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Speech by Representative Gerald R. Ford Jr. at Big-Ten Young Republican Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan
March 24, 1950

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, delegates and friends.

I am pleased and honored to have the opportunity to appear on this program and participate in the discussions and work of this worthwhile conference.

At the outset, may I publicly commend the University of Michigan Young Republican Club, the sponsors of this conference. Despite almost insurmountable hurdles that would have discouraged less hardy souls this conference is a reality. A tribute from all of us is due those who have given their time and effort so unselfishly in order that this splendid gathering could be successful. The results are indicative of what can be accomplished by careful planning, hard work and a never-say-die determination.

At this time I would like to toss another bouquet to the members of the University of Michigan Young Republican Club for their constructive work in preparing and submitting a Party Platform entitled "Opportunity State". I am enthusiastic about the slogan "Opportunity State". This slogan sums up succinctly the basic philosophy of the Republican Party. Our party was founded at a time when certain fundamental opportunities were denied to a segment of our population. The Republican Party has seldom strayed from that philosophy and it now stands foresquare for those principles.



The Young Republican group at the University of Michigan have ^{created} ~~carried~~ a refreshing slogan which could well be a cornerstone for Republican success in this crucial election year. Furthermore, and this is important, the drafters of this platform have implemented the title with effective and impressive concrete suggestions. It is brief, comprehensive, foreseeing and mature. Above all, it is straightforward and sincere.

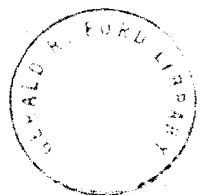
There is one criticism that might legitimately be leveled at many politicians and party workers in all political parties, namely, "too little horsepower and too much exhaust". Those assembled here are definitely not guilty on that score. My observations indicate the existence of tremendous horsepower and very little exhaust.

I can well visualize the trials and tribulations experienced by those who drafted the platform entitled "Opportunity State". Likewise I appreciate the difficulties being experienced today by the assembled delegates. You have and will have problems in putting all of your thoughts and ideas in mutually acceptable form. The national leaders in the Republican Party faced the identical problem several months ago.

Republican leaders, party workers and others who are truly sympathetic to the free enterprise system are faced with the practical difficulty of



fashioning a blanket that will encompass a sufficient number of citizens to win a national election. If the blanket is too expansive, covers too many, fundamental principles inevitably disappear. Without a recognized national leader, one who can definitely and unequivocally set policy, the Republican Party has no way of corralling the recalcitrants. Our Democratic friends have an entirely different situation. Mr. Truman, the duly elected leader of their party, determines party policy. Any individuals who are Democrats and who may feel critical of a particular phase of the President's program do their utmost to squeeze under the Truman blanket. The would-be recalcitrant Democrats instead of going off on a personal tangent restrain themselves and their convictions in order to deflect the wrath of the White House. I only urge that we in the Republican Party and our allies who believe in the American System will be patient and understand some practical political considerations. Our point of view will prevail. In the meantime let's not be hypercritical of potentially strong allies who cannot by reason of strong personal conviction, go down the line on each and every battle. I plead for tolerance in this conference and for understanding in the crucial battles that lie ahead.



My assigned topic this afternoon is "Young Republicanism in Congress".

This is an easy subject for we now have in the House of Representatives a determined, intelligent, constructive and effective group of young Republicans. You should be proud of their past achievements, and will undoubtedly subscribe to their future accomplishments. The younger generation of Republicans is ably represented and for your benefit I will mention a few names and recount their records. As Al Smith said on numerous occasions, "Let's look at the record."

One of the top congressmen, a good Republican, is Representative Richard Nixon, a young man of 37 years, who was chosen as one of the ten outstanding young men of the nation in 1948. The citizens of the United States owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dick Nixon for his outstanding work in seeing to it that the infamous Alger Hiss, the Red tainted darling of the Trumanites, was brought to account before the courts of the nation. Few people know or appreciate the fact that Dick Nixon carried on the necessary and highly unpopular investigatory work almost singlehandedly in the fall months of 1948 when President Truman was labelling the committee's work as nothing but a "red herring". Were these investigations a Red Herring? I think

~~the~~ Americans believe otherwise, for it has been proven in a court of law that Alger Hiss, a man who helped to guide the Administration's foreign policy decisions in the critical post-war period was a liar and by implication a traitor to his country. With the Hiss expose as a lesson you would imagine that the Democratic Administration would seek to remove the last vestige of Soviet flavored influence in the Executive branch of the federal government.

The opposite seems to be the case at the present time where we find the President refusing to release loyalty files to a responsible Senate, ^{Investigating} Committee for use in executive session behind the Committee's closed doors. I fail to see the reason for the withholding of these documents by the President after the Committee has promised that strict safeguards will be maintained for the protection of innocent, and I repeat innocent, people.

