INTERVIEWEE: MARY D. KEYSERLING (Tape 2)

INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. McCOMB

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M: You were going to say something about President Johnson.

K: Yes. I felt that when we talked last week that I hadn't been specific enough in reading into the record additional comments which in these past five years I've heard President Johnson make that are indicative of his enduring, continuing, and strong concern for the advancement of the position of women in our society. And while others may document this, and surely a part of the record is in his public papers, it might be helpful to the future historian to have some of these statements assembled together in one place with the references marked so that the researcher can pull these together more easily.

I remember last week I mentioned the Cabinet meeting in January 1964, when the President expressed his intent to appoint more women to top jobs in the public service. I will read into the record this one very brief quote from his statement then. The quote is: "The day is over when top jobs are reserved for men." And it was then that he announced his intent to appoint the fifty additional women to government posts.

And a quote that I like especially is the following, when he announced the names of the first additional women to be appointed, because it's so typical. It's serious and it's light; it gets at the essence of the story. He said, "I would like at this time to make a policy announcement." And he paused, and he said, "I am unabashedly in favor of women. I'm insisting that women play a larger role in this

government's plans and progress." Then he spoke of his intent to bring increasing numbers of women of imagination and energy to the fore.

Last week I said that there had been perhaps around three hundred women appointed. I have checked my records and find that just between January 1 of '64 and the end of December '65, that one hundred new appointments of women had been made to top posts. Then in '66 and '67 this continued. There were well over three hundred appointments, as far as I can find, but the full record was not kept, and I hope that for the historians of the future, when we have another President, if we're lucky enough to do so, with this concern for the full utilization of our human resources, that full records will be kept. But the executive agencies in that first two-year period appointed eight hundred eighty-nine women to top level jobs and promoted 2,698 at salary levels of $10,600 and above. And I found it interesting that in those first two years, which told the story of what was to come true, that of the twenty-two top women in the Executive Branch, thirteen were appointed in that early period.

M: This would indicate that the President was serious in his policy.

K: That he was serious; that he was continuous; that he meant business; that he was not following in the footsteps of those who were making rather feministic speeches merely about rights. What he was saying was that he was concerned with the human beings who comprise this country. He wanted to find the means to use their talents. He recognized that what he could do in this appointive role was relatively small, necessarily, but that it could be symbolic to business everywhere. What he could do in one area, others could also do.. The talent is there; it should be drawn on. To the extent that the talent isn't there, but is a potential, it should be released. It must be found and trained.

M: Let me ask you this. Do you think this policy will have lasting effects after the retirement of the President?

K: Yes. You asked whether this will have lasting effects. It will surely, because a new point of view emerged and was really reinforced in these past five years. A new approach to meeting the needs of women in our society has emerged. The emphasis was very largely on correcting under-utilization. It turned from mere declaration of rights to the actual opening of the doors of opportunity. There was still much door-opening to be done, and it was done through law. But it was also--"Let's find out why people aren't going through those doors and if there are barriers that are keeping them from realizing the opportunities now released through change in law. Let's meet those problems specifically."

The President, for instance, in February of 1966, as I think I mentioned last week, called to his office on February 28 the winners of the Federal Women's Awards. He didn't have to do this; we had had a program for some years honoring the five women in the federal service who each year were voted the most outstanding in their contribution to the country. He took it upon himself in '66 to call the winners to his office--those who had previously been awarded this distinction--to speak to them. And he said that he was pleased to welcome them and proud to congratulate them. Then he talked of the situation that women confront. He said, "Today, millions of bright young women would like to train for professional careers, and we discourage them. Today, millions of mothers seek gainful employment to provide a better life for their children, and yet we discriminate against them. Today, millions of women with grown children seek new meaning in their lives through a second career, and we ignore them." And then he talked of how the Federal government had sought to correct this situation within its own ranks. And he mentioned

his appointive policy and the affirmative emphasis of the federal agencies.

Then he pointed to the need of our society for additional school teachers, specialists in the health services, in science, engineering, in state and local employment. He said that the requirements in these fields alone will be 110,000 additional trained specialists every month for the next ten years. So that on the one hand, he looked at the under-utilization of women and said this: "The under-utilization of American women continues to be the most tragic and the most senseless waste of this century."

And then turning to this huge demand for skilled people, people of ability, he said, "This under-utilization is a waste we can no longer afford." And this is a kind of emphasis that I don't think we had heard from Presidents in years gone by. He spoke of the fact that this need for specialists can't be met by men alone; that unless we begin now to open more and more professions to our women and unless we can begin now to train more of our women to enter these professions, then the needs of our nation just are not going to be met.

This philosophy has been picked up and emphasized by his Cabinet members. And I don't think that they would have done it without this firm expression on the part of the President; perhaps some would have, but it wouldn't have been a universal thing. The members of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women are Cabinet members. Secretary Wirtz is the chairman; Mr. Macy, the Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission, is one of its members. The members of this group have taken their responsibilities very seriously. They have asked all of the agencies to report on the number of women in their employ by grade; they have asked for periodic reports; they have set up a

system for periodic review to ascertain whether we are getting the kind of progress that we ought to get. They're by no means satisfied with the rate of progress. We've had a very great increase in the number and proportion of women in the lower and the middle grades; we've made great improvement with respect to the Federal Entrance Examinations--which we call FSEE. This is an exam that young college graduates take, and then appointments are made from the list of those who do well.

