

REMARKS OF
HONORABLE BOB DOLE
HAYS SENIOR CITIZENS' CONFERENCE

HAYS, KANSAS
FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1968

I WANT TO TELL YOU ALL HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE YOUR ATTENDANCE
HERE TODAY. ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PANEL AND THE ADVISORY
COUNCIL, WELCOME TO THE HAYS SENIOR CITIZENS' CONFERENCE.

TODAY WE WILL DISCUSS THOSE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF STATE
AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHICH AFFECT SENIOR CITIZENS. BUT BEFORE
WE GET INTO THE SPECIFICS OF SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, TITLE III
PROJECTS UNDER THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT OF 1965, AND OTHER PROGRAMS,
I FEEL IT INCUMBENT TO COMMEND THOSE SENIOR CITIZENS HERE AS OUR
GUESTS TODAY.

- CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU!!! -

YOUR GENERATION, WHOSE SPAN HAS COVERED ALMOST ALL THE 20TH
CENTURY, HAS MADE A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICA'S HERITAGE --
AN EXCITING OUTPOURING OF TALENT UNPARALLELED IN THE HISTORY OF
MANKIND.

YOUR 20TH CENTURY HAS SEEN MORE DISCOVERIES, MORE INVENTION,
MORE TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS THAN ALL PREVIOUS HUMAN EFFORT COMBINED.
IN AGRICULTURE: FARM MECHANIZATION, HYBRIDIZATION, FERTILIZERS,
PESTICES, AND THE RURAL EDUCATION EXPLOSION IN AMERICA HAVE ALL
COMBINED TO PRODUCE THE FOOD NEEDED TO FORESTALL MASS STARVATION
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

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MEDICINE HAS INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY FROM 50 TO 70 YEARS BY PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES WHICH STAMP OUT EPIDEMIC DISEASES, BY SANITATION AND WONDER DRUGS, AND BY NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE BODY CHEMISTRY.

IN THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES, THIS CENTURY HAS SEEN MAN, THE EARTHBOUND CREATURE, GO SOARING TOWARD THE PLANETS HAS SEEN TELEVISION SIGNALS BOUNCED OFF SATELLITES FROM JAPAN TO FRANCE HAS SEEN PICTURES TRANSMITTED FROM CAMERAS POSITIONED ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.

YES, THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST EXCITING PERIOD FOR MANKIND, AND YOUR GENERATION HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF THE GROUNDWORK, IF NOT ALL THE ACTUAL DEVELOPMENTS, IN THIS REVOLUTIONARY EXPLOSION OF EFFORT AND SCIENTIFIC DIRECTION. ALL OF US WHO ARE YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN CAN ONLY APPLAUD THE MAGNITUDE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKS YOU HAVE UNDERTAKEN.

- THE SENIOR CITIZEN ADJUSTS -

TODAY AS OUR SENIOR CITIZENS ADJUST TO RETIREMENT, THEY LOOK ABOUT AND SEE AS THEIR CONTEMPORARIES ONE-FOURTH OF ALL THOSE WHO EVER LIVED PAST THE AGE OF 65 IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

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THE OLDER AMERICAN IS NOT ONLY MORE NUMEROUS, BUT HEALTHIER AND MORE COMFORTABLE THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, BUT, IN SPITE OF THESE COMFORTS AND THE EVOLVING PROGRESS, SENIOR CITIZENS FACE A DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENT. THEY FACE REDUCED INCOME (IN SOME CASES), WANING PHYSICAL ENERGY, INCREASED LEISURE TIME, AND SEPARATION FROM THEIR CHILDREN AS THE KIDS PURSUE THEIR OWN CAREERS -- OFTEN TAKING THEM TO DISTANT STATES AND DIFFERENT CITIES.

- GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN ACTION -

RECOGNIZING THESE DEVELOPMENTS (WITH ALL THE PROGRESS), THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT HAVE TAKEN ACTION TO FORESTALL SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS. THE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WHICH ARE DESIGNED FOR THE SENIOR CITIZEN ARE CONSTRUCTED TO ASSIST HIM IN MAINTAINING HIS DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY.

THESE ARE INDEED THE GOALS: DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY.

REGARDLESS OF THE INITIAL PLAUSIBILITY OF ANY GOVERNMENT PROJECT, IF IT SERVES TO HUMILIATE TO RESTRICT TO CAUSE APPREHENSION IT IS BETTER FORGOTTEN.

WE ARE HERE TODAY TO DISCUSS WHAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IS DOING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS. WE WILL DISCUSS VETERANS' BENEFITS, SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, THE SCORE PROGRAM OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, OPPORTUNITIES FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT, AND MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO ALL SENIOR CITIZENS.

- INCOME IS THE KEY -

NOW, OBVIOUSLY, THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROTECTING ONE'S SECURITY, INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY IN ADVANCING YEARS IS AN UNINTERRUPTED INCOME.