Aside from his superb work in the Hiss matter, Dick Nixon has been an invaluable member of the Committee on Education and Labor. He has an unlimited knowledge of the problems, legal and otherwise, involved in labor-management legislation. When he speaks on the floor of the House his words and arguments are effective. ^{Furthermore} His influence is not limited to domestic affairs, for Dick Nixon served on the important Herter Committee which examined thoroughly



the question of U. S. economic aid to our European allies. I am told by his colleagues on the Herter Committee, the Committee on Education and Labor and the Committee on Un-American Activities that Dick Nixon is a pillar of strength at all times. We in the House will miss him but know that he will continue his great public service in the Senate come January 3, 1951.

Let's turn for a moment to a rugged midwesterner, Representative John Byrnes of Wisconsin, who is one of the most able members of the House. As a member of the important Committee on Ways and Means, John has wielded a sound influence at a time when the President is demanding new and higher taxes and certain pressure groups are ^{fighting to protect} ~~demanding~~ special ^{while others seek} tax exemptions, reductions and privileges. No one except the President and the Democratic members of the House Committee on Ways and Means denies the need for the immediate repeal or reduction in wartime imposed excise taxes. If prompt action isn't taken along that line, unemployment in certain industries will increase and the affected businesses will collapse. Mr. Truman says NO, we must dilly dally and find other revenues before providing tax relief for the workers and employers who are presently



discriminated against by the continued existence of the wartime excises.

Johnny Byrnes drafted the following resolution which was rejected 15 to 10 in a straight party vote. [I quote - "Whereas the public hearings have revealed many areas in which certain excise taxes are causing numerous hardships by reason of consumer resistance, production cut-backs and unemployment; and whereas the public hearings have further revealed that it is essential to relieve this condition at once, I move that the committee immediately prepare excise relief legislation providing for reduction and/or elimination of excise taxes to relieve this condition and report such legislation to the House forthwith prior to consideration of other revisions of the internal Revenue Code." end quote.] In my estimation, and I hope in yours, this is an expression of real statesmanship. It met the serious issues head on and offered a sound solution. The Administration should be condemned for playing partisan politics when there is a crying need for immediate tax relief in the excise field.

Representative Byrnes who is only 37 recently made a speech on the floor of the House which deserves our attention and consideration. I

quote - ["If there is one thing that the children of this country need,

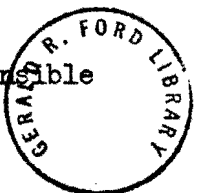


is an administration that will put a stop to loading them with debts that we are unwilling to pay today but are willing to incur for future generations." End quote.

Such logic is unanswerable. The point should be impressed on the minds of all our citizens and particularly those who seek to impose on the already overburdened federal treasury new spending programs which have no relation to national defense or internal security. The citizens of the Badger State are rightfully proud of Congressman Byrnes.

We in Michigan know of the fine record of Representative Charles Potter of Cheboygan, a member of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Charlie Potter, 34 years old, is a Purple Heart veteran of World War II but despite the greatest imaginable physical handicap he ably represents his district and the citizens of the nation.

Let me give you a concrete example. The commercial fishing industry has been the livelihood for thousands of citizens in the states surrounding the Great Lakes. In recent years the waters of Lake Michigan have been mysteriously plagued by the sea lamprey with disastrous results to the valuable commercial fishing industry. Charlie Potter is responsible



for the legislation which Congress has approved in an attempt to eradicate this threat to the economy of the lake states.

Representative Potter is also the principal sponsor of legislation which seeks to revive package shipping on the Great Lakes. Our salt water shippers since the end of World War II have been rather favorably treated in the disposition of wartime used cargo vessels and in contrast fresh water shipping interests have been left out in the cold. Charlie Potter has taken the bull by the horns and is leading the fight to eliminate this inequitable discrimination in the disposition of government owned cargo vessels. I can assure you that this is an example of sound and constructive action by one of our young G.O.P.ers in the present Congress.

Few who heard his speech will forget Representative Potter's persuasive arguments in opposition to the multibillion dollar veterans ^{pension} ~~bonus~~ bill of last year. You, I am sure, would have been proud of his courageous stand in thwarting this bankrupting proposal.

In the field of foreign affairs the Republicans have the guiding hand of our great Michigan Senator, Arthur Vandenberg, but we in the House can look with pride to the achievements of Representative John Lodge



of Connecticut. He is the author of the provision in the Korean Aid legislation which provides that U.S. funds shall be cut off if any Communists are brought into the government of the Korean Republic. Such a provision is necessary particularly with the weak and fascilating influences in the State Department now directing our Far Eastern foreign policy. In the past whenever the State Department sponsored or permitted coalition governments, and this has been our policy too often, the results have been disastrous. John Lodge's amendment may well save our Korean allies from a fate similar to that experienced in China and elsewhere.

Representative Lodge has been and will continue to be one of the foremost experts on E.C.A. and M.A.P. His ideas on both are original; his advocacy effective and his influence pronounced. Mr. Paul Hoffman, the E.C.A. Administrator, can be thankful that John Lodge is on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

In passing, I would like to mention one other achievement of Representative Lodge. In the 80th Congress and again in the 1st session of the 81st John Lodge argued vigorously for an amendment to the Displaced Persons Act which would recognize the plight of the 18,000 Polish D.P.



who fought valiantly in General Anders Polish Army and who struggled heroically on our behalf in the Battle of Britain. This provision is now in the House version of the Cellar bill. The Polish people in the U.S. should understand that a young Republican is principally responsible for relief which will probably be accorded these rugged wartime allies.

