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Office of the Vice President
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TEXT OF REMARKS
PREPARED FOR VICE PRESIDENT NELSON A. ROCKWELLER
AT THE
REPUBLICAN LINCOLN DAY DINNER
VETERANS MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
DES MOINES, IOWA

April 14, 1976

Nothing can strengthen my faith in America's future quicker than a visit to Iowa. Here in this State you epitomize the qualities that built America's greatness. I'm especially proud to be here in the hometown of Mary Louise Smith, the first woman elected as Republican National Chairman. Mary Louise not only symbolizes the Republican Party's recognition of the role of women in American leadership, she is an inspiration to us all -- and I am delighted to have had the opportunity of flying here with her. And you have an outstanding Governor who epitomizes the qualities of Iowa -- your fantastic four-term winner, Governor Bob Ray.

As a former State Governor myself, I have a pretty fair idea of what it takes to do a good job as Governor, and so do the other 49 State Governors who recently chose Bob Ray as Chairman of the National Governors Conference. And our Party has wisely chosen Bob to head the critical platform committee at our national convention.

Bob Ray is a doer -- a problem solver. He has given this State better services, better transportation, better education, and, by using sound Republican principles of efficient business-like management, and Republican fiscal responsibility, he has been able to perform that rarest of all feats -- raising the quality of government service while lowering its cost. His leadership typifies the strong, solid Americanism that has sprung from the soil of Iowa.

You started with God's blessing of rich, fertile land. And you were willing to invest 10 and 12 hour days -- six days a week -- into making this one of the most productive spots on Earth. You were receptive to new ideas, to new techniques and new technologies. You applied imagination and creativity.

As a result, you took a state with only 1.6 per cent of the land in this country and less than 1.5 per cent of the total population, and you made it a leader in total agricultural production -- second only to far larger California, a top producer of corn -- second only to far more populous Illinois, a beef cattle state second only to giant Texas, and the Nation's number one hog producer -- second to nobody.

Never has the rest of the Nation been more indebted to you, because it is the unmatched farm output of a State like Iowa which has saved America's position in international trade -- and given us a favorable balance of payments, even after the enormous and rapid-growing drain on our dollars to import oil.

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The hard work of your farm families, your initiative and enterprise do not end with fantastic agricultural production. Iowans have also tripled industrial production -- from both farm-related and completely independent enterprises in just 20 years.

Iowa's virtues symbolize the basic values of the Republican Party -- a sense of self-responsibility, self-discipline, hard work, faith in the American economic system, and confidence that the American people can find answers to their problems -- without every answer being labelled "Made in Washington."

Here at this Lincoln Day dinner it is a pleasure to be among Republicans who live what Lincoln had to say on this subject over a century ago. "The legitimate object of government," Lincoln advised us, "is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere." These fundamental principles of Republicanism, which Lincoln believed, are as valid in our time as they were in his age.

And, tonight, I want to talk to you about the role of our Party and its future and some of the problems we face as a Nation.

Role of Political Parties -- The parties were created -- not as ends in themselves -- but as a means to an end, the end being good government. In America, we seek the objective of good government through the two-party system -- which is the strength and vitality of our free society.

I believe that the leadership of President Ford is in tune with the American people. I have never known a man in public life with deeper concern or deeper love for this country. I have been privileged to sit in on meetings with him for hour after hour as he listens to different points of view. And when he reaches his conclusion, whether it's a domestic or international problem, he is not swayed by short-term political advantage, Jerry Ford does what is right for America. And so I believe that our Party is in a potentially strong position this year.

Nevertheless, in terms of enrollment, we are still a minority party, nationally, so we have a monumental task of persuasion before us. Our candidates and our programs must appeal not only to Republican voters -- but to Independents and independent-minded Democrats as well.

Sure we face tough problems. But, let me tell you, I am optimistic about the future of our Party and I am optimistic about the future of our Country. This is a unique moment in the history of civilized people. There were never greater opportunities for the future of the individual -- of mankind throughout the world -- than there are today, if we but have the vision, the courage and the wisdom to grasp them. With the creative genius of science and technology and the productive power of our free people and the American enterprise system, we can lead the world in achieving economic growth and rising standards for all. We can make this a period of opportunity to help shape the future -- not only of our own Nation, but of all mankind. We can continue to be what Abraham Lincoln knew we were nearly 114 years ago when he described the United States of America as "the last, best hope of Earth."