

The original documents are located in Box 24, “2/23/76 - Remarks Upon Proposing a Toast at the Winter Meeting of the National Governors' Conference” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Over 27 years
ventured my state

~~THE~~ PRESIDENT HAS ~~SEE~~

DINNER TOAST:

NATIONAL GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 23, 1976

Steve McLoughlin
Vice Pres. Rockefeller

-|-

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR BETTY AND ME TO WELCOME

OUR DISTINGUISHED GOVERNORS, YOUR LOVELY WIVES,

AND OUR OTHER HONORED GUESTS TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR WE HAVE HAD THE HONOR

AND THE PRIVILEGE OF TENDERING A FORMAL DINNER

FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE.

THIS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS A VERY

SPECIAL EVENING●

THIS IS A TIME TO RECALL THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OF THE PAST WHILE PLANNING FOR AN EVEN BETTER TOMORROW.

A TOMORROW BRIGHT WITH PROMISE BECAUSE WE LOOK FORWARD

TO NEW PERCEPTIONS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO NEW REALITIES.

AND SOME OF US EVEN LOOK FORWARD TO NEW HAMPSHIRE.

TONIGHT I LOOK NOT ONLY TO THE FUTURE BUT TO THE

PRESENT STATE OF WHITE HOUSE RELATIONS WITH THAT OTHER

GREAT AMERICAN INSTITUTION -- THE STATE HOUSE.

IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER

TO REDEEM ALL THAT IS BEST IN AMERICA.

WE MUST REVIVE

A GREAT SOURCE OF AMERICAN STRENGTH

-- THE ESSENTIAL BALANCE

CONCEIVED BY OUR FOUNDING FATHERS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP

OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE STATES.

LAST YEAR I ASKED A DISTINGUISHED FORMER GOVERNOR,

VICE PRESIDENT NEBSON ROCKEFELLER, TO SUGGEST

THE BEST POSSIBLE WAYS FOR US TO HELP YOU HERE IN WASHINGTON.

THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO RESTORE TO YOU THE AUTHORITY THAT RIGHTFULLY

BELONGS IN THE STATE HOUSE / RATHER THAN IN THE COMPLEX AND

CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS CREATED BY THE CONGRESS.

TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS,

WE HAVE NOW EXPANDED THE FUNCTION AND STAFF OF OUR WHITE HOUSE

OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS. I HAVE APPOINTED

A SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR THIS OFFICE, STEVE Mc CONAHEY,

WITH ORDERS TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE RAPPORT

BETWEEN YOU AND ALL OF MY ADMINISTRATION.

OUR COOPERATION BECOMES EVEN MORE VITAL AT

A TIME WHEN THE CONGRESS IS DEMONSTRATING GREAT RELUCTANCE

TO ACT ON THE PROPOSAL I MADE ALMOST A YEAR AGO FOR THE

EXTENSION OF GENERAL REVENUE SHARING.

I HAVE ASKED THE VICE PRESIDENT TO WORK WITH YOU TO MOUNT
A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO CONTINUE THIS VITAL PROGRAM /-
SO THAT GOVERNMENT CAN BE CLOSER AND MORE RESPONSIVE
TO THE PEOPLE.

LAST DECEMBER, A NUMBER OF YOU GAVE ME AND MY

CABINET A VERY VALUABLE BRIEFING ON THE STATE OF THE STATES.

MUCH OF YOUR THINKING WAS, AS YOU KNOW, INCORPORATED INTO

MY STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE.

I WILL CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO YOUR SUGGESTIONS●

ONLY TODAY I SENT TO THE CONGRESS A NEW BLOCK GRANT PROPOSAL●

I WILL SEND OTHER SUCH PROPOSALS IN COMING DAYS,

TO TRANSFORM OUR IDEAS INTO EFFECTIVE ACTION●

WE MAY NOT ALWAYS AGREE ON EVERY ITEM.

BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE TO GIVE

EVERY POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION TO ANY CHANGE THAT HELPS

YOU GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY ON THE STATE LEVEL.

AND WE CERTAINLY AGREE ON THE NEED FOR LOCAL DETERMINATION

OF LOCAL PRIORITIES AND TO RETURN FEDERAL TAXES AND

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES TO OUR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

IF WE ACHIEVE NOTHING ELSE DURING THE BICENTENNIAL, THIS PROCESS

ALONE, JOINTLY ADVANCED, WOULD BE A MONUMENTAL MILESTONE.

YOU AND I TOGETHER HAVE THE HIGH HONOR -- AND
SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY -- OF RENDERING THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE
THIS YEAR, AND EVERY YEAR, TO ALL THOSE WHO GIVE US THEIR
TRUST -- THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

SO LET US DRINK A SPECIAL TOAST TONIGHT

TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND PLEDGE OUR OWN WORK AND

COOPERATION TO THE PERFECTION OF THE FINEST POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT

THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE -- LOCAL, STATE-WIDE AND FEDERAL --

FOR ALL THOSE WHOM WE ARE SO PRIVILEGED TO SERVE.

END OF TEXT