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Office of the Vice President
(Salem, West Virginia)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
SALEM COLLEGE CONVOCATION
SALEM, WEST VIRGINIA

(AT 7:50 P.M. EST)

Thank you very much, Reverend Miller. Dr. Champagne, I want to thank you very much for those gracious, overly generous remarks.

My dear friend, Senator Jennings Randolph, President Bailey, Chairman Gottlieb, members of the Board of Trustees, distinguished members of the faculty, student body and friends of Salem.

I have to say, ladies and gentlemen, as I look around at this wonderful gathering, that I feel that here tonight we have both actually and symbolically the best of America.

(Applause.)

America 1976, and that this Salem College Convocation symbolizes all of the dreams and aspirations and hopes of the founding fathers 200 years ago.

True, they couldn't picture the form in which the development of this great Nation was to take place. But as has already been mentioned so eloquently, their dedication to education, their realization that opportunity and education were intimately interrelated, and the fact that during this 200 year period distinguished men and women have devoted themselves to pursuit of learning and to the service, as members of the faculty of this great university, in colleges throughout the country; that increasing numbers of young people are going on to higher education; that we find the dedication and devotion to those spiritual values upon which this country was founded.

We believe in God as the guiding force, father of us all. And then we see here, or we heard earlier your wonderful band and beautiful choral group.

I had the honor and the pleasure of shaking hands with so many of the young men and women coming in. It kind of helps give one a sense of tremendous pride and a great thrill that we have the privilege of being Americans, that we live in this great land.

Sure, we have got problems. But who hasn't got problems? And wouldn't life be boring if we didn't have problems?

If one stops to think, there are very few people in other lands of the world who wouldn't give anything that they could have, or what they have, to be able to come and live in this great land of ours. So it is appropriate that we thank God as we open this convocation.

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I would like to express my respect and affection and deep admiration to Senator Jennings Randolph who to me also symbolizes, as does this convocation, the best that is America.

(Applause.)

I am privileged to be his friend and proud that we in this country are so fortunate to have men and women at all levels of government who give of their energies, their creativity, their time, their efforts, to serve this great land -- in large capacities, in the case of the Senator; in small capacities, those in local politics or local government. It is a little hard to separate them.

But I would like to say when I mention politics, that my idea about politics is it is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The end is good government, and good politics is the way to get there. The best politics is good government.

(Applause.)

So I was honored and thrilled to have the privilege of being here, coming as a friend of Senator Randolph, being with him, riding down in the plane with his son, recognizing the sacrifice he makes coming here tonight knowing that his dear wife is in the hospital.

We just talked to her before coming over here. She has gone through a serious operation. And yet his presence here is typical of his devotion to Salem College.

(Applause.)

And if Daniel Webster had studied here, I am sure he would have said of Salem what he said of Dartmouth, which was my alma mater, "It is, sir, a small college, and yet there are those who love it." That is the way I feel about Dartmouth, and I am sure that is the way you all feel here.

In fact, a college such as yours which has already produced two State Governors and four Senators can only be regarded as small in its intimacy and personal warmth. It is big in its contribution to America.

I am delighted to have so distinguished an audience of faculty, administration and guests. But I want to address my thoughts principally today to the students of Salem.

Yours is a landmark generation in two respects. You begin your careers just as our country begins its third century. And 25 years from now as the world enters the year 2000 -- a new millenium -- you will be the generation in command.

That is a very exciting thought, and at the same time a sobering thought.

In some circles it has become fashionable to view the future with pessimism. In some circles it has become fashionable to predict that future economic growth will deplete our natural resources and degrade the environment,

that technology will become a runaway force, dehumanizing our lives and mechanizing our existence, that overpopulation will condemn millions, hundreds of millions throughout the world to starvation, that the "haves" will scramble for more and more material gains at the expense of the "have nots," and, consequently, the gulf between the rich and the poor, between wealthy nations and poorer nations will grow wider.

I am here this evening to say that we can reject that dismal prophesy categorically. Quite to the contrary, I am optimistic about the future. I am excited about the future.

I have to say to you wonderful young people who are at the university that in my opinion, this is the most exciting moment in the history of civilized man -- if we would have the intelligence and the will and the vision, which is our heritage, to grasp this opportunity and have faith in the future and have faith in ourselves.

Now going back to this dreary diagnosis, which results largely from a faulty understanding of two basically positive forces: economic growth and technology. Both economic growth and technology have somehow become bad words in the vocabulary of some social circles.

Let us examine first the contemporary criticism of economic growth. In recent years, a no-growth philosophy has gained currency -- perhaps starting with the Rome studies, the idea of finite materials -- a philosophy which warns us to slow down the pace of economic development, to curb the expansion of new plants, new industries, new construction and greater productivity, or else face a diminution of the quality of life -- a depletion of our natural and human assets.