In 1963 when President Johnson took office, 18 percent of the successful applicants, that is, those appointed from the exam, were women. In '67 it was 37 percent. This is an expression again of the results of this emphasis.

Let me just mention one or two other things that are indicative of the President's attitude, because this should be pulled together in one place as part of the record. I mentioned the fact that we in the Women's Bureau had taken upon ourselves the responsibility for trying to encourage the states to appoint Commissions on the Status of Women. This had been one of the recommendations of the President's Commission, urging the legislatures and the governors to set up groups that would do for each of their states what the President's Commission had done for the nation. By a little more than a year ago, every state in the union, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Island, and Puerto Rico, and two municipalities had appointed commissions. They have made a very real contribution, and I think I discussed this last week.

But in 1964 we had a first conference of these commissions and brought them to Washington. And in the summer of '65 we had a second conference; and the summer of '66 we had a third, of representatives from these state commissions. But indicative of the President's interest in this full utilization of the skills of women in the economy, fuller

drawing on their leadership capacities, he invited the delegates to the White House. And in our report, for instance, just to illustrate for the second conference of 1965 which is entitled "Progress and Prospects," we summarized the remarks of the President to the conference participants. And this is indicative of his thinking, and I think it belongs in the record.

"While we seek to advance women to their rightful place at the top of this ladder, of the ladders of this society, we must never forget and never neglect those women who stand insecurely and uncertainly on the lower rungs. I think especially of the mothers who face the uncertainties of the market-place--the heartbreaking dilemmas of impoverished households, without training, often without motivation, very often without even the barest decencies of life or even the emotional support of a husband." And he went on to talk of the responsibility that he assumes as President to meet these needs. In other words, he was calling on this advantaged group of women as they talked of the problems of women to exercise their leadership in helping to meeting the problems not only of the women who most needed help, but of all people in need. He urged them to constitute themselves as a force in our society for the war on poverty which he instituted and which has made such fantastic headway under his leadership. I'd like to speak of that a little later.

He made another comment to the women that year. "The one thing I need from you more than anything else, aside from your leadership in your local communities, is for you to take your eyes and your ears and your head and your heart and your heels and try to develop for me the most outstanding women in this country who could be available to lead the people of this country. There are places that we need to fill if we could only find the brilliant, the trained, those with heart and mind,

who are there but whom we haven't been able to put our fingers on. You can do that for me. If you don't get the proper kind of response from me, take it up with Lady Bird because she and Liz Carpenter mount that door all the time, and put questionnaires to me about what I have been doing for women lately." And I think that's a touching, sweet, a sincere expression of deep concern. I marked just one--you know, it's hard to select from his many remarks. Everything he said seems to me to be so moving and so right in this area.

Also, as an indication of the President's thinking, I would refer anyone to the report of the third conference in June of '66 called "Targets for Action." And, again, his words deeply moved the three or four hundred people who came from all over the country, as he talked of the opportunities and the responsibilities of leadership. What he chose to talk about is interesting. By that time we'd had forty-eight state commissions, and he talked of their work helping to erase inequities before the law. He talked of the laws. He said two hundred eighty-four state statutes passed last year were passed to improve the civil and political status of women. He talked of what they, the commissions, were doing for beautification, for continuing education for women. But he spoke especially of women volunteering to help with Head Start. Perhaps when I finish this section I would like to just say a few words on some of the things he has stimulated women to do, encouraged them to do, in relation to the war on poverty, and about the creation of a new spirit of involvement which women share, I think, as never before. There has never been a period in American history when so many women, and men too, have said, "The problems which this nation confront are problems I want to help solve through my own activity." And as I'll point out in a few minutes, there were, according to our last study,

over thirteen million women volunteering in community service in the course of the year in which this study was made, and it's much more now. And I think that this has been one of the healthiest, soundest, and most creative aspects of the President's challenge to the American people to war on poverty.

These are just a few examples of what the President has had to say. This has been a documented review, but that was not what I think you asked me to do, but just to speak from the heart about my own experience.

Now, in terms of the war on poverty, the accomplishments will be certainly a part of this record. But I meet with women's groups all over the country. This has become a profound concern of every responsible women's group. That was not true in years gone by. One of my early jobs when I left college teaching in the late thirties was to set up a committee of public spirited people--I was then the Executive Director of the National Consumers League--to try to get them to lend their support to the passage of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act. We were seeking to get that bill through, which started with the assurance of a 25¢ an hour minimum wage to rise to 40¢ an hour in three years. It's dreadful to even think back and realize that this could have been as great a gain as it was. And the bitterness and resistance to these meager wage rates we encountered were so incredible. I went to many women's groups to urge their support. Some, yes, would support it. Many refused. But today, and I'm not going to name them, many of the groups that would not lend a hand then, have made this battle of national effort to assure all people minimum living standards--the good way of life our nation is now able to provide all our people--one of their real causes.

