

The original documents are located in Box 5, folder “1/18/75 - Bob Georgine Testimonial Dinner” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *R.F.*

BOB GEORGINE TESTIMONIAL DINNER

SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1975

I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN WITH THE OFFICERS OF

17 SEVENTEEN INTERNATIONAL UNIONS REPRESENTING THREE AND *3,500,000*

ONE HALF MILLION WORKERS, WITH THE LEADERS OF INDUSTRY,

WITH DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS AND WITH

OTHERS GATHERED HERE TONIGHT TO HONOR BOB GEORGINE (GEORGE-EEN).

THERE IS A VERY ENCOURAGING SYMBOLISM IN THE FACT
THAT JUST AS LABOR, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT ARE JOINED
TOGETHER HERE TONIGHT, SO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE COMING
TOGETHER TO TAKE CHARGE OF OUR OWN FATE.

BOB IS TAKING ON A GREAT CHALLENGE AS PRESIDENT
OF THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT OF THE
AFL-CIO. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE AMONG THOSE AMERICANS
FEELING THE HEAVIEST IMPACT OF INFLATION, RECESSION AND
THE ENERGY CRISIS. BOB HAS AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY --
AND I WISH HIM WELL AND OFFER TO HIM EVERY COOPERATION
THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CAN ACCORD.

I PARTICULARLY WANT TO THANK PRESIDENT GEORGE
MEANY FOR THE STATESMANSHIP, ENERGY, AND VISION HE HAS
DEMONSTRATED IN HELPING TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS TO OUR
NATIONAL DIFFICULTIES. I COMMEND GEORGE FOR HIS
FORTHRIGHT AND CONSTRUCTIVE INVOLVEMENT.

GEORGE AND BOB AND OTHER PROBLEM-SOLVERS OF THE LABOR
MOVEMENT KNOW HOW TO NEGOTIATE AROUND A TABLE IN THE
GREAT SPIRIT AND TRADITION OF AMERICAN LABOR.

AS WE MOVE TO SOLVE THE COMMON PROBLEMS FACING
US, LET US NOT GET HUNG UP ON DIFFERENCES OVER DETAILS
OF THE PROGRAM NOW BEFORE THE CONGRESS. THE PROBLEM
IS TOO PRESSING. TOO MANY AMERICANS ARE OUT OF WORK.

LET US JOIN TOGETHER IN STARTING THE PROCESS, IN MAINTAINING
FORWARD MOMENTUM, IN GETTING THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
MEETING AND GETTING DOWN TO CASES.

TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, LET US START THE TRAIN
IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND THEN RECONCILE CONCERNS OVER
THE FARE AND THE SPEED -- AND EVEN OVER REBATES ON THE
TICKETS. BUT LET'S GET STARTED.

TONIGHT, I WANT TO ISSUE A SPECIAL INVITATION TO
GEORGE MEANY AND BOB GEORGINE AND ALL THE GREAT LEADERS OF
LABOR. THE WHITE HOUSE DOOR IS OPEN TO YOU. I NEED YOUR
HELP. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE COUNTRY NEEDS IT.

AND I SAY TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING TRADES TONIGHT:

LET US CONSTRUCT AND BUILD RATHER THAN DEBATE AND DENOUNCE.

[AND LET ME ADD THAT WE HAVE ALL BEEN GUILTY OF THIS IN THE PAST.]

I ASK YOU TONIGHT TO JOIN WITH ME IN PRESSING
FOR ACTION TO GET OUR ECONOMY MOVING AGAIN, TO OPEN
NEW CONSTRUCTION AND NEW JOBS ACROSS AMERICA.

I ASK YOU TO PUT YOUR EFFORTS AND YOUR FORCES
BEHIND THE DRIVE FOR AMERICAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE. I CALL
ON YOU TO VOLUNTEER -- AS LABOR HAS ALWAYS VOLUNTEERED
IN TIMES OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY -- TO WORK IN EVERY
COMMUNITY TO INSTALL ENERGY-SAVING HOME INSULATION WITH
THE MATERIALS WE WILL MAKE AVAILABLE FREE TO POORER AMERICANS.

I CONGRATULATE BOB GEORGINE ON HIS NEW LEADERSHIP
ROLE.

I UNDERSTAND, INCIDENTALLY, THAT BOB PLAYS GIN
RUMMY. I WON'T SAY HOW WELL. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY:

BOB GEORGINE HAS DONE FOR GIN RUMMY WHAT THE TITANIC
DID FOR OCEAN TRAVEL.

AND SO, BOB, TO HELP YOU WITH THIS PROBLEM --

I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE GIFT. A COPY OF COHEN'S

COMPLETE BOOK OF GIN RUMMY.

IT SHOULD DO WONDERS FOR YOUR GAME. THE NEXT

TIME YOU PLAY GEORGE MEANY OR LANE KIRKLAND, YOU'LL BE

ABLE TO LOSE MUCH MORE CONVINCINGLY.

BUT WHETHER YOU WIN OR LOSE, BOB, YOU AND THE
OTHER GREAT LEADERS OF LABOR AND ALL AMERICANS ARE GOING
TO BE WINNERS IN THE STRUGGLE OVER THE REAL PROBLEMS THAT
FACE OUR NATION. FOR WHEN AMERICA WINS, LABOR WINS.
AND ALL AMERICANS ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. AND TOGETHER
WE WILL FORGE A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA.

I AM HONORED TO ATTEND YOUR TESTIMONIAL, BOB,
AND TO MAKE THIS PRESENTATION.

I THANK YOU.

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