

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
CONFERENCE OF FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN
STATE DEPARTMENT BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C.
THURSDAY, JULY 25, 1963, 10:45 A.M.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THAT ALL MAY SERVE THEIR COUNTRY

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this conference. The work you are doing is of vital importance to the health of our country.

If the word "government" means anything, it means the power of the people's elected representatives to have their decisions carried out. It is your task to see that this is done with equal competence in every part of the nation.

Throughout most of our country's history, the civil service was a leisurely place where a person could earn a small income with relative security -- and still have spare time during the working day to do something else.

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote "The Scarlet Letter" while working in the Custom House in Salem, Massachusetts. Herman Melville wrote "Moby Dick" while holding down a government job in New York City.

Many a young civil servant just out of college probably has similar ambitions -- but I doubt that they have the spare time any more. For our government today requires more from those working for it than at any other time in its history.

There are now 2-1/2 million civilians working for the United States Government. More than 90 per cent are outside the National Capital area. These public servants outside Washington provide the chief source of day-to-day contact between government and the people.

How good a job these public servants do determines the honesty, efficiency and competence of the Government of the United States.

In the world today, we no longer deal with just a few European powers. We deal with more than 100 independent nations on every continent. Most of them are governed by non-white leaders.

At the same time, we are witnessing at home a major struggle to assure equal opportunities for every American, regardless of his color, or creed, or national origin.

As the largest employer in the country, the United States Government must play a major role in bringing this struggle to a successful conclusion -- a conclusion that will make us a better country. And it will, I hope, make us better individuals.

One of the saddest stories I ever heard about the waste and heartbreak caused by racial discrimination in our country was that of a young Southern Negro who finished at the top of his high school class, but was going back to his family's tenant farm instead of on to college.

(more)

When asked why, he said that it had been his sole ambition to be a horn player with a symphony orchestra -- but he "knew" a Negro would never have the chance.

Stories like this, repeated millions of times over, depict the handicaps facing more than 10 per cent of our population. They indicate a serious twofold problem.

First, we must convince those who employ others of the waste caused by discrimination. And second, we must convince the Negro -- and any other American who feels discriminated against -- that it does pay for him to go to college; that it does pay for him to try to be as big a man as he can; that he can compete in our free American society.

I expect to live to see the day when any young American can dream -- and know that he will not be barred by his ancestry from trying to make his dreams come true.

You can help by seeing to it that when a person dreams of a high-level civil service position -- in any branch of the government, in any part of the country -- he doesn't say to himself:

"No, they will never give a person with my background a chance."

The civil service must be open to all. And we must convince every American that this is so.

When I became Vice President 2-1/2 years ago, I also became chairman of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

No other job has taken up so much of my time. No other job is more important. No other job has given me greater satisfaction.

I have met many times over with labor leaders and business executives. We have persuaded them to change some practices; to modify others; to join in plans to encourage Negroes to study and work for higher-level positions. Progress, though heartening, is slow.

But it is in the federal agencies that we can make dramatic progress. Discrimination based on race is, of course, outlawed in the federal service. But we have found Negro college graduates holding down a GS-3 job when white men with the same qualifications are GS-9's and 11's.

And in a major post office recently, we found 50 men who had mail bags on their shoulders -- and college degrees on their walls.

No matter what the historical reason, no matter what the psychological reason, the simple fact is that when we let such things happen, we are failing in our job. I don't think we can stand for it, but these are the facts. And two years of work has not corrected the situation.

We have more than 293,000 Negroes in the federal agencies. Despite dramatic changes, 68 per cent of our Negro civil servants are still in the grades GS-1 through 4.

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Negroes make up 10.3 per cent of the nation's labor force and constitute 13 per cent of total federal employees. Yet they represent only 9.1 per cent of the employees in the classified services. Thirty-six per cent of all Negroes in federal service are found in wage board -- blue collar -- jobs.

Roughly 50 per cent of all persons employed by the government are in the classified service or similar white collar jobs. But only 33 per cent of the Negroes are so located.

These are telling statistics. We know there are skills and qualifications in this vast pool of manpower that we are not using to full advantage. Last year, for example, as the result of active policies, the number of Negroes holding jobs in grades GS-5 through 11 increased 19 per cent. In GS-12 through 18, the number jumped a dramatic 36 per cent.

We know that there are others who haven't been given the equal opportunity to which this administration is pledged. We want you to help us find them. And we stress that we are looking for qualified persons. We are not going to hire a man because he is a Negro; but he is not going to be barred because he is a Negro.

As federal executives, you make decisions each day that affect the lives of those who work under you. They are paper decisions to you. But to a man with a wife and children, your "paper" decision can be a crushing blow or an opportunity to move ahead according to his capabilities.

The policy of equal opportunity must start with you. It must be passed down through your subordinates until the seeking out of qualified personnel in your organization is an integral part of your program.

In his first State of the Union Message, President Kennedy spoke of the civil service. He said:

"Let every public servant know, whether his post is high or low, that a man's rank and reputation in this administration will be determined by the size of the job he does.... Let the public service be a proud and lively career. And let any man and woman who works in any area of the National Government, in any branch, at any level, be able to say with pride and with honor in future years: "I served the United States government in that hour of our nation's need."

