

TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY UDALL'S
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S
SPEECH AT THE INTERTIE VICTORY BREAKFAST AT THE
SHERATON HOTEL, PORTLAND, ORE., THURSDAY, SEPT. 17, 1964

SECRETARY STEWART L. UDALL:

Our feelings this morning are best expressed by that wonderful song from Oklahoma, "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning."

I want to give you, Mr. President, a very brief report on our meeting this morning. There are in the audience today representatives from all segments of the electric and power industry – the REAs, and the municipalities – the private systems from seven states. We have had a fine breakfast and a morning of fellowship – in fact, the biblical prophecy of the lion and the lamb sitting down together has been fulfilled here this morning. In fact, I can't even tell myself, the difference between the lion and the lamb.

We have also had brief speeches from five people representing the different groups involved in the intertie—Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles; Bob McMullen of Arizona, who is also the president of the American Public Power Association; Don McClung, President of the Pacific Power and Light Company, Portland; John Nelson, Superintendent of Lighting City of Seattle, and Jack Horton, President of the Southern California Edison Company.

Mr. President, this project of linking the resources of different regions together is a fulfillment, really, of a dream which power men have had in the West for many, many years, and therefore this is more than an ordinary fulfillment for all of us here. This is the reason, I am sure, that you will sense a very special spirit present this morning.

I am going in a moment to introduce the distinguished guests travelling with the President, but I am going to take the liberty of intruding on this meeting for one special tribute, that I am sure no one here will resent – in fact everyone here will recognize the appropriateness of it – because in a project of this magnitude there had to be someone who was like a rock. There had to be someone in the middle who, to use the term so familiarized to the American people by President Johnson himself, was capable of getting people to sit down and "reason together." We happen to have such a person, and I know of no one that I have served with the last 31/2 years in the highest offices of Government who is a better public servant, or one who combines the qualities that would enable us to solve a great controversy and put something together. He is a person who was able – because of his intellectual honesty, because of his integrity – to command the respect of everyone who sat around the conference table; and therefore I want to pay that special tribute in the presence of the President to one of his Administrators and one of my Administrators, Mr. Charles Luce, the Bonneville Power Administrator.

I would like to introduce the very distinguished majority leader of the United States Senate, your neighbor, Mike Mansfield, Montana; the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. William Fullbright, Arkansas; and one of the wonderful men of the Senate, Sen. George Aiken, Vermont; and two neighbors here – I am sure they probably have as many friends in the room as anyone – Sen. Warren Magnusson, Washington – and I am sure the other Senators will understand because he's chairman of what to me is the most important committee in the Congress – and no one did more than he on this project – Scoop Jackson, of Washington.

Two other Oregon neighbors, and I'll introduce them together, because they are a great team together – the Senators from Nevada, Allan Bible, and Howard Cannon. And the baby senator from other neighboring state, Pierre Salinger.

I think I should say one other thing before introducing the Oregon delegation – introducing Senator Morse to introduce the President – and that is with all the effort of three and a half years of studies, of negotiations, or arguments that went towards the final compromise, I think it should be recorded here that the President himself played a very major role in this. Not only, Mr. President, the railroad strike that was settled in your office in the White House, because some of us remember two or three meetings in the Oval Room in the President's inner office, where people were told rather directly that if the benefits of this great project for everyone were as good as we were telling him it was, that certainly we could sit down and reason together and we ought to go back and sit down and talk some more. This is what, above all, helped produce this agreement.

Finally, it is a pleasure for me to introduce – let me introduce two other neighbors quickly – both of them from Idaho (the Idaho Senators would not join us) – Congressman Compton I. White is here with us. Congressman White, and my very able Assistant Secretary, John Carver. And we also have from Oregon a very fine freshman Congressman, Bob Duncan; and my congressional classmate – and she is becoming Mrs. Education in Washington – Edith Green; and everybody's favorite senator in Washington, Maurice Neuberger.