First, let us examine realistically the consequences of a no-growth economic and social philosophy. We face right at this moment, not only here but throughout the world, a serious problem of unemployment. We know some of the factors which contributed to this; a five-fold increase in oil prices by OPEC, food shortages, large purchases and therefore the rapid rise in food prices; and then with inflation, and then came the depression, and then came unemployment.

Let's stick with our own country for the moment. Since mid-year of last year, the last six months, it is about a million six net gain in employment. But we still are short about 2 million 800 thousand jobs to get back to even a normal level.

And on top of that, I think everybody is fully aware, particularly those who study economics, that every year we are going to need approximately one million and a half to two million new jobs, additional jobs -- I am not saying new -- if the young people coming out of school and college and joining the labor force are going to have an opportunity.

So if one goes directly to the individual and focuses on this whole basic question of the opportunities that have grown out of the growth of the life of this country, then I think we begin to look in perspective at this situation of no-growth.

If our economy remains relatively static, if no considerable economic expansion takes place, then those who are unemployed now and those who in the future will be looking for jobs will not be able to find them when they are ready to come on into the labor force. There will not be enough jobs waiting for them.

What does this do to the individual's opportunity to achieve a decent standard of living; to improve his quality of life, or hers; hopes for the future; the hopes for the family; hopes for the children?

The tradition of this country has always been that the children were going to have a greater opportunity. The parents worked to give them that opportunity; more education, opportunity for the future.

Imagine the American standard of living as one of those pie-shaped charts. Imagine that the pie has to be divided among the American population. As our population grows, the only way that newcomers to the work force can obtain a fair share of the pie is if the pie grows.

And unless there is economic growth and increased job opportunities, the disparities between the poor and the comfortable simply will not be overcome. The alternative to a job, to a decent life of self-sufficiency and individual dignity, is some form of welfare -- a marginal life of dependence on others and the loss of individual opportunity and dignity and humiliation, which go, unfortunately, with large bureaucracies handling matters of this kind.

Now if we really intend to help those in need, the best thing to do is to expand the American enterprise system, create more jobs that will enable people to elevate their standards of living through their own efforts and their own dignity intact.

And the best thing to do to help the aged, the sick, the blind, the disabled, those who cannot be productive in our society but those who may through their lifetime have already contributed so much, but who are unable to work at the present time, is to build a strong economy, since private enterprise directly or indirectly provides 85 percent of all the government revenues at all levels of government which are needed to support programs to help those in need.

Obviously, with no-growth there will not be the increased revenues of government, or the pace of growth will be so slow that we as a society will be unable to meet our responsibilities and our needs to help those who cannot help themselves.

If you have a no-growth philosophy, it allows the "haves" to look down on those who are still striving and say, "You can pull up the ladder now, mates, I am on board, and to hell with the rest." Excuse me; "to heck with the rest."

(Laughter.)

I didn't mean that at a convocation. It is not in the written text, I would like to say.

(Laughter and Applause.)

Closely related to the question of economic growth is the issue of energy. Energy is the life's blood of our economy. Energy equals jobs.

That fact was made painfully obvious during the Arab oil boycott over two years ago. The Arab oil embargo of 1973 -- and I should say parenthetically, it is interesting to me the basic forces which we face in the world today are two. One is the accelerating rate of change that is taking place everywhere, and the other is the growing interdependence in the world.

This boycott is a good illustration of both of them because as we became net importers in the late sixties of oil, and the Arab countries being the principal producers, they found they could control the price. And then as they could control the price, they got caught in the Middle East War and then wanting to put economic pressures on us, they then put on the oil boycott.

Now, what did it do? The United States in that period lost half a million jobs, and it cut our Gross National Product by about \$25 billion. Since then our reliance on imported oil has increased to nearly 40 percent. And for those of us who live on the East Coast, it is between 80 and 90 percent dependence on imported oil. And it is still rising, because our consumption is going up, our production is going down.

This year as a Nation we will spend about \$30 billion in buying oil from overseas. Here we are in the greatest center of energy that you will find anywhere, and that is coal.

I will digress a second and say that one of the tragic lessons which I hope we have learned as a Nation is when we regulated the gas prices many years ago, and well below cost of replacement -- gas being a very desirable and usable fuel -- it drove coal and to a certain degree oil out of the market and seriously set back the development of coal as a basic source of energy.

So that we have a history there where the government intervened and intervened in a way which at the moment seemed to be a desirable thing but which in the long term the economic consequences were not understood.

So here we find ourselves in a situation where another oil embargo would have disastrous consequences on our economy and on our national security.