MUCH HAS BEEN DONE IN RECENT YEARS TO PROVIDE THIS FLOW OF FINANCIAL PROTECTION. OUR VETERANS' PROGRAMS, OUR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, THE EXPANDING ECONOMY, PRIVATE PENSION PLANS COVERING 25 MILLION PERSONS (SOME STILL WORKING AND SOME ALREADY RETIRED) -- ALL THESE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECLINING NUMBER OF PERSONS OVER 65 DEPENDING ON WELFARE PAYMENTS FOR SUSTENANCE.

IN 1940, 28.8 PERCENT OF ALL PERSONS OVER 65 WERE RECEIVING WELFARE. TODAY, THE LATEST FIGURES SHOW ONLY 11.3 PERCENT OF OUR SENIOR CITIZENS DEPENDENT UPON THAT SOURCE FOR INCOME.

THIS IS A TREMENDOUS ADVANCEMENT. THESE STATISTICS ARE A TESTAMENT TO THE INCREASING SOCIAL AWARENESS OF INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT. WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF THE PENSION PROGRAMS OF FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE ORIGIN WHICH PROVIDE A CONTINUED FLOW OF INCOME TO RETIRED PERSONS, ALLOWING THEM TO MAINTAIN THEIR DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY.

ALL PENSION PLANS, SUCCESSFUL THOUGH THEY ARE, FACE ONE GREAT THREAT: INFLATION.

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- INFLATION IS A THREAT -

INFLATION IS THAT DEBILITATING DISEASE WHICH STRIKES THE OLDER AMERICAN WITH MORE SAVAGERY THAN ANY OTHER SOCIAL GROUP. WE ALL KNOW THE 1939 DOLLAR WILL BUY ONLY 44 CENTS WORTH OF FOOD AND SHELTER TODAY. RETIREMENT PLANS, SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, VETERANS' BENEFITS, AND OTHER PENSIONS MUST BE INSULATED AGAINST THE EROSION OF INFLATION. I MIGHT ALSO ADD IT IS THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT ALL CITIZENS' SAVINGS FROM INFLATION, BUT ESPECIALLY THE SENIOR CITIZEN, WHO DEPENDS MORE THAN ANYONE UPON SAVINGS FOR HIS INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY.

- CHANGE IN ATTITUDE -

AS WE PROCEED IN OUR DISCUSSION TODAY, WE WILL NOTE THE VARIETY AND FLEXIBILITY OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE OLDER GENERATION. WITH THIS VARIETY AND FLEXIBILITY, WE RECOGNIZE A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHALLENGES OF AGE IN AMERICA. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS NO SINGLE "BEST" SOLUTION TO ALL THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY. I HOPE THIS CONFERENCE WILL CONTINUE TO FIND NEW ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY, AND IN SO DOING HELP US REACH AN INCREASED APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE RATHER IMPORTANT ROLE AND DISTINCTION OF BEING A "SENIOR CITIZEN".

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FORTUNATELY FOR ALL OF US, GREATER ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF THE OLDER INDIVIDUAL IS BEING GIVEN, AND WE ARE CASTING ASIDE THE IGNORANT AND FEARFUL STEREOTYPE OF THE DEPENDENT, HELPLESS, AND USELESS OLDER PERSON. MUCH OF OUR DIFFICULTY IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEMS OF GROWING OLDER, I SUSPECT, HAS BEEN CAUSED AND COMPOUNDED BY THE FACT THAT WE VALUE YOUTH AND YOUTHFUL THINGS SO HIGHLY. HOLDING THIS VALUE DEARLY, MANY AMERICANS STILL LOOK UPON THE PROSPECT OF GROWING OLDER AS A DEPRESSING PROSPECT, USUALLY WITHOUT REASON. WISELY, HOWEVER, WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE THAT THE STEREOTYPE OF CONSTANT YOUTH, JUST LIKE THE STEREOTYPE OF OLD AGE, IS AN OUTWORN CONCEPT.

THE ELDERLY HAVE SPECIAL PROBLEMS REQUIRING SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ATTENTION -- OF THIS THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT -- AND WE HAVE INDEED COME A LONG WAY IN FINDING MANY SOLUTIONS TO SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS. WHAT WE HAVE FAILED TO DO IS TO DEFINE THE ROLE THE ELDERLY CAN PLAY IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND NATION AS A WHOLE. TO HELP IN THIS DEFINITION, WE IN THE CONGRESS, AND FOR THAT MATTER THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, ARE TURNING LARGELY TO YOU, SINCE YOU BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE KNOW WHAT IS NEEDED AND THE BEST MANNER IN WHICH WE CAN MEET THESE NEEDS. THIS, THEN, EXPLAINS THE REASON FOR THIS CONFERENCE AND OTHERS BEING PLANNED IN WESTERN KANSAS. I HOPE THEY WILL BE PRODUCTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL AND, ABOVE ALL, BENEFICIAL IN SOME WAY TO YOU.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR COMING.

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