M: Do you think women are more concerned with that than men are?

K: Yes, without any doubt. Partly because of the leadership of their own organizations. Let me illustrate. Five women's organizations have grouped together to form WICS (Women in Community Service), and this largely--this was something that the President and Mrs. Johnson were very interested in at the very start. When the war on poverty started, as you remember, it included the Job Corps programs for boys and girls. We had a problem when the Job Corps was started--how we would recruit the young women for the Job Corps. It was to be a relatively small group--the Job Corps has never been very large--but it was to be a creative, exciting, wonderful experience for girls in poverty and out of school, out of work--the most disadvantaged. And our unemployment among this group has been the highest of any group in the country. Our young people have suffered three times the rate of unemployment, which generally prevails, and it's stayed fairly consistently three times the average overall rate. And our young girls, particularly the minority girls, have suffered higher rates of unemployment than the young men of the same age. And we've all been deeply concerned with this, seeing in the Neighborhood Youth Corps, or Job Corps, and opportunity to give these young women--these wonderful young women--a toehold on the ladder of opportunity. That's the birthright of every boy and girl in America.

How were we to recruit? The National Council of Negro Women, the National Council of Catholic Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Churchwomen United, grouped themselves together in Women in Community Service--a new national grouping--to undertake the task of recruiting young women. I can remember when we went over to the White House and met with Mrs. Johnson to talk of the possibility of this kind of assistance through volunteer involvement and participation on the part of women and how much encouragement and support she gave us.

The YWCA has also played an extremely important role, first, in signing a contract with the Economic Opportunity Office to develop one of the most productive of the Job Corps centers, located in Los Angeles. They have also involved their people in another area of responsibility; they've opened their residences to girls who've graduated from the Job Corps. I think it is twenty-eight--it may be a larger number now--of their residence halls have opened their doors to young girls who've been trained in the Job Corps, where they live with girls who've been more advantaged than they. YWCA members work with the Job Corps graduates and help them find jobs and become oriented to their new life. The girls feel that they have new friends and counselors. One could talk literally for hours about the very wide range of volunteer programs in which virtually all of our women's organizations are now engaged, many of them relating to ways in which they can assist in helping to lift people from deprivation.

M: Excuse me a minute. When you say YW--

K: The Young Women's Christian Association.

M: The YWCA.

K: The YWCA. But the multiplicity of programs is really impressive. You read the literature of the women's organizations today, and it's a literature of concern and of responsibility; of, "How can I serve? How can I be involved?" I spoke of a study of volunteers which we made in the Department of Labor; we're just getting it ready now for publication. The survey related to 1965, and we found that during the year ending November 1965, over thirteen million women had done volunteer work in community service, excluding church activities. This was in the area of social service, related to schools and hospitals, and the whole range of lending a hand to one's fellow human beings. The number would be far

greater now, because at that time, Head Start had barely gotten started. And it's been the women volunteers who have manned--so largely made possible the work of Head Start.

Here is another example of just one group here in the city of Washington, a Women's Club with some fifteen hundred women. For many years it had two meetings a week to listen to speakers. With the advent of President Johnson's poverty program, they too picked up the challenge and organized a community service program which within a year had mobilized between three and four hundred of their women in significant volunteer community activities. I think that this quality of leadership has produced a response that will have lasting implications.

Some people will say, "It's fine to organize women and send them down to the juvenile court to lend a hand to the young people in trouble with the law, who may not understand what they're told and who need the compassionate guidance of the non-professional who can interpret and who can give warmth. But that doesn't solve the poverty problem." I've had people tell me this. I've had people tell me, "But going in and teaching a child in the seventh grade as you taught your own children to read and write doesn't solve the poverty problem." No, it doesn't, but it involves literally millions of people in a helpful relationship; individuals will have larger opportunity because of it. But more importantly--I don't know that it's more important, as important, people who've led sheltered lives who now in our affluent society don't know what it means to encounter hard, economic problems, begins to appreciate their magnitude and lend support to the kinds of programs which President Johnson and his Cabinet and the Vice President and others in the Administration have sought to advance. I don't think we can go backward now very easily.

M: So this will have--

K: It will have a lasting effect. You asked, do women feel differently about the issues? This is a tense moment; a very important election will be held next Tuesday. Many of us are deeply concerned by the fact that so many Americans, as some of the polls have indicated, have fallen for the simplistic approach of Mr. Wallace--the easy answer that has no substance. I was glad to see that according to the polls, when the interest in Mr. Wallace's candidacy was at its height, the proportion of women who were appealed to by his approach was about half the proportion of the men. This, I found very encouraging because it meant to me that women through their own organizations had, one, learned a great deal about the issues; two, learned about the facts; and, three, developed a concern and a compassion which wouldn't allow them to succumb to the kind of philosophy that Mr. Wallace has been expressing.