To which we can only add: Let every American be able to say to himself: "My country wants and needs me, if I am qualified to do a job. I can serve my country, and rise in its service, regardless of my race or religion."

I know we are all working toward this goal. I want to thank you and assure you that your work -- so important to our country's future -- has and deserves the support of the Administration and the people of our country.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 24, 1963

TO: The Vice President

FROM: Robert Resnick

RE: Washington Conference of Federal Executive Board Chairmen, Thursday,
25 July

Subject to approval by the Vice President, a tentative schedule for addressing the Federal Executive Board Chairmen in charge of coordinating Federal activities outside the National Capital area, is:

- 10:40 AM: The Vice President arrives C Street entrance to the State Department. Be met by Chairman John W. Macy, Jr., of the Civil Service Commission and coordinator of the conference, and escorted to the International Conference Room 1107.
- 10:43 AM: The Vice President and Mr. Macy arrive at Conference Room. Mr. Macy introduces the Vice President.
- 10:45 AM: The Vice President addresses an audience of 65 high-ranking civil servants from all parts of the country meeting in Washington to discuss how to best coordinate the executing of national policy.
- 11:00 AM: At the conclusion of the Vice President's talk, Mr. Macy introduces the Vice President to members of the audience.
- 11:05 AM: The Vice President departs from C Street entrance.


RHR



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 9, 1963

The Vice President
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Vice President:

Following up on our telephone conversation yesterday, I am very pleased that it will be possible for you to meet with the Chairmen of the Federal Executive Boards at their Washington conference on July 25. In view of your preference for a morning hour I am suggesting 10:45 a.m. We can make adjustments in our schedule if that time is inconvenient. The meeting will be held in the International Conference Room (Room 1107) at the State Department building.

As a note of background, the President directed the establishment of Federal Executive Boards in November 1961 to consist of the major agency representatives in the principal centers of Federal population across the country. He expressed the belief that this official association of Federal leaders would generate a better understanding of Federal operations, improved management and efficiency, and more effective execution of the Administration's management programs in the field. He requested that I serve as the Washington point of contact for the Boards. In the past two years Lee White, Bill Carey of the Bureau of the Budget and I have visited these Boards in an endeavor to promote their development along the lines specified by the President.

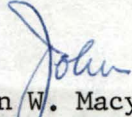
One of the programs pursued by all of the Boards has been equal employment opportunity. In most of the cities with Boards the local meetings sponsored by the President's Committee have been arranged in collaboration with the local Federal Executive Board. It would be highly beneficial if these men could at this time hear directly from you the objectives of the equal employment opportunity program and the necessity for leadership on the part of Federal officials in every part of the country.

Knowing the tremendous demands on your time I would consider the group to be most fortunate if you could spare us 20 to 30 minutes for this purpose.

Please do not hesitate to call me if there is additional background that you desire. I am attaching for your information the roster of Federal Executive Board chairmen. These men, plus representatives from the Washington headquarters of major departments and agencies, will constitute the group with whom you will be speaking.

With appreciation and best regards,

Sincerely yours,


John W. Macy, Jr.
Chairman

enclosure

FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN

July 1, 1963

Mr. Alexander A. Morrisette
Chairman, Boston FEB
Office of Civil Defense
Oak Hill Road
Harvard, Massachusetts

Mr. Anton Sestric, Jr.
Chairman, St. Louis FEB
Bureau of Customs
Department of the Treasury
U. S. Court House and Customs House
12th and Market Streets
St. Louis, Missouri

Mr. Thomas V. O'Keefe
Chairman, New York FEB
Veterans Administration
Regional Office
252 - 7th Avenue
New York 1, New York

Mr. Theodoric C. Bland
Chairman, Kansas City FEB
U. S. Post Office
Kansas City, Missouri

Mr. Dean J. Barron
Chairman, Philadelphia FEB
Internal Revenue Service
2 Penn Center Plaza
Philadelphia 2, Pennsylvania

Dr. Albert H. Rosenthal
Chairman, Denver FEB
Department of Health, Education
and Welfare
621 - 17th Street
Denver 2, Colorado

Mr. Alfred W. Tate
Chairman, Atlanta FEB
Veterans Administration
Regional Office
441 West Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta 8, Georgia

Mr. Neal S. Warren
Chairman, Seattle FEB
Internal Revenue Service
109 Marion Street
Seattle 4, Washington

Mr. John B. Naser
Chairman, Chicago FEB
Veterans Administration
Regional Office
2030 West Taylor
Chicago 12, Illinois

Mr. Raymond R. Holmquist
Chairman, San Francisco FEB
Post Office Department
San Francisco, California

Mr. David S. Phillips
Chairman, Dallas-Fort Worth FEB
General Services Administration
1114 Commerce Street
Dallas 2, Texas

Mr. Robert A. Riddell
Chairman, Los Angeles FEB
Internal Revenue Service
P. O. Box 391
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