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Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON,
DEDICATION CEREMONY, BREATHITT
COUNTY COLISEUM, JACKSON, KENTUCKY

Governor Breathitt, Congressman Perkins, Mrs. Turner,
Treva and friends:

We have just visited the Lick Branch School in the beautiful mountains nearby and found a group of bright, alert, clean and healthy children in a primitive school building which was just as neat and orderly as its pupils and their teachers. We met the warm-hearted neighbors who heat the children's lunches and bake cornbread and do many wonderful things for the youngsters; and I threw the switch introducing electricity into the school.

Now, we come to Jackson to dedicate a brand new gymnasium replacing the one built by the W.P.A. I am so proud to know that the old gymnasium was dedicated in this very town by one of the great women of our nation -- Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. On January 28, 1938 -- twenty-five years ago -- Mrs. Roosevelt stood near this very spot to be introduced by a bright young high school student, Shafter Watts -- Mrs. Roosevelt told of her work at the Washington Railroad Station during the First World War and the impression an incident made on her. A rather striking-looking young soldier would not buy a post card to write home. She busied herself to find out why, and learned his home folks could not read any message he would send, and he could not read anything they might send to him.

"It always has seemed sad to me," she said, "that there could exist anywhere in this country a method of living under which it would be possible that one who was going away from home to -- he knew not where -- could leave with the distressful feeling that he could not write to those he left behind or himself read what they might send to him."

Much progress has been made since then in the fields of literacy and general education. Much remains to be done.

Breathitt High School can certainly be proud of its role in this community. I have been informed that 90% of the teachers presently employed in the county school system are graduates from Breathitt High School and have at least an A.B. or B.S. Degree. Several hold Masters Degrees and above. Mrs. Turner -- who has served this county so well these many years -- tells me that your graduates include doctors, nurses, a minister and many other types of professions. Thirty students from the Lick Branch School have come here and graduated from Breathitt High.

With the development of the mind and spirit must go the strengthening of the body. This new gymnasium symbolizes the steps we as a nation are taking to strengthen the physical fitness of our youth -- our greatest natural resource. Here again much progress has been made, but as the nation's unduly high percentage of draft rejections shows, much still

remains to be done. With more facilities such as this, our boys and girls across the country will increasingly be physically fit, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Jackson is certainly getting things done! Today, we dedicate a new gymnasium. Very soon you will dedicate a new Courthouse -- just up the street. This is another sign of growth and confidence. This Courthouse, I'm told, is one of 188 Accelerated Public Works programs in the Cumberland area. These projects represent a Federal investment of approximately \$25 million. But here's a statistic that is much more important than that -- the people of Kentucky through their state and local governments have provided \$55 million in matching funds to pay for those 188 projects. Earlier this month, I visited in Atlanta and was proud to dedicate a new auditorium for the Communicable Disease Center -- built on the same partnership basis as you have built this gymnasium -- the American principle of local initiative bolstered and strengthened by Federal support.

This is the kind of concrete evidence of Kentucky pioneer self-help and self-reliance that makes the President and all America so confident of victory in our war against poverty.