For instance, when the Civil Rights Bill was pending--the Civil Rights Act of 1964--over two hundred women's organizations banded together to lend their voluntary support, spending time and money to talk to their own members and others--to say, "This is what matters to women," and to work for the bill's passage. And then to ask, once it was passed, "How can we, through our own conduct in our own community, bridge the gap between peoples? How can we lessen tensions, lessen discrimination, exemplify in our relations the concepts embodied in this bill? I think discrimination no longer has a place in our life.

M: Do you think that employer attitudes will eventually change along these lines?

K: They're changing very rapidly. There are tremendous gains being made.

M: Can you see this in your tenure of office?

K: Oh, indeed I can. Just let me take this one figure which illustrates it.

I mentioned last week when you were here that women are highly concentrated in the lowest paying jobs. On the whole, our non-white people are much more concentrated in less skilled jobs than whites. One measure of where you are in the economic structure, of course, is your wage. And we like, in the Bureau, to look at the median earnings of people and follow the trends, in median wages. Back in 1940 the median wages of non-white women--working year round and full time--as I remember the figure, and I'll check this--I couldn't be prepared for everything that you might ask me--was about 37 percent of the median earnings of white women working year round, full time. Since 1940, the real earnings of non-white women have more than quadrupled. And by "real," of course, I mean wages after adjustment for price rises. Median earnings of all white people, men and women, have about doubled. In other words, the Negro woman, being the lowest paid of all workers, gained the most. She needed it most. The median earnings of non-white men who work year round full time, as I remember the figure, increased about three-and-a-half fold.

M: Not quite as much.

K: No quite as rapidly. But the median earnings of the Negro man are far higher than the median earnings of white women, or of the non-white ones. The point I'm making is that the gap between the earnings of the non-white man and the white man have been closing, not by any means fast enough, but closing. And the median earnings of the non-white woman have closed very rapidly. And the last time I looked at the figures, the differential was something--the non-white woman's median earnings, referring only to people who work year round full time--was about 70 percent of those of the white woman. A gap remains but it is far narrower than it used to be. Now, the remaining gap is a reflection

of the kinds of jobs the two groups hold. It isn't a difference in wages for the same kind of work. It means that there's a larger percentage of the Negro--non-white women--in domestic work, which is lower paid, and in some of the service industries and trades which are lower paying and somewhat smaller percentage in the higher and more advantaged occupations.

M: You're saying that this closing of the gap, say, between non-white women and white women--

K: And non-white men and white men--

M: --is due to an upgrading in their jobs--

K: It's due to tremendous improvement in education; to a very rapid increase in proportionate numbers entering college; to tremendous change, especially in these most recent years, in discrimination in employment.

M: It's not just a simple raise in wages?

K: Oh, by no means. It's where you are in the total job structure. It's the kind of job that you hold; it's the kind of educational opportunity; and our training programs have sought to compensate for disadvantage--that is, to include a larger percentage of non-whites than their ratio in the population, because their need is the greater.

M: Have the number of household workers decreased?

K: The number hasn't decreased; the number is about the same as in 1940. But the percentage of all working women who are household workers in the total labor force has diminished. We still have about two million women in household employment. This is a group of wage earners with whom we in the Women's Bureau have been deeply concerned. We find, when we make our studies, that the household worker who works year round and full time--and year round is fifty weeks or more; full time is thirty-five hours a week or more--averages about--the latest figures

were something like $1200 a year--about $100 a month. It's a very disadvantaged occupation. It lacks dignity. The very first weeks that I came to the Bureau after I had been appointed, I asked myself what more we in the Bureau could do to try to upgrade this occupation. And in this work we have had the interest and support of the entire Administration. Let me just try to describe it very briefly.

We knew that the upgrading of this occupation couldn't be done by a small staff in the Labor Department; that it was a task that should really challenge women everywhere--and men too. We called together representatives of perhaps fifteen, sixteen national organizations and stated the facts; the fact that these women are not covered by most of the legislation others enjoy--minimum wage laws, for instance. Only one state gives them minimum wage protection.

M: What state is that?

K: Wisconsin. And two states came close to it but backed away. Wages are lower. Hours are long. The occupation needs redignification. All work should give one a sense of satisfaction that it's honorable, that it's good; that you can take pride in it; it's needed. Some people said to us, "Don't try to redignify this occupation. Take women out of it." But we wouldn't turn our backs on the two million women who were employed in it. Nor could we ignore the fact that many households can provide a rewarding field of employment for women; that many women are household oriented in their interests and skills. This is a needed type of work, so it has the two angles. Well, we called our organization friends together--largely representatives of women's groups but there were several organizations that were civic organizations--and put the problem to them. We asked them whether they wouldn't want to make a survey of attitudes, to try to understand the attitudes of both the

employees--the problems as they saw them--and the problems that employers have in this field. Many employers complain, "People aren't responsible anymore; the work doesn't get done well; I won't pay more because it isn't worth more; the whole attitude of people toward their jobs has changed." We thought they might accept the challenge and involve their members in a relatively small attitudinal survey. They said they would like to. We worked with them, gave them help with the drafting of a questionnaire. Organization members interviewed, as I remember, about 50,000 people, dividing the work among the members of the various organizations. They did not try to do a definitive Census Bureau type of study, but tried to get a sense of what the problem is. What the needs are. To become involved. Out of this came a much deeper sense of the importance of doing something to improve the status of the occupation. And the groups themselves undertook, as a result of the consultation that we held together and their work, to form a National Committee on Household Employment.

