

133. 1979

-3-

are cared for and loved rather than warehoused and tolerated, in seeing that the needy are helped to provide for themselves. In the face of these failures, the institution--the federal government and those who exalt its capacities--insists that success will come with increased expenditures, with increased size, and with increased authority.

Never mind that as a people we are poorer because government takes our money, and its purchasing power, and our incentive; that we are endangered because government constantly increases its control over us. These are second order consequences. The real tragedy is that we are poorer and we are endangered because government takes away our need and our obligation and our opportunity to behave as individuals, as human beings, toward each other.

This is the major problem which confronts us in this great land. It is the source of cynicism in a country that was not borne out of cynicism but out of hope. It is at the root of the desperation with which so many of our people thrash about for something to believe in, something to hold on to, something to shape lives they no longer believe they can shape themselves.

This is my concern in the campaign ahead. It is, in the words of an American poet, to let America be America again. It must be an America which understands what it means when it speaks of rights--civil rights, human rights, individual rights, equal rights. It is true as Burke said, that "all men have equal rights, but not to equal things." The man who lives in a row house and rides the bus has the same constitutional rights as the man who lives in a mansion and rides in a limousine. Yet, the one has no right to the wealth of the other, and the other has no right to prevent the first from achieving whatever he may within the confines of the law and his own abilities. They are equal before God, before the Constitution and before the law. But it is arrant nonsense to suppose that because they may not be equal in ability and ambition government should equalize their portion of the material advantages which flow from the unfettered exercise of ability and ambition.

If we can eliminate this and similar misconceptions about the purpose of government then we can get away from building the federal budget and the federal bureaucracy and get back to building the nation.

This is my message in the campaign ahead.

-more-

-5-

If any or all of these incidents, and many more, could be structured into a comprehensible pattern that we might call U.S. foreign policy then, whether we agreed or disagreed with the policy, we and the world would have confidence that at least a policy and a unifying vision existed. There is no such confidence, and the next step away from confidence in foreign affairs is grave, dangerous doubt. This is not a time for grave doubts about the U.S.' ability to conceive and manage a foreign policy.

So we will be discussing these things and more in the days ahead.

I will offer no slogans; slogans are no substitute for ideas, and novelty cannot replace hard, painful thought if, as we hope, government is to be a shared national endeavor once again rather than a costly entertainment.

I intend to promise only the possible, so that when I am successful in my aims I shall have occasion to disappoint as few as possible.

I do not propose just to make people believe in government again; but rather to urge that they believe in themselves again. I do mean to remind people that our founding thinkers and our constitutive documents all aimed at institutionalizing doubt about government, in keeping that doubt foremost in the public mind, and in providing the means to limit the power of government and to protect the individual against it. And none of that has to do with the calibre or character of people who make up the government.

I do not urge that we turn our backs on the future. I urge that we recover some old truths about ourselves as a people, and that we be guided by these as we face the future. The truth is that today many Americans have doubts about the future of this nation. We have to eliminate those doubts. I believe we can.

I do not agree with Henry Adams that politics is "the systematic organization of hatreds." We fought a terrible war--and these plains which surround us today were drenched with the first blood of it--for the proposition that a house divided against itself could not stand. That truth is no less compelling today. When you divide a people to conquer an office, the division is maintained in order to hold the office--and a divided people are a weakened people. There are natural adversary relationships in America; it is irresponsible to exacerbate the adversarial nature of these relations for political advantage--to single out the businessman or businesswoman or the working man or woman as scapegoats, or the farmer, or the poor, to set one region against another, one economic group against another. This is demagoguery. This we must not do.

-more-

-4-

I will neither attack my opponents in the Republican Party, nor the incumbent President. My fellow Republicans have views which the American people must weigh, and the President has a record which must be considered and accounted for. I am sure we will be diligent in helping to consider the record, and I am sure the President will be equally diligent in accounting for it.

There are, of course, a number of concerns which confront us and I mean to address them in the months ahead, though I give little attention to them here today.

One is the state of the economy. Since our economy today is managed largely by government, its failure is simply one more failure of government. We have rejected hard wisdom, short-term sacrifice and long-term prosperity for immediate political advantage and immediate personal gratification. Our leaders have persisted in the view that we could spend ourselves rich; that we could grow fat by devouring ourselves.

With that plan discredited, we seem uncertain where to turn next. I don't mean this as a criticism, but I simply point out as an example of the confusion of goals and methods that one of the first official acts of the present Administration was to increase the salaries of some of their staff by sums in excess of 100%, sometimes reaching 150 to 200%, and they now insist that the average American workers should forego pay increases in excess of seven percent. Our economic difficulties are broader and deeper than this example, but the will to cope with them is fairly reflected there, I think.

Another concern is peace. We have enjoyed a peace established in 1973, and squandered it in some measure, and it is becoming an increasingly uneasy peace maintained largely by retreating in the face of Soviet and Soviet-sponsored aggression around the world. It is a difficult thing to make a peace--but it was done; it is a difficult thing to keep the peace, and I think we are failing in that regard. Our economic position, our defense position, and our prestige are being rapidly eroded around the world.

We preach international morality, but we don't practice it, and the world knows it.

In the Middle East, we have tried to compromise Israel to buy Arab oil, and that effort is not over yet.

In the Far East, we walked out on Taiwan for a public relations success; to suggest mastery of foreign affairs we accepted an arrangement with China which had been available to us since 1973 when the door to China was first opened.

-more-

-6-

And so I mean to wage a whole campaign. I will be speaking with our friends in the Democratic Party as well as Republicans and Independents, believing that neither party has a corner on wisdom. We seek not a Democratic approach or a Republican approach to the nation's future, but we seek the correct approach and it will combine the best thinking and the best efforts of all.

I will be meeting with black and brown and red and yellow and white. Events in the world are forcing our nation's doors open again, and they should be open if we are to call ourselves Mother of Exiles. We must not fear that new Americans threaten to diminish a finite national wealth. We must rather work to increase that wealth. New blood, new brains, new energy will help. Joseph's coat was a coat of many colors, distinctive threads woven together in one strong fabric. It is an ideal we have sought through our national history. We must continue, confident that we will be judged not by whether we succeeded, but by whether we tried.

I will be reaching out to women and to men--whether in politics, in business, in the labor market or in the home. When we insist that women "tell us what they really want," we cast ourselves in the master's role--benevolent, perhaps, but superior nonetheless. We are not patrons, we are partners. That is not a sentiment, it is a reality. It is not a reality which we have fully accepted and assimilated, and this we must do.

I will be meeting with labor as well as business. So often we see them as separate and distinct entities, enemies in constant conflict; and some have found it useful at times to encourage that false perspective and generate hostility for political gain. Labor and business are joined together like Siamese twins. Each may have its own goals and interests, but neither can accomplish anything without the other. We must reduce government's role as a third party in the labor-business relationship, as a court of first and last resort. Each have their own strengths and their own capacities to contend with the other. Let them do it without intervention in any but the most grave circumstances.

And I will speak to the young as well as the adult and the elderly. Those too young to vote are nonetheless American citizens, with a stake in our nation's future and with a capacity to grasp--if we trouble to explain--what are the concerns which effect us all. It seems to me foolish to work to build a nation for our children, and never tell them what we are doing or what are the real difficulties involved.

-more-