as a result of bringing in to the mainstream of
33 American life all of these people who had to struggle to do it,
34 that America has become great, that we have achieved this great
35 economic -- yes, and I add spiritual --- strength, that underlies
36 the United States of 1968. And so for 180 years, through
37 incredibly unpredictable conditions, we made this idea of free-
38 dom work by enlarging our family, bringing in others, who were
39 different, unfamiliar, when our first reaction to them might
40 have been hesitation and even fear. And we have made it work.

41 Now, in 1968, it is suggested by some in this campaign
42 that that answer is no longer good. That that answer can no

1 longer be pursued safely, and that at this point in our history
2 we must call a halt to that policy and instead begin to build
3 walls.

4 That really is the issue of this campaign. Because
5 we can't forge viable policies for our country, whether an
6 Southeast Asia or for our cities, or to deal with race relations,
7 or to handle the problem of law and order, or to deal with
8 environmental contamination, unless we have a responsible,
9 enlightened electorate that can take the constructive objective
10 point of view, as a basis for decision-making rather than emo-
11 tional reaction to other Americans.

12 You simply can't think through the problems in a
13 democracy with your emotions. You have got to think it through
14 with your heads.

15 (Applause)

16 And as a test of this, it is suggested by two other
17 candidates in this campaign that democrats know nothing about
18 law and order, that all they can talk about is the social pro-
19 blems.

20 Well, is it sheer coincidence that George Wallace's
21 Alabama has the highest murder rate of any state in the country.
22 This law and order man? Who talks a great game but doesn't
23 practice it in his own state?

24 (Applause)

25 Let's talk about Republicans. Mr. Nixon puts out
that there has been an 88 percent increase in crime between
1960 and 1968 while there was a democrat in the White House,
and so democrats must be held responsible.

He doesn't point out that law and order is a state and
local responsibility, and bearing that in mind, what is the
record. From 1960 to 1968, there were five states that had
Republican governors throughout and the increase in crime in
those five states was not the 88 percent national average, but
170 percent.

(Applause)

And through that period there were 18 states that
had democratic governors throughout, and the increase in crime
is not 170 percent, nor the 88 percent national average, but
66 percent.

(Applause)

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1 It just might be, although I wouldn't be irresponsible
2 enough to draw such a quick conclusion, but using Mr. Nixon's
3 reasoning, it just might be that this proves that in states
4 which combine with proper concern for effective law enforcement,
with compassion for people caught up in social problems, you
get a better answer in terms of law and order than states where
the only answer is the club.

5 But I don't suggest that at all. Because all Americans
6 are concerned about the growth in crime. We are all concerned
7 about the unrest in our society. We are all concerned about the
demonstrations and riots and all of the other reflections of
8 problems in our country. But you don't answer them, my friends,
with a Party label, you answer them by getting at the problem.

9 (Applause)

10 I should give one other statistic, considering Neil
11 Smith's preoccupation with my counterpart on the Republican
12 ticket. Maine is the fifth lowest state in incidents of crime
of the 50, and Maryland has the highest rate of any state in
the country for violent crimes.

13 (Applause)

14 I know the temptation to respond to the simple Wallace
15 approach to this problem. And the Nixon approach is just a
modulated version of the Wallace approach.

16 (Applause)

(4)

17 He talks about law and order and then adds "And justice,"
18 but when we ever talk about the "and justice" part of it, he
tells us we are exaggerating it.

19 You have got to have even handed justice. The first
20 responsibility of an organized society is to protect its people,
their lives, their property, their families, their streets, and
21 their communities. That is the first responsibility. That
responsibility must be understood not only by the privileged
22 members of our society, but those who are disadvantaged, because
you can't solve their problem when our society is in chaos.
But at the same time, we should not overlook the underlying
causes.

23 And so we are concerned with all of these programs,
24 designed to make it possible for citizens in the cities, citizens
on the farm, citizens in rural America, citizens wherever they
25 are, to find a place for themselves in this great country, to

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1 find opportunity for themselves in this country, to find hope
2 for improvement in the future. And in the process, we have got
3 to convince our young people that this is so. And we will find
4 that they will respond as well.

5 So what we must do between now and November 5 is to
6 unite our country in the face of great forces of division and
7 that, to me, my friends, is a greater responsibility and a
8 greater challenge than electing Hubert Humphrey and Edmund
9 Muskie to the presidency and vice presidency of the United
10 States. And I ask your help in doing that job above all others
11 that you undertake in the next five to six weeks.

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