M: Where was this survey?

K: This was back in--well it was done in 1965.

M: Where?

K: The first consultation was held in 1964 in the spring shortly after I came to the Bureau. The survey was undertaken in many parts of the country, later that year.

M: It was not just in one city then?

K: No, not at all. No, the national organizations divided the job up and sent the questionnaires out to their membership. And the project helped develop a new kind of interest in household employment. It spread awareness of the problem. Magazine writers took it up. Three or four of the leading, very large circulation magazines ran feature articles

on household employment. The National Committee on Household Employment was founded--it now has twenty-two national member organizations. It was soon recognized that one of the approaches that we needed was training; that if you could give people in household employment a higher degree of training, perhaps even certification, that this would add to the dignity of the work. It would also mean that employers would be willing to pay higher wages for highly skilled workers. This would help.

I won't go into blow-by-blow detail, but the net result was the presentation of demonstration training programs by the new National Committee to the Labor Department with a request for the funding of seven different types of training programs to show us what's useful, what can be done, the best way to do it, to try to demonstrate approaches which others could follow. And funds were granted. We saw the possibility of expanded commercial enterprise in this field. Could business firms be formed--small business firms--of people who would themselves provide service? Two or three men and perhaps an equal number of women might be able to get a small business loan and set up a small corporation. This would give a sense of status and dignity, create an enterprise; they could do work on a contract basis, and be bonded. We saw, too, the possibility for organizing cooperatives in this field. The business approach meets needs which are house-oriented rather than people-related. Where the work to be done is people-related, you can't come in, do the job, and get out in an hour or two. But it's cleaning, scrubbing, and window washing, and all the hard cleaning jobs which especially are needed by the larger number of women who are working, which business firms can do. After all, I mentioned last week that half of our adult women between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five are now in the labor

force. And many of them need some assistance at home if they're to do their work outside of the home. And this kind of assistance would meet a tremendous volume of need which now creates a very real problem.

People-oriented jobs are something else; that is, care of children or the elderly.

M: This is one of your problems in household work, however--contact with the employer. I mean, how do you contact an individual woman who hires another woman, say, once a week? How do you reach this employer to make her aware of the problems of the maid or whoever comes in?

K: Well, that was where we felt the national organizations had a special contribution to make. Their national magazines posed the problem to their members. One State Commission on the Status of Women got very interested and drew up a code of what makes an employer a good employer; what's a fair employment code? This was the Minnesota Commission. The code was adopted by the National Committee on Household Employment, and has been very widely distributed. In other words, it says to the woman who is an employer, "Think about what makes you a good employer. Do you give clear assignments? Is the work week reasonable? Do you delegate responsibility? Do you stand over your employee? Do you pay fair wages?" Educating women who employ household assistants as to good employment policy was regarded as an important challenge.

M: How about Social Security payments?

K: This is very important. "Do you pay the Social Security? Do you help your employee understand the importance of Social Security for her own retirement?"

M: Is the avoidance of paying Social Security a wide practice?

K: It's quite widespread but is diminishing. More and more people appreciate that unless they are on Social Security lists, they will not be

able, when they retire, to have the benefits to which they are entitled. But there's continuing education needed.

M: Were your demonstration training programs--did they result in a permanent training program anywhere?

K: It's too early to say whether this will happen. We think it will, because six of the seven training projects are still in process and we're learning from them. We have a lot to learn, but our object is to find the way in which training programs can best be developed--curricula, if you will, developed which others can then adopt and use without federal financing.

M: Is this related in any way to the Job Corps?

K: No, it has not been.

M: Could it be?

K: It could be. We have felt that in our Neighborhood Youth Corps programs, in the Job Corps, and in vocational training in the schools, we could do a great deal more than we have been doing to include household employment as a desirable field of work. It also should be viewed as a stepping stone to related careers. One can move from being a waitress to being a caterer; from being a child care assistant to being, with additional training, a semi-professional in the field, and even to being a fully qualified professional; to go from home related jobs to institutional jobs that are very much the same. We have been successful in recent years in creating a new "Homemaker" occupation, which is an adjunct to the social service field. This is, after all, household employment. But this is a coveted field of work; it pays well; people feel that it has great dignity. Homemakers are employed by social service agencies to go into a household where the mother may be ill or in the hospital to tide the family over; to give the family all the

attention it needs--maybe cleaning, maybe cooking, maybe child-care, but being the substitute during the period of crisis. And it has great dignity. So that we know we can do a lot to add to the quality of this occupation.