Or look at it another way. If we spent that \$30 billion that we would spend this coming year, and each year increasing, for the development of energy independence within our own country -- and we have the human resources and the talents and we have the material resources and they are in abundance in all sorts; and with the kind of imagination that exists, we can use one, we can move to another, we can use substitutes as we find out more about cost -- that \$30 billion could be spent on developing these resources of our own and pour in of itself 1 million 200 thousand jobs directly and give

the economy the stimulus to get off dead center that we now have and get rolling that opportunity again is going to be available.

I have got to say, ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor of serving as Chairman of the Commission on Water Quality. In fact, the good Senator got me into this, and then through his persuasive qualities I found I was elected chairman.

(Laughter.)

We have been going for three years now. But we have been studying this question of the pollution of our waters to recommend to the Congress about the '72 law.

I have got to say here, after listening to those studies and reports and so forth, that we can meet our energy requirements and our raw material requirements and at the same time take care of our environment that has been polluted, restore our environment, our ecology, and protect it in the development of these resources.

Now some people say, "Well, that sounds good, but just how would you do it?" Let me take one example.

We have in Colorado and in the West a great deal of shale, and in that shale is a lot of oil. As a matter of fact, there is about five times as much oil in the shale in the Midwest, or the Far West, as all of the known reserves in the Arab countries. So that is a tremendous thing.

But the trouble is, if you mine the shale, and then cook it to get the oil out of it, and liquify it and it comes out, gasify it, you end up with what I call talcum powder. It is shale that has been cooked and, therefore, it is just really powder.

We don't have much water out there. Therefore, we would just have to fill valleys with it. The trouble is with the wind, and that gets blowing around, and this would be very serious for the ecology and might not be too attractive to the people who live in Colorado.

So here is where science comes in, technology comes in. There are scientists in laboratories who have been studying this and who have developed on an experimental basis tests which show that you can drill down into the shale, put a pipe down, set off an explosion, and then set it on fire underground, so you go through the process of cooking the shale underground through its own burning of the oil.

The oil of the shale is gasified, and you bring it up in the pipe, and you condense it on the surface. Okay, there is no ecological problem. The only thing is we don't know what the costs are because nobody has done it, a commercial line.

Frankly, this same could be done for deep veins of coal, exactly the same process, and gasify the coal and then bring the gas up to the surface, again saving the ecological difficulties.

I just mention that with science, with imagination, with technology, and with a will these things can be done. The problem is that at the present time we have got to go back to developing the kind of creative cooperation between government and the American enterprise system.

There are some who say government shouldn't get into any of these things because they will interfere with the free market system.

Well, I would just like to say, how did we build our railroads in this country across the United States? Because the Congress of the United States authorized land to be given to the railroads so that they would be encouraged to build across the land so they could sell it for towns and that is how it was financed. Then this great railroad system was developed.

How did we get this tremendous automobile industry which has been so important in our economy? Because the Federal Government, State Governments, local governments built roads and highways, and then private enterprise moved and built the cars.

You can say the same about airplanes. How do we in the United States have the greatest airplane industry? Because for military purposes the government did research and development in airplanes. Then they were used for commercial purposes and the industry was there.

You can even take agriculture, which is one of the extraordinary phenomena of our country. The productivity of American farm families, less than five percent, produced more food than all of us need and a great deal to export. That wasn't just the individual.

Government built a credit system. They had land grant colleges. They then set up the Extension Service. And so we have had this cooperation between government and private industries to achieve objectives which this Nation wanted to achieve, and which our founding fathers didn't spell out, what they left in broad enough terms so that we could.

I think in the field of energy the government now has to take the major risks, just as they did during the war with rubber reserves where natural rubber was cut off because of the submarines and so forth.

Government through the RFC set up the Rubber Reserve Corporation and contracted with the five private companies to develop synthetic rubber, or maybe it was six. Four of them succeeded. The government at the end of the war sold the plants. They got the money back and we had a new industry.

This is the kind of creative imagination which our combination of free people and a democratic government with an American enterprise system has been able to do. I think that this area is one in which we have to have the kind of faith we have had in the past if we are going to assure the opportunity for our coming generations to share in the privileges which we have enjoyed.

Now this second obstacle to increased energy production is, again, the no-growth mentality, the fear of accelerated coal mining and nuclear power generation, off-shore oil pumping, and other efforts to step up energy production, which they fear will severely damage the environment. This concern is understandable.

One of the most inspiring legacies of the sixties was the leadership of the young people in opening our eyes to what was happening in the environment. But as I said, we have the energy in this country in all different sources to achieve energy independence, and we can achieve economic growth without fouling our nest.