(Secretary Udall's' introduction of Senator Morse was obliterated by voice)

SENATOR MORSE:

Mr. Secretary, President, my friends and colleagues from the United States Senate, from the House of Representatives, other distinguished guests, our many visitors, and fellow Oregonians:

It is my distinct privileged and my very high honor to preset to this great audience our honored guest, the great President of the United States.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON

When you travel with Wayne you always have a surprise. I wish he'd made speeches that short in the Senate. And, I might say, that good. Thank you very much, Senator Morse, and Sen. Neuberger and Congressman Green, distinguished member of the Congress, mayors and governors and friends in Portland.

This is a very nice thing for you to do so early in the morning on a rainy morning. I know it took a lot of arranging and a great deal of trouble and a very unusual hospitality. I realize it is your way of showing your respect for the great office I hold, of the President of this country, and I would like for all the people in the Northwest Power Association and the Northwest Electric Light and Power Association to know that I feel a very special debt of gratitude to you for the time you spent and the money you invested in the wonderful public event that you have helped bring about. This is a rather discouraging occasion, however, when I think of all the effort it took to turn off the few lights in the White House in Washington, and here you all are trying to settle your differences and are turning on millions of lights all over the country every day.

In 1844 a fiery young orator warned "make way for the young American buffalo. We'll give him Oregon for his summer shade, and the region of Texas for his winter pasture." Well, it's wonderful to be here in Oregon with you this morning. But I want it distinctly understood I'm not ready for any Texas pasture.

Yesterday, in a few hours, I swept across a continent it took decades of daring to conquer. It took brave men and strong men to make that crossing. Most of all, it took men of faith...men of great faith in themselves and their country and the future of this land.

So today, we inhabit a continent made fertile by that act of faith. Napoleon truly said when he sold Louisiana, "This accession of territory consolidates the power of the United States forever."

But it was not territory that made us great. It was men. Our West is not just a place. The West is an idea.

The Bible says, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee."

Here, in the West, we learned man's possibilities were as spacious as the sky that covered him. We learned that free men could build a civilization as majestic as the mountains and rivers that nourished him. We learned that with our hands we could create a life worthy of the land that was ours. And that lesson has illuminated the life of all America – East, and West, and North and South. This gathering, I think, this morning is further proof of that.

Your work is a more powerful instrument of freedom than a thousand shouted threats and warnings. In far off countries men will look here and learn again that the path of free men is the surest path to progress.

Here in the Northwest, America is moving again and all the world knows it. This inertia which is the result of so many brains and so much work and such great effort is the most exciting transmission system in history. It will make us world leaders in direct-current transmission. It will carry from the Peace River to the Mexican border enough power for five San Franciscos.

So I come here to tell you and to tell each of you that all America is proud of all of you.

I am glad to see this cooperation of private power with public power. The public power yardstick is essential. Private power will always play a substantial and a vital role in the future of this great land.

This system is also proof of the power of cooperation and unity. You have proved that if we turn away from division – if we just ignore dissention and distrust there is no limit to our achievements – and I am going to interpolate a moment here to tell you an experience I had as a young man trying to reconcile the views of the leaders of public and private power in my state.

We had a great man who happened to be a spokesman for Electric Bond and Share who was president of one of our great power companies, and he looked just like a Methodist deacon.

He sat back and was dignified, a very attractive man, a very pure individual, very cautious in what he said. I negotiated with him for three days and I never made a dent in his armor. He was looking at those stockholders and he almost looked at me with what I thought was contempt.

Finally I got up in my youthful enthusiasm and some impulsiveness I'm very much against these days, and I said, "So far as I am concerned you can take a running jump and go straight to you know where."

The old gentlemen didn't get the slightest bit rattled, just looked back and smiled, and said, "I'm sorry you feel that way, young man, we've got to do things as we see them, we are men of convictions and we've got to carry out our views, and do for our stockholders what we think we ought to do."

All of my REA and public power people applauded me and said it was a great speech and I started out of the room. They all stood, and as I walked up to the door I saw an old man there and that was the general counsel for the water district. He was an ex-senator and I said, "Senator, how did you like my speech?" He said, "Well, come by the office and I'd like to talk to you about it." I said, "Oh-oh."