I might add, Mrs. Willard Wirtz, the wife of the Secretary of Labor, consented to serve as honorary chairman of the Household Employment Committee. She has been very much more than an honorary chairman and has taken this as a very serious assignment. She has, in fact, been a participating chairman. She attended a meeting that we had in Chicago not long ago, attended by representatives of a wide range of groups in the community. We hope many similar conferences will be held in other parts of the country to ask what can be done through the schools, through vocational training, through the settlement houses which might work with low-income people in helping them to set up cooperative ventures by reaching out to employers to help change attitudes, and in many other ways to redignify household employment. So that this has been one of the interesting ventures of these years.

M: Does Day Care have any relation to this?

K: It has a very real relationship. The expansion and improvement of child-care services is an area of major concern of this Administration. President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson have frequently expressed their active interest in this particular problem. At the present time--

M: Excuse me, we might clear up just what "Day Care" means? This would be for working women, not only people employed in household employment, but--

K: By "Day Care" we mean the care of children outside their own homes--not necessarily the children of working mothers, but also children of economically disadvantaged families; and those who can benefit by the developmental opportunities good day care affords.

M: But this would be a service not only for employment in low-paying jobs [but also] all the way up to career women in high-paying jobs, is that right?

K: Day Care services also serve these women, yes.

M: Care for their children?

K: Well, let me explain what the problem is. We've had, as I told you, a doubling of the number of women at work since 1940. But because the jobs have been there, mothers have worked increasingly. Actually there has been more than a seven-fold increase in the employment of mothers of children under the age of eighteen. We now have over five million children under the age of six whose mothers work. Some years back, when I first came to the Bureau, we undertook a survey jointly with the Children's Bureau to ascertain what arrangements working mothers were able to make for the care of their children. The Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau paid the Census Bureau to do the survey for us as a part of one of its regular surveys of households.

Our findings were horrifying. We found that all too many children were receiving care far from what it ought to be in a great nation such as ours. Half of the children under the age of six were cared for in their own homes by baby sitters or maids or by the father or another relative. We found in many cases that the home care was being provided by youngsters under sixteen years of age, kept home from school. We found that 30 percent of the children were cared for in homes other than their own. Now, in some cases this was very good care. In others, it was merely custodial or worse. Neighbors frequently take three or four kids in, and there is no care one could describe as developmental. There is no story-telling; no reading; no development of vocabulary. It is purely custodial care. We found that in the case of 15 percent

of the children under the age of six, the mother took the child to work with her.

M: Fifteen percent?

K: Fifteen percent. Just fantastic. We found, understandably, that low-income mothers were twice as likely to do this as the mother in modest or comfortable circumstances. We found that eight percent of the children covered by the survey were expected to take care of themselves--the latch-key kids. Little children--six, seven, eight years old--out on the street with tags around their necks reading: "I'm Susie Jones; if you see me more than so many blocks from home, tell me how to get home." This was shocking. And we found that only two percent of the children were benefitting from group care. We found that seven percent of the younger children aged three to five had group care, and fewer than one percent of the children six years of age and over. Well, we found that at that time there were licensed facilities for group care outside of the home for only about 185,000 children. This was shocking. And, as I said before, over five million children under the age of six have working mothers.

This problem has received more concentrated attention in these last few years than at any other time except during the World War II years when it was a real emergency need. At that time, we really responded to the need of working mothers, and we developed a very large number of day-care facilities. Now, if we can do this in war time, we should be able to do it in peace time. But I'm glad to be able to tell you that in these last five years we have increased licensed facilities considerably. There are now over 500,00 children cared for in licensed homes and centers. We believe that this is terribly far short of the number that we should have. The President has spoken of it; Hubert

Humphrey constantly refers to it; and I think in the years ahead this will be an area of--I hope will be an area of concentrated attention. Perhaps as many as two million children, if not more, are in need of this kind of care.

M: You have the problem, but what can the Women's Bureau do other than just giving advice and encouragement to solve this problem? Do you have grants? Can you establish day-care centers yourself?

K: No. We have no grants. We're a very tiny group. We ask ourselves always, how we can deploy our small resources to help get the country to recognize the problems that are so severe for working women? Well, what could we do? We could educate; we could reveal the facts; we could promote others to act. We got together with the Children's Bureau concerned with the children, we concerned primarily with the needs of working mothers. We jointly undertook the study I mentioned. The facts speak for themselves. We could get the facts to our friends in the Commissions on the Status of Women; to all the national organizations, and say, "This is the problem that we face. What are we going to do about it together?" We called a national conference in June of 1967. This was a consultation on working women and day-care needs. We brought together representatives of over sixty national organizations to participate. At one conference, I talked about the magnitude of day care needs. Katherine Ottinger, the Director of the Children's Bureau, talked about ways of meeting day care needs. A panel of eight individuals from different parts of the country who were involved in innovative approaches to the day-care problem talked about their approaches to the problem. Isn't it surprising that our industries and unions have done so little to develop day-care centers that are plant related? In Denmark, this is the basis of much of the day-care for the children of working

mothers; it's true in England; it's true in Sweden, and many other places.