Your speaker tonight, Representative Thruston Morton of Louisville, Kentucky is an able member of the House Committee on Education and Labor. He is one of several Republicans who have attempted to solve the federal aid to education problem in an intelligent manner. The only logical argument for federal aid to education is that certain geographical areas in the U.S. are unable for economic reasons to provide adequate school systems. Such states like Mississippi and Kentucky are in this category. The so-called Morton bill aims at rectifying this problem by the distribution of federal funds to the needy areas.

In contrast the Administration seeks to subsidize schools in all states regardless of need by the payment of federal funds directly to the various states. This is rank subsidization of the school systems of the nation and would inevitably lead to federal control on the basis of



the old adage that he who pays the piper calls the tune. I am certain that any individual who believes in the integrity and independence of our educational system would greatly prefer Representative Morton's proposal over the 300 million hand-out bill sponsored by the Administration.

Those of you who come from Illinois have a 39year old freshman member of the House who has made a remarkable record in the past 15 months. I refer to Congressman Harold Velde, a member of the Committee on Education and Labor and the Committee on Un-American Activities.

Congressman Velde was well qualified for his appointment on the Un-American Activities Committee through his experience as an FBI Agent investigating communism and espionage throughout the country. In this capacity he was instrumental in exposing top-flight communists and espionage agents throughout the country and was chiefly interested in the treacherous activities of the communist spy ring operating at the University of California Radiation Laboratory. This spy ring was first uncovered in San Francisco in March 1943, and I regret to say that none of the members of the ring have yet been prosecuted.

Velde brought before the Un-American Activities Committee two of the possible 150-member espionage ring. They were Steve Nelson, the



communist party organizer for California and the famous Scientist X who has now been identified as Dr. Joseph W. Weinberg, a research physicist during 1942 and 1943 at the University of California. During the appearance of Weinberg before the Committee he ^{allegedly} committed perjury in several instances in denying his membership in the communist party and denying that he was a co-conspirator of Steve Nelson.

After lengthy hearings the Committee turned their files over to the Department of Justice with the recommendation that Weinberg be prosecuted for perjury. The Committee recommended that ^{he} ~~it~~ be brought before the Grand Jury for indictment for perjury. This recommendation was made last year but has not yet been acted upon by the Department of Justice.

Valde considers it one of his duties as a representative of his district as well as representing the American people generally to continue his efforts in exposing the treacherous activities of the communist party members and of the communist front groups in the United States, and has vowed to do this to the best of his ability.

Frankly, if time permitted I could go on almost indefinitely, for you have in the House top notch young Republicans from all parts of the



country. In addition to those already mentioned there are Glen Davis of Wisconsin, Don Jackson of California, Charles Nelson of Maine, Caleb Boggs of Delaware, Jack Javits of New York, Walter Norblad of Oregon, and the newly elected Bill Bates of Massachusetts. All are conscientious legislators. All believe in the sound fundamentals of free enterprise.

These men, the Young Republicans in the House are real Americans, and as such are against this country being handled and mishandled by Big Anything, be it Big Business, Big Government or Big Labor, or Big Agriculture. This country belongs to the people, and it is time we restressed the fact. It is time we stood up and shouted it. It is time our people went to the polls and did something about it.

Today we are catapulting down the chute to the worst type of bureaucracy and regimentation. This disaster must be stopped here and now, not tomorrow. But how are we going to stop it when the public appears to enjoy being spoon fed by a paternalistic government? . . . We can't stop it by ignoring social problems. We can't stop it by me-tooism.

We must show the people why bigger and bigger bureaucracies endanger free government, we must show the public why financial insolvency



ultimately leads to forced economy and slave labor and we must show the public that men cannot both be free and at the same time dependent on government handouts for food, health and lodging.

Spirit--that's what our party needs....SPIRIT. To go forward, to sound a clear and courageous call--WE AS REPUBLICANS must not falter.

On this occasion I'm reminded of a story, an inspirational story. Let me take a moment and tell it to you.

Once on the battlefield, Napoleon Bonaparte lost his confidence. The battle was going poorly. Troops were in retreat and it looked like the invincible general was about to suffer a terrible defeat.

In his mind the great general was ready to call it quits. In desperation he called his drummer boy.

"Drummer boy," he said, "the battle is lost--beat a retreat!"

The little drummer boy stood there for a moment looking aghast at Bonaparte. Finally he spoke.

"Sire, I was with you at the Battle Marengo. I was with you in the great campaign in Italy. I was with you in Egypt. And sire, you never taught me to beat a retreat. But I can beat a charge...I can beat a charge that will make the dead fall in line!"

Napoleon looked at the boy and said,

"Boy--beat that charge!"

And when the day was over they had won the battle!

The spirit of the drummer boy should be the spirit of the Republican

Party on this occasion. We must not let ourselves be downcast. We must not even admit that we know how to beat a retreat.

