

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL, U.S.A. MEETING
PALMER HOUSE HOTEL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1972

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE INVITATION TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL, U.S.A. AS THE AMERICAN ARM OF THE ONLY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION CONCERNED EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES, REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL, U.S.A. CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE DIRECTION OF REHABILITATION IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE YEARS AHEAD. I AM EAGER TO JOIN IN YOUR WORK, SINCE I HAVE LONG SHARED YOUR DEDICATION TO THE CONCEPTS OF SELF-HELP AND LOCAL INITIATIVE IN THE REHABILITATION OF THE HANDICAPPED.

John Kemp

- Dr. Kuhn (Mrs. Lewis)

- Ideas me in the back

*- Agnew -
Lunch -
Jeff*

Walter Reed

503,000 miles

to the Moon

-2-

GOVERNMENT, OF COURSE, HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN REHABILITATION. IT MUST ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A BROAD VARIETY OF REHABILITATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH EVERY TYPE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISABILITY. THESE SERVICES -- INCLUDING MEDICAL AND RESTORATIVE CARE, EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND TRAINING, AND SOCIAL SERVICES -- MUST BE AVAILABLE IN SUFFICIENT SUPPLY AND VARIETY FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS ACROSS THE LAND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM.

REHABILITATION IN AMERICA

SUCH A PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN OPERATION IN THE UNITED STATES FOR JUST OVER HALF A CENTURY. IN 1920, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE FOUNDING OF YOUR PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATION, CONGRESS ENACTED THE CIVILIAN REHABILITATION ACT, A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM THAT EVENTUALLY EVOLVED INTO THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT. THIS PROGRAM WAS INITIALLY VERY LIMITED. IN 1921, THE FIRST YEAR OF ITS OPERATION, ONLY \$285,000 WAS SPENT ON THE NEW PROGRAM, AND \$93,000 OF THAT CAME FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. ONLY 523 HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS WERE REHABILITATED THAT FIRST YEAR.

-3-

IN CONTRAST, DURING FISCAL YEAR 1971, A TOTAL OF \$631 MILLION WENT INTO THE PROGRAM, WITH \$489 MILLION COMING FROM FEDERAL SOURCES AND MORE THAN 291,000 PERSONS RECEIVING REHABILITATION SERVICES. AND SINCE THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT BECAME LAW ON JUNE 2, 1920, NEARLY THREE MILLION DISABLED PERSONS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.

SINCE ITS 1920 ENACTMENT, THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT HAS BEEN EXTENDED AND AMENDED MANY TIMES. EACH TIME A GREATER NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS HAS BEEN PROVIDED A BROADER VARIETY OF SERVICES.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT VETOED THE 1972 REHABILITATION ACT. HE BASED HIS ACTION ON A NUMBER OF GROUNDS, INCLUDING THE BILL'S DEPARTURE FROM THE BASIC OBJECTIVE OF REHABILITATION INTO NON-VOCATIONAL AND MEDICAL AREAS WITH NARROW, CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS THAT WOULD NOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER PROGRAMS OR WITH THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACT. HE ALSO CITED THE MANY UNNECESSARY AND WASTEFUL FEATURES OF THE BILL, AND ESPECIALLY ITS FUNDING PROVISIONS WHICH GREATLY EXCEED THE AMOUNT THAT CAN BE WISELY AND EFFECTIVELY SPENT IN THIS AREA.

-4-

AS ONE WHO HAS MAINTAINED A PERSONAL AND A LEGISLATIVE INTEREST IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REHABILITATION PROGRAMS, I AM HOPEFUL THAT ONE OF THE FIRST PRIORITIES OF THE NEW CONGRESS WILL BE TO ENACT A RESPONSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE REHABILITATION ACT.

THE CONGRESS HAS AN OBLIGATION TO MEET THIS RESPONSIBILITY AND I WILL DEDICATE MY EFFORTS TO SEEING THAT THE 1973 REHABILITATION ACT IS A CONSTRUCTIVE ADDITION TO THE LONG LINE OF SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATION IN THIS FIELD.

IN AMERICA, WE HAVE A GREAT RECORD OF IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE VITAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY CITIZEN TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING EXISTENCE -- REGARDLESS OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITIES.

GREATER INFORMATION

THE REHABILITATION COMMUNITY OVER THE YEARS HAS DONE A BRILLIANT JOB IN ITS ROLE, BUT THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER TASK AT HAND IN WHICH A GREAT DEAL IS YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. THIS AREA IS INFORMATION -- INFORMATION ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE HANDICAPPED, THE PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THEM, AND THE NECESSITY FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE ENTIRE SOCIETY.