We in the Bureau had been working with our friends in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union during this period. The Joint Regional Board of the Union in Baltimore decided some time ago that it would see whether day-care services could be developed. Working with management, funds were raised to start day-care centers in fifteen plants in a four or five state area. We invited Mr. Sam Nocella, our good friend who is the head of the Joint Regional Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union to talk about what his unions had been doing. We got someone who is connected with one of the few good industrial day-care projects sponsored by management itself to speak about what management can do. We got someone who had been planning the establishment of the day-care center as part of a housing development to come and talk about this type of innovation.

M: Well, your job then was the recognition of the problem, identification of it, and the publicizing of it, and contacting people who could do something about it.

K: Publicizing it and generating support and interest. I can tell you that this conference generated great interest and led to many similar conferences all over the country. It has helped to speed the recognition of need on the part of government. We are now moving toward concerted interagency approach to the day-care problem. And this in itself is a major chapter which should be recorded.

We are building what we call a "4-C" community day-care approach, "4-C" standing for "community coordinated child care." We are trying to bring together, in the local communities, all groups that are day-care concerned to serve as a central planning group to assess need; to develop and coordinate new projects; and to serve as a channel through

which supportive funds can flow. We haven't had much Federal legislation, although quite a number of bills have been introduced. Senator Ribicoff has proposed the authorization of five hundred million dollars for Federal aid to day care. Representative Patsy Mink has sponsored a bill for funds to provide educational materials. Nobody that I know of has introduced a bill to provide construction funds and this is fundamental. Unless there are construction subsidies, sufficient day-care centers cannot be built, especially to meet the needs of children in low-income families. Good day care is expensive; it has to meet the licensing requirements of the community; we can't afford slipshod approaches; we can't afford fire hazards; inexpert leadership. We have developed under the leadership of the Children's Bureau which gets the full credit, I think, for the national leadership in this area, a good approach to standards setting. But because you have standards, this mustn't be an obstacle to progress. You need standards, but most importantly you have to spend the money. And we need many billions of dollars to do the job.

M: Do you get any opposition to such a program?

K: Yes, there is much opposition to spending for all vital social purposes. But we must convince our legislative friends that when you invest in people, whether it be in Head Start, in day-care centers, or in manpower training programs, that it's the best investment you can make. You get your money back 100-fold not only in human terms, but in dollar and cents terms as well. The child who gets the benefit of good day-care experience, and starts school with skills, with self-confidence and good health, is a child that will develop. A few hundred or a few thousand dollars spent in these early days may be one of the most important investments our society can make, especially for the deprived child, who

starts with many handicaps. I hope that my remarks indicate some of the ways in which we work.

M: Let me straighten out a point here. You mentioned the name of your program as "4-C" community program; when you say 4-C, is that a numeral 4 and then a dash C?

K: Yes.

M: That's a departmental designation?

K: This is an interdepartmental designation for "community coordinated child care" programs. It's an effort to develop coordination at the local level and coordination at the federal level of our attempts to extend and expand day-care services and to improve them.

M: Did we cover everything on your list that we were going to talk about?

K: Well, there are so many--I think you've covered the highlights.

M: I have one last question then. Do you think that it's feasible, that it would be a good idea, and that it would be possible, to have a woman Vice President or President?

K: Of course.

M: With the liberalization of employment for women, the breakdown in discrimination, you would see no barrier for a woman--

K: There are attitudinal barriers now, but these are moving. There is one aspect of the work of the Bureau that I haven't talked about and which has meant a great deal to me and which I've put a great deal of stress on during these years. I talked of the concentration of women in the lesser skilled jobs--the fact that so large a percentage of women are at the bottom, so few at the top of the job ladder. We haven't talked in any detail about the factors involved. In part, over the years, it has been discrimination in hiring and in training and in promotion. I think we talked a little about the myths in the minds of employers

that it doesn't pay to train a woman. These myths are changing as some of us work harder to get the new facts of women's work life out to the public; the fact that, on the average, women work twenty-five to thirty years and hence they're worth training. And work life expectation will continue to increase. An employer who discriminates against women shortchanges himself.

Part of the problem, of course, lies in the quota system which still exists, in fact, in our professional and other training schools. Nobody likes to call them quotas, but the law schools--many of them--still keep the proportion of women admitted down to three percent, medical schools to five, six, or seven percent or the student body. The Bureau has sought to bring this problem out into the open and to attack it.

Not long ago we called a national conference on "Meeting Medical Manpower Needs--the Fuller Use of the Woman Physician," in which the President was interested. He took the time to send the conference participants a message, indicative again of his continuing interest and concern. We have much to do to change attitudes on the parts of admissions committees as well as employers.

One of the real problems we have is to reach the youngsters themselves--girls in their early teens or even younger--to get them to understand the changed patterns of women's lives, to anticipate more realistically what the future will hold. I haven't talked about one area of the Bureau's work which is an area particularly close to our heart, and that is of encouraging and improving approaches to the counseling of these youngsters. They have to know that nine out of ten of them, when they reach adulthood, will work, and many of them, as I say, for a long period of time. You go to talk to them at school, or

even at college, and you say this: "Nine out of ten of you will be members of the labor force." Universally, they all think they're the tenth. Well, they can't all be the tenth. They've been told by their parents, their teachers, their counselors, "Okay, dearie, get yourself a job when you get out of school, out of college, find Mr. Right, then kiss the work-world goodbye, and that's that." It's just not true any longer.