So I went by and he said, “You’re in public life, young man, just starting out – I want to see you move along and do well. The first thing you’ve got to learn, son, is that to tell a man to go to Hell and make him go are two different propositions.”

He said, “Mr. Carpenter doesn’t want to go, and this is a free country and he’s going to stay around here and he thinks its pretty hot down there, and he doesn’t elect to take your choice.” He said, “it took me two months to get this group together and you bust it up in two minutes, and I am just going to have to work now until we can get together again.”

I follow the advice of the Prophet Isaiah, “Come, now, let us reason together,” and many, many times in the Senate and other places of responsibility where I have served, I have harked back to that day in that little court room where I expressed my views to the president of that power company. And lots of times I didn’t get up and tell Bob Taft what I thought about his views and where he ought to go, nor Bill Knowland, nor Everett Dirksen, nor even some of my Democratic friends, from time to time.

But I never could forget what that old, wise, general counsel said to me – “telling ‘em to go and making ‘em go are two different propositions.”

I do want you to know, though, that by your reasoning together, by your cooperating together for the benefit of all – I think that is true conservation and this is the kind of conservation action that your government is going to continue to provide leadership for.

I grew up on the land. The life of my parents depended entirely upon the bounty of the soil. I have devoted much of my public life to protecting for our children the great legacy of our natural abundance.

So I come to report to you that we have not just talked about progress in this field – we have made progress, and we are at the close of the greatest conservation Congress in the history of the United States of America.

The 88th Congress has passed more than 30 important conservation bills.

A new Land and Water Conservation Fund will help states and cities set aside spots of beauty for recreation and pleasure.

A Wilderness Act will guarantee all Americans the natural magnificence which has been your heritage.

Water Research and Planning bills will speed development for the soaring water needs in this great, growing nation.

We established continental America’s first new National Park in 17 years – twenty-three new national park areas – and four National Seashores -- and a national riverway.

We began the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation so that our children will have a place to hunt and fish and glory in nature.

We began construction of over 200 water resource projects with about 70 more scheduled for 1965.

We built or began more than 5500 miles of transmission lines in this great land.

Flood control funds were increased by more than 50 per cent.

All this we have done more, and I pledge you that my Administration is going to continue with this problem.

But we must do more than continue – our problems are changing, and we must change to meet them.

Three changing forces are bringing a new era to conservation.

The first is growing population. By the year 2000, more than 300 million Americans will need ten times the power and 2-1/2 times the water we now consume. Increasing pressure will take our resources and increasing leisure will tax our recreation.

The second is the triumph of technology. The bright success of science also has had a darker side. The waste products of our progress from exhaust fumes to radiation, maybe one of the deadliest threats to nature that we have ever known.

The third force is urbanization. More of our people are crowding into cities and cutting themselves off from nature. Access to beauty is denied and ancient values are destroyed. Conservation must move from nature's wilderness to the man-made wilderness of our cities.

And all of this requires a new conservation.

We must not only protect from destruction, but we have the job of restoring what has already been destroyed – not only develop our resources but create new ones – not only save the countryside but finally salvage the cities.

It is not just the classic conservation of protection and development, but it's a creative conservation of restoration and innovation.

Its concern is not with nature alone, but with the total relation between man and the world around him. Its object is not just man's welfare, but the dignity of spirit.

Above all, we must maintain the chance for contact with beauty. When that chance dies a light dies in all of us.

Thoreau said: “A town is saved not more by the righteous man in it than by the woods that surround it.” And Emerson taught: “There is no police so effective as a good hill and a wide pasture.”

We are the creation of our environment. If it becomes filthy and sordid, then the dignity of the spirit and the deepest of our values immediately are in danger.

In the development of a new conservation I intend to press ahead on five fronts.

First, we seek to guarantee our children a place to walk and play and commune with nature. The demand on our recreation facilities is doubling each decade. We must act boldly or our future will be barren.

We will more vigorously under our recent laws to acquire and develop new areas for recreation for this country – emphasizing areas of concentrated population.

And we will be ready to expand our programs to meet developing needs.

A National program of scenic parkways and scenic riverways is on the horizon.