-5-

THERE ARE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF ALL SORTS OF ASSISTANCE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HANDICAPPED -- INCLUDING VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. MILLIONS HAVE BEEN HELPED BUT THERE ARE PROBABLY AS MANY MORE WHO DO NOT KNOW OF SUCH POSSIBILITIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSISTANCE. THEY ARE THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE HANDICAPPED AND THE HANDICAPPED THEMSELVES WHO HAVE FALLEN BY THE WAYSIDE BECAUSE THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

IN RECOGNITION OF THIS NEED, I HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR SEVERAL YEARS TO ESTABLISH A CENTRAL POINT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED WITH THE HANDICAPPED. AFTER HEARING FROM MANY CONSTITUENTS AND INDIVIDUALS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY -- AND AFTER STUDYING A NUMBER OF APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM -- I HAVE PROPOSED THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTER FOR THE HANDICAPPED. THE NATIONAL INFORMATION CENTER, WHEN ESTABLISHED, CAN DO A GREAT DEAL TO CLOSE THE INFORMATION GAP, AND I HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HANDICAPPED.

-6-

A SOUND INVESTMENT

BUT THERE IS ALSO A GREAT DEAL THE REHABILITATION COMMUNITY AND CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE CAN DO -- REGARDLESS OF, AND INDEPENDENT OF, PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY GOVERNMENT. WE MUST GET ACROSS THE MESSAGE THAT REHABILITATION IS A GREAT INVESTMENT IN AMERICA. IT MAY BE SOMEWHAT COSTLY, IT MAY NOT BE HIGHLY VISIBLE OR SENSATIONAL, BUT IT IS NECESSARY, WORTHWHILE AND SUCCESSFUL. AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT OUR WELFARE SYSTEM IS A DISASTER AND A FAILURE, WE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE THAT MANY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, WHOSE GREATEST DESIRE IS TO GAIN A MEASURE OF SELF-RESPECT AND INDEPENDENCE, CAN WITH THE HELP OF REHABILITATION SERVICES, BECOME TAXPAYERS INSTEAD OF PUBLIC WARDS. THEY CAN HAVE MEANINGFUL AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR SOCIETY AND THE WELL-BEING OF OUR NATION. THESE PEOPLE DO NOT ACCOUNT FOR GREAT NUMBERS ON THE WELFARE ROLLS. BUT THEY WANT TO GET OFF THE ROLLS AND CAN DO SO IN A WAY THAT WILL PAY THEM AND THEIR FELLOW TAXPAYING CITIZENS HANDSOME DIVIDENDS.

-7-

A CAMPAIGN FOR ALL SEASONS

REHABILITATION IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS AROUND, AND WE MUST WAGE AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN TO GET THIS MESSAGE ACROSS. IT IS NOT A CAMPAIGN TO GEAR UP FOR EVERY FOUR YEARS OR EVERY TWO YEARS LIKE SOME WE SEE. IT IS A CAMPAIGN FOR ALL SEASONS THAT WE MUST BE PREPARED TO WORK AT ALL THE TIME.

THE MEANS OF BRINGING THIS MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC ARE LIMITED ONLY BY OUR IMAGINATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, JUST LAST MONTH, GOVERNOR DAN EVANS OF WASHINGTON SPENT AN ENTIRE WORKING DAY IN A WHEELCHAIR, SO HE COULD LEARN AT FIRST HAND WHAT THE HANDICAPPED FACE EVERY DAY AND ALSO DRAMATIZE THE NEEDLESS AND THOUGHTLESS OBSTACLES THAT CONFRONT THE HANDICAPPED IN AN INSENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT.

-8-

THE EFFORT TO ELIMINATE ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE DONE AND HOW THE PUBLIC CAN BE REACHED. BUT WE MUST WORK TO MAKE ALL ASPECTS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MORE PROMINENT AND SUCCESSFUL IN OUR SOCIETY. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE GIVEN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SHORT SHRIFT FOR TOO LONG. THE AVERAGE PERSON PROBABLY IS NOT REALLY AWARE THAT IT EXISTS -- NOT UNTIL SOMEONE CLOSE TO HIM NEEDS IT.

ACCESS TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE

BUT THOUGH VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MANY WAYS, WE MUST NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL EVERY SINGLE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NEED OF THESE SERVICES IS ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM. JUST AS WE ARE ELIMINATING ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS, WE MUST REMOVE THE BARRIERS OF IGNORANCE, APATHY AND INSENSITIVITY. AND TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WE MUST MAKE ALL OF LIFE -- AND ITS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, ACCOMPLISHMENT AND FULFILLMENT -- ACCESSIBLE TO HANDICAPPED AMERICANS.

-9-

I BELIEVE THE GREAT ASPECT OF REHABILITATION IS ITS FOCUS ON PEOPLE'S ABILITIES AND TALENTS, NOT THEIR INFIRMITIES AND HANDICAPS. THIS IS IN THE POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE TRADITION WHICH HAS MADE AMERICA THE WONDERFUL LAND OF OPPORTUNITY WHICH WE KNOW TODAY.

AGAIN, LET ME SAY THAT I AM HONORED TO SERVE ON YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND LOOK FORWARD TO PARTICIPATING IN REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL'S EFFORTS TO MAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF AMERICA A REALITY FOR ALL AMERICANS.

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