This same is true, and I don't want to go into detail here because I will take too much time, but I think it is a subject that has interested me very much. I happen to be Chairman of the Committee on Productivity, which was created by the Congress.

We have the raw materials here. Sure, we import a tremendous volume. But after the study of the Commission on Critical Choices, which I set up before the end of this present spot in Washington, we came to the clear conclusion that with science and technology today, that there are either substitute sources for essential raw materials or substitutes for those materials in manufacturing.

For instance, the Prime Minister of Trinidad was in New York -- he is an old friend of mine -- a couple years ago. This was right after the OPEC raised the price of oil. He was thinking about the possibility of instead of importing bauxite to the United States, and this is what was in the mind of a lot of people, other raw materials would be dealt with as the OPEC countries dealt with the price of oil.

He said, "We have the gas, and our neighbors have the bauxite. We are thinking of setting up first alumina and then aluminum plants," which take a great deal of gas.

I said, "This is very exciting and interesting. Have you explored what the costs will be to make aluminum from silicon sand in the United States?"

He said he never heard of it. I said, "Before you make any major investments, you had better do it."

Of course, we have resources for making aluminum in the United States which are unlimited. This is true of taconite, for instance, instead of iron ore.

For those preachers of doom, this country is so blessed with natural resources and with imagination that we can preserve this growth, both in terms of energy and raw materials, job opportunities, without destroying the environment and, at the same time, correcting the mistake we have already made in our environment.

So I have to say to you as we meet here on this 200th anniversary that we have immediate problems, yes. But if one looks just a little into the future, the opportunities are so unique and so exciting, not only opportunities for us but what I was saying about our ability in this country can

also be applied to the rest of the world. And the same is true of food, new sources of food, unheard of before. We can visualize an era in which not only will this country develop its own opportunities for all its people, but we will cooperate with other nations throughout the world in achieving the same.

As they do, and we help them in the manufacturing of machinery and equipment they need and the technology -- one hears a great deal of adverse comment about multinational corporations. But if you actually look at it and analyze it in perspective, the multinational corporation is the most unique vehicle produced by the American enterprise system; the creativity of people who have found a way of creating an irrigation system which takes the technology, the capital, the management, and the markets and takes them around the world and helps other countries develop.

Now, the criticism has been by some of the labor unions that this is exporting jobs, and we have made it difficult at home and expensive to produce certain things.

But if the standard of living rises in other parts of the world, their demands will rise and, therefore, we don't have to fear this because other items will come that we can export.

One of them happens to have been agriculture. In the last four years we have gone from about \$5 billion in exports to over \$20 billion in exports of agricultural products. Sixty million new acres of land were opened up and brought into production.

So what I am really saying here is rather than this being a period in which we wring our hands and are discouraged and feel life has no meaning and no purpose, that we have in front of us the greatest opportunity to fulfill the dreams of those who founded this country.

And with development comes the revenue in government; and with revenue in government or the revenue of individuals, the opportunities for education, for health, and all that goes with it, and the opportunity to more adequately care for those older citizens who have contributed so much to the building of the country.

So we see a total picture here unfolding, which leads me back to the very thought that I had expressed before, that rather than being a period of discouragement, it has got to be a period of the greatest opportunities, if we have the courage and the wisdom and vision to grasp that.

I said, when I was allowed to speak in the Senate, and I have to say to you in confidence that I can't speak without unanimous consent. I preside over the body and it is a great honor. But I sit there and I can just bang the gavel and call order and give an opinion that is requested, but only speak on unanimous consent. But I would like to say when I was sworn in they were good enough to let me speak.

(Laughter.)

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I said on that occasion that there is nothing wrong with America that Americans can't right. I feel very strongly about that, ladies and gentlemen.

I just want to say to the young men and women in this room that you are not only the hope of the future of this country, you are the hope of the world, for those people who believe in freedom and opportunity and dignity and quality of life, and that you can't enjoy those factors, nor can anyone else, unless you have enough to eat, unless you are not sick and don't have malaria or hookworm or something else. And that takes science and technology, and it takes economic development. And believe me, agriculture today is part of a very complex industrial process.

So I would just like to say that I think we are here in this 200th anniversary in a moment in which we have every reason to thank God for His blessings upon this great Nation, both in terms of the richness of the human qualities which exist in this country and the blessings which have been bestowed upon us in terms of the natural resources.

If we have the wisdom to use them wisely, not abuse them, use them for the benefit of all people, I think that it is going to give a sense of purpose and direction to us as a Nation, to us as individuals, and give meaning and value to individuals in their lives who are worried about where we are today.

So I stand on a note of optimism and one of deep appreciation to all of you for letting me have the pleasure and privilege of being here in Salem College on our 200th anniversary.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

END

(AT 8:25 P.M. EST)