I hope, for instance, to make the Potomac a conservation model for our metropolitan areas.

In our cities open space must be reserved where possible, and created where preservation comes too late.

Second, we must control waste products of technology.

The air we breathe, the water we drink, our soil and our wildlife are all being blighted by the poisons and the chemicals, and the inevitable waste products of modern life. The skeletons of discarded cars – old-young cars – litter our countryside – and are driving my wife mad. She thinks one of the advantages of getting defeated is to give her some time to get out and do something about cleaning up the country side of these old junk yards along our beautiful driveways.

I intend to work with local government and industry to develop a national policy for the control and disposal of technological and industrial waste and I will work with them to carry out that kind of policy.

Only in this way, I think, can we rescue the oldest of our treasures from the newest of our enemies.

Third, we must increase mastery over our environment through the marvels of new technology.

This means rapidly increasing emphasis on comprehensive river basin development. So we plan to cooperate at every level to develop the resources and to preserve the values of entire regions of this land.

It means drawing on fresh water from the oceans. Within a few years, economic desalinization will be a reality for a large number of Americans.

It means learning to understand the weather and to do something about it.

The advance notice that we got on the hurricane Carla saved thousands of lives and millions of dollars.

It means the use in every field of the newest knowledge to meet the oldest needs. It means encouraging the development of the genius of man in order to unlock the secrets of the earth.

Fourth, we must prevent urbanization and growth from ravaging the land. I will suggest in cooperation with local government and private industry policies for such preservation. Their goal will be to insure that suburban building, highway construction, industrial spread are conducted with reverence and with the proper regard for the values of nature.

Fifth, we must conduct conservation on a global scale.

The Antarctic Treaty, weather and fishery agreements, the treaty with Canada we celebrated yesterday, are all examples of what can be done if nations will devote common effort to common interest.

These are some of the fronts of the new conservation which I will work to carry forward, and I tell you now that this hope will always be among the closest to my heart.

From the beginning we have been a people of open spaces. We have lifted our eyes to the deserts and mountains, and now we lift them up to the stars. But on this earth the ring draws closer around us.

So let us not leave our task with the reproach of our children already ringing in our ears.

Far, far too much is at stake.

They are the resources on which our future rests.

But there is a good deal more than that. In a thousand unseen ways we have drawn shape and strength from the land. Respect for man and reverence for God have taken root in our spacious soil. In isolation from nature lies the danger of man's isolation from his fellow and from his creator.

All my life I have drawn sustenance from the rivers and from the hills of my native state. I do not see them so often any more these days and I am lonesome for them most constantly. But their message of love and challenge is written in my spirit and I want no less for all the children of America, than I was privileged to have as a boy.

In the book of Matthew it says the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded upon rock. The House of America is founded upon our land and if we kept that whole, then the storm can rage, but the house will stand forever.

This morning you have an unusual assemblage in this room. I was escorted to the dais by your progressive young Republican Governor. I was met by your cordial, hospitable Mayor.

I flew across the continent with a number of outstanding leaders of Congress in the House and Senate. You have an unusual quality of leadership in this great Northwest.

We celebrated some of the fruits of that planning yesterday in Canada – fruits of the work of men like the two great Senators from Washington and this wise federal legislator from Vermont, George Aiken, who sits in the front and does me great honor by coming to this area of the nation with me.

Oregon, Washington, California, Montana – all the great West is here this morning – not to just talk about the glories of the past, but to try to pull all the talent of this great region together to undertake an adventure of tomorrow.

I first came to Portland as a youngster fresh out of uniform in the early days of the war to scrap the Battleship Oregon, and I saw then all the hope and the daring and the idealism and the spirit of conservation that I have observed reflected by your spokesmen in the halls of the House of Representatives and in the Senate.

We have come a long way in those 20 odd years, but we haven't gone near far enough and the eyes of the nation are looking to you to provide the leadership that will not make this just the best conservation Congress we have ever had, but that will help us to bring our dreams of a more beautiful America, safer America, a healthier America, available to our children as it has been available to us.

Thank you very much for your wonderful hospitality.