

**The original documents are located in Box D22, folder “Lincoln Day Dinner, Binghampton, NY, March 6, 1967” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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**MINORITY LEADER**  
**United States**  
**House of Representatives**

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**AND NOT IN PERSON BECAUSE OF ADVERSE**

**FLYING CONDITIONS.**



AN ADDRESS BY MINORITY LEADER GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.

AT LINCOLN DAY DINNER, BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

In Washington, ladies and gentlemen, there is a hint of spring in the air. The time is not far distant when the forsythia will parade its golden blooms before the fortunate eye, and the azalea blossoms will delight the senses.

As in the other cities throughout the country, spring in the Nation's Capital also is cleanup time. The word goes out from all the public works departments in the Washington Metropolitan Area to gather together all the refuse, all that is unsightly and repugnant, and to place it at the curb for pickup.

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A people inherits the qualities of its forebears. Events may tend to blur or erase some of those national characteristics, but there is one shining quality which I believe will gleam ever brightly in the American people. That quality is their devotion to truth, a demand for honesty in public affairs.

Tonight we are gathered here to mark the 157th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest of all American Presidents, a great Republican.

It matters not that the actual anniversary date is weeks past. Lincoln is timeless, for his words and actions were those of a wise man, a just man, a resolute man, an honest man.

He served our Nation in time of war, a time that tried men's souls. Humble, determined in the face of monumental crisis, he refused to agree to the sundering of the Union of States.

Lincoln, perhaps more than any other American President, personified the Puritan Ethic in America. It is not only the school child but every American who thinks of him as "Honest Abe."

Yet, looking through my list of quotations I could find only one Lincoln comment on honesty.

With homely humor and the great wisdom that marked so many of his public utterances, Lincoln said: "No man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar."

The American people are a moral people. They admire honesty. They are deeply disturbed by deception. They resent being misled. They are angered when what appears to be truth dissolves in a flurry of contradictions and evasions.

It is difficult to be a parent in America today. How do you explain to your children the contradictory statements made regularly by the highest officials in the Johnson Administration? Quite justifiably they ask, "What is the truth?"

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Poll indicating that a majority of the American people believe that misuse of public funds is common practice by members of Congress?

I began my remarks to you this evening with an ode to spring and trash removal because I wanted to impress on you just one fact: It's time we cleaned up the mess in Washington.

It's time we cleaned up both the Executive Branch and the Congress. It's time we had an honest credible Administration in Washington.

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President Johnson is trying desperately to erase the Credibility Gap. He is keenly aware of the gulf that has opened up between his Administration and millions of Americans.

What is happening? The Credibility Gap is widening and the Crisis of Confidence is growing despite the contrived candor of Lyndon Johnson. LBJ is working on a new image. Do you see any change in substance? The Administration still prescribes a pill for every ill.

In his State of the Union Message the President confessed he had made some "mistakes" and that some of his programs were not working very well.

Did this mean he had learned from the 1966 elections? Did this mean he had "gotten the message"--that the people want performance and not empty promises, progress at a pace they can afford and not extravagant experimentation, a streamlining of the federal government and not further bloating of an overlapping bureaucracy?

No, Lyndon Johnson has not changed. He still believes that the way to succeed in politics is to follow the precept laid down by New Dealer Harry Hopkins, "Tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect."

Harry Hopkins might have added these words to his Democratic Party victory formula--certainly Lyndon Johnson has: "Promise, promise, promise. What's the difference if you can't deliver?"

Take a close look at the Presidential messages received by Congress this year. Has there been any genuine change in the Presidency? Lyndon Johnson again has taxed the credibility of the people with grandiose schemes. Again we find Lyndon wandering in Wonderland.

The favorite gag-line in Washington now is "Would you believe?" The controversy over Central Intelligence Agency financing of student organizations shows just how honest the Johnson-Humphrey Administration is with the American people.

In Palo Alto, Calif., on February 21, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey said that CIA financing of student groups represented "one of the saddest times, in reference to public policy, our government has had." Humphrey added he was "not at all happy about what the CIA has been doing." HEW Secretary John W. Gardner said on the same date that it was "a mistake" for the CIA to have involved itself covertly with educational organizations.

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The President had refused to say whether he had personal knowledge of the CIA ties to student groups. But Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, speaking from experience as Attorney General, told newsmen both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson knew about the CIA connection with the students.

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In a speech to the farmers at Clinton, Illinois, in 1858 Lincoln said: "You can fool all the people part of the time and part of the people all the time, but you can't fool all of the people all the time."

This brings us to our question for tonight: "Why does the Johnson Administration keep on trying?"

In the last election the American people said they were tired of being fooled. And they said a lot more. They said they were tired of a political party which pretends it can solve all of the Nation's problems just by throwing billions of dollars at them...the taxpayers' dollars. They said they were tired of a political party which is splitting into fragments, a party which has lost the capacity to lead in war as well as in peace, a party which is split not only South and North but East and West.

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If the North Vietnamese leaders and the Viet Cong believe America is divided, it is because of attacks on the President's Vietnam policy by members of his own party.

It is because Sen. Robert Kennedy leads them to believe that if they will only persist in their present tactics, public opinion will force the President to call off the bombing of the North while they go on pouring messengers of death and the materials of war into the South.

It is because Democratic critics like Sen. Fulbright and Sen. Morse continue to build a case against the President's Vietnam policies, continue to follow a policy line which gives aid and comfort to the enemy--whatever their intentions may be.

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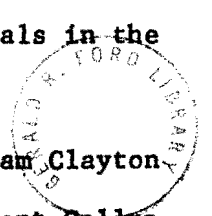
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