And the more educated the woman, the less true it is. You take our women who've had five or more years of higher education. They combine marriage and work full-time or part-time, most of their lives. Even in the peak child-bearing, child-rearing years, of twenty-five to thirty-four, among these women, fewer than a third are out of the labor force. In other words, two-thirds continue to work. As you go down the educational scale, you find a larger percentage leave the labor force during the child-bearing years. But for women as a total group even during these peak years of child-bearing and rearing, 40 percent of all of our women are in the labor force, which is a tremendous change--just a tremendous change from what the work pattern used to be only a few years ago.

Now, the youngster, if she's going to work, ought to set her sights in accordance with her fullest potential. If she has a first-rate mind, she ought to think of the first-rate things she can do with it and be encouraged. If she's an awfully able youngster, capable of being, say, a first-rate doctor, she shouldn't be told, "Set your sights for being a practical nurse." There's nothing wrong with being a practical nurse or a registered nurse; we need very able women in nursing. But the demands of the medical field are somewhat higher by and large. By this I don't mean that the Bureau, when it works with

counselors and counselors groups and raises questions as to new approaches to the counseling of the girls, suggests that women "ought to work." This is not what we do. The woman of today and the woman of tomorrow will make her own decision in the light of her circumstances, her attitudes, her husband. All we can say is, "The women of today have made this decision and if they're going to work and work for long spans, then they ought to be doing the best thing that they're capable of doing and their training and career sights should be in accordance with it."

Our standards of living are rising all the time. President Johnson has done more than any previous President to help speed their rise, I must say. The rate of economic advance in these years has been spectacular. In consequence, today's woman is able to purchase many of the goods and services that had to be provided within the home only a relatively short time ago. Homes are easier to manage. Today's woman bears fewer children than did her mother. By the time the average woman, today, reaches the age of 35, she has sent her last child off to school. The child rearing period is now greatly diminished in length. By the time women are 35 or 40, most of them can anticipate many years ahead when their energies and abilities will not be needed on a full-time basis at home. As I pointed out earlier, over half of our women, aged 35 to 60, are now in the labor force, and the proportion will continue to increase at a rapid rate in the years ahead.

Young women need to appreciate these realities early. It is these realities that give increasing importance to career choice for women. For a majority, it has become no less important than career choice for their brothers.

The Bureau believes we are challenged not only greatly to improve vocational guidance of young women; no less vital is assistance to women who take time out from work to rear their families with the expectation of returning to the labor force. They, too, need vocational guidance as to changing occupational opportunities and as to how best they can keep their job skills alive. How, when they are ready to return to work, can they best refresh their skills or acquire new ones? The Bureau has actively promoted the expansion of continuing education for mature women. Let me cite one example of our interest and activity. Particularly important is the "retooling" of the woman physician who has taken time out and whose professional contribution is so badly needed. We have been working with one of the medical schools which is concerned with this problem and which has been planning a refresher program. The idea of doing this emerged from our Conference on Women in Medicine, I might add. There is much to be learned about how best to provide refresher courses; how long should the program be; what should it include? We have supported the school's efforts to obtain Federal funds to help finance this demonstration retraining program. Most women physicians do manage to combine marriage, child rearing and their medical practice, on a full or part-time basis. But we can't afford to lose the contribution of those who have had to drop out and who are eager to return.

M: Would you like to see more women in politics?

K: Why, of course.

M: As politicians? Professional politicians?

K: Well, why not? I don't know what a professional politician is. Politics is the decision-making process of our communities. Unfortunately, women have no place to go in politics except up. It's just unbelievable to

think that in this country only three percent of the members of Congress are women. There are many countries in which 10, 15, 18 percent or more of the members of the legislature are women. Yet our country educates, as I said before, a far larger percentage of its women through college and beyond. Well, maybe--I hear people say, "The small number of women in Congress is due to the fact our country is so big." Almost all our women today marry. It's so hard to leave your husband if you live in Portland or San Francisco and come to Washington to Congress. But what's the matter with the state legislature? Well, we do a little better in the state legislatures. How much better? Five percent of their members are women. Okay, it's a big state. You can't leave your husband and go to the state legislature. What's the matter with being mayor? Yet we have only three or four women mayors in our cities of over thirty thousand or forty thousand, as I remember the figure. We need the brains, the compassion, the ability, the talent of women every place there's a job to do. And here we have to change the attitudes of women and of men. Women are doing all the dirty hard work, you know, the doorbell ringing and the stuffing of the envelopes. That's underuse of a human resource. We need them out in front as well. And the President has said this at our conferences when he and Mrs. Johnson have been kind enough to invite our participants to the White House, as they have. Politics represents a very important area for leadership on the part of women.

M: That's all the questions I have. I wish to thank you very much for the interview.

K: I've enjoyed doing it. I hope we have been able to cover some of the areas of interest.

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By Mary D. Keyserling

to the

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