

YOUNG MEN AND LEADERSHIP

Never before in our history have young men had such great opportunities to influence the course of their nation. Young men are advancing throughout this world in their countries struggles for freedom and independence and in nations seeking to better their people's standards, young men are presenting constructive ideas and providing leadership.

In addition to the many overwhelming issues facing any nation, there are many opportunities. In national, state, and local governments, the movement toward youth is apparent. In the Administration, Congress, State Legislatures and County Courthouses, as well as all other governing bodies, the young are demonstrating they possess the necessary dynamism and energy to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities.

Politics and politicians, of course, have been under attack for years. An early-day American humorist, Artemus Ward, once said, in recommending himself for a job: "I am not a politician, and my other habits are good." Thus it has gone. Politics has been the subject of jest and ridicule. Political office holders have been scrutinized, analyzed, ostracized, scandalized and, in general, made to feel that perhaps in trying to help steer the course of government they had unwittingly strayed from the straight and narrow and joined Ali Babba or Captain Kidd.

I fear that too many Americans have succumbed, perhaps, drifted, in to this general feeling about politics. We have a national shame which transcends our slums, our pockets of unemployment, or any other shortcomings you may care to mention. It's our indifference to the sacred right to choose our leaders, at all levels of government.

So, I call upon you to shuck whatever shell of misconception, indifference or disinterest in politics you may have been wearing. I invite you to wade in and get your feet wet. You will find it stimulating, and educational. And it will create a sense of satisfaction in having played an active part in your nation's political future.

We all have within us this volcanic political urge. We despise injustice, we detest graft and corruption, we demand law enforcement, and efficient handling of the people's business. That is, we think we do. Too often, we keep this volcanic political energy bottled up and allow it to erupt only when a flagrant abuse of political power is brought to our attention.

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By a steady, diligent effort, we could well prevent any such need for explosive action. We could, in short, assure constantly the good government we are all in favor of.

It seems, and perhaps is then, unnecessary to point out to Jaycees why they should expand their interest in governmental affairs, at all levels. You, who today are the very guardians of the freedoms of future generations, cannot sit idly by. If you are interested, not only in preserving but extending our free enterprise system, in keeping the power of local, state and federal governments in proper perspective and in elevating the caliber of public officials, then your responsibility is clear.

From the office of: Bob Dole
Member of Congress
244 House Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20515