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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTERS, SHERATON PARK HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER 3, 1965

Since I entered public life as a freshman member of the 84th Congress in 1955, I've spoken before all manners of groups and under all imaginable circumstances, but this is the first time that surgery has set my schedule.

Vice President Humphrey has asked me to extend to you his personal regrets for his inability to be here. The President's recent operation, as you know, required the Vice President to reshuffle his plans to be here tonight--enjoying every minute of it, I'm sure.

So, at his welcomed request, I am here. The business of your organization, education, is of utmost concern to every Cabinet member and I welcome the opportunity to be with you and discuss the subject.

Your imaginative convention program has impressed me. We are a Nation of problemsolvers and it is a basic belief that education will help us resolve all problems and issues quicker and easier.

Last February first, the Congress of the United States was told by President Lyndon B. Johnson:

"We in the United States have an abiding faith in the value of education to our own society's success and we are affirming that faith with a new and strengthened commitment to education in America. But education is a force for freedom, justice and rationality know no national boundaries--it is the great universal force for good. Our efforts in the exchange programs give that force added strength and justified support. For when we help other peoples achieve their highest and best aspirations, we truly work for understanding, for progress, and for peace. In this work let us continue with new enthusiasm and confidence, for out of the understandings among peoples will grow peace among nations."

I hope that we all are impatient men, impatient to see things done and done right.

When we recognize, as the President has said that the taproot of poverty is ignorance, it should be a stimulant to us to inject more education or a better quality of education to get the job done better and quicker.

Your opportunities--working with a tool as versatile as television--are enormous for significant and profound advances in education.

When he transmitted his Full Educational Opportunity Message to Congress, it was pointed out by the President that:

"One student out of every three now in the fifth grade will drop out before finishing high school--if the present rate continues.

"Almost a million young people will continue to quit school each year--if our schools fail to stimulate their desire to learn.

"Over 100,000 of our brightest high school graduates each year will not go to college--and many others will leave college--if the opportunity for higher education is not expanded."

That darker side to education in America is a perpetual prod for action.

Outside the classroom, the noncommercial television industry has come a long way in a comparatively short time. But our laurels are not big enough to rest on. There is a real demand for your product but it cannot be bottled and sold. It can't be displayed on the super market shelves.

The next logical step in cultural television's development--a national education television network--is going to require money. How you get that money requires vision, patience and aggressive salesmanship. Larger government budgets will be needed, but the aid programs devised--whether Federal, State or local--must retain the diversity and imaginative planning that now go into the best of educational television productions.

Your media is a delicate one and your creative talents need all the fresh air available.

Since community television represents the only consistent cultural excellence available to millions of Americans, there can be no turning aside. In authorizing facilities grants, Congress displayed its understanding of your problems and--even more importantly--encouraged the continued growth on noncommercial, culturally-oriented television.

I hope you all are aware of the educational television experience my own department is carrying out in Samoa with the help and encouragement of your association.

The story started four years ago in American Samoa, a territory in the distant South Pacific. At first glance it would be hard to pick a place on the globe that would seem less relevant to the mainstream of American life. But the 22,000 people of mainly Polynesian descent and culture who inhabit American Samoa are direct participants in what now--after a year of operating experience--looks like a genuine breakthrough in education.

When Governor Rex Lee, sitting here on this dais with us tonight, arrived in Samoa soon after his appointment in 1961, he found its educational system appalling. It used Dick-and-Jane textbooks that had no relevance to anything familiar to a Samoan. The classroom technique was mainly simple repetition--learning to recite by rote. Students could pronounce English words, but barely understood what they were saying. The reason soon became obvious to Governor Lee. In his own words:

"I found that I could not make myself understood, nor could I understand, the very teachers who were responsible for English language instruction. To be trite, but explicit, the blind were indeed leading the blind."

Many of the teachers were dedicated people but unprepared. Most had about a sixth grade education, and were almost illiterate in English--in a territory which had been associated with the United States for six decades. The single high school had room for only one-third of American Samoa's children of high school age. And, largely because of the language barrier, high school graduates at best had the equivalent of a sixth grade education.

Governor Lee came back to Washington and talked it over with me. Bringing in an estimated 300 stateside teachers would be extremely expensive and could cause extreme social dislocations. We were, and still are, committed to the idea of helping Samoans retain what is best in their ancestral culture of which the Samoan language is an integral part. The jobs of the faithful, if inadequately trained, Samoan teachers had to be considered. But quality schools had to be provided, and the Governor understandably did not want it to be a 10- or 20-year process.

Educational television held the greatest promise. And with Congress' consent, the Governor obtained \$40,000 for a feasibility study. The National Association of Educational Broadcasters carried out the main portion of the study. NAEB's experts strongly recommended ETV as the fastest, most effective and--in the long run--most economical way to bring the school system up to acceptable standards.

Physical obstacles were formidable. Old village schools were replaced with about half as many new, consolidated schools. Suitable new high schools were added. Governor Lee was persuasive, and Congress came through splendidly with support, approving a two-step program: first, a three-channel system for the elementary grades and then, if this succeeded, an expansion to six channels serving all grades through 12.

The Samoan teachers would be retained to maintain classroom discipline and supervise the children's work; at the same time they would receive what amounts to on-the-job training. The television system also would serve as a medium for adult education in such subjects as public health and self-government.

The engineers selected 1,600-foot Mount Alava as the best transmitter site, overlooking Pago Pago's beautiful harbor, and an aerial tramway nearly a mile long put it there. That tramway, incidentally, is now on its way to becoming a self-supporting tourist attraction.

Power facilities were installed on the main island of Tutuila, big enough to permit the extension of electric service to almost all sections of the very rugged island (which, incidentally, is smaller than the District of Columbia). The extension of electric service to areas outside Pago Pago Bay has wrought profound changes in village life--among them, the introduction of refrigeration. Samoan villages had never before been able to preserve food and malnutrition was a constant problem.

The dedicated and distinguished Mr. Vernon Bronson of NAEB gave us the services of some of the best people he could find. At various times, your Association gave the Government of American Samoa, on loan, the use of half a dozen of expert staff members. And equally important, NAEB recruited nearly 100 others for the Samoan experiment as full-time workers, from technicians to teachers.

On the morning of October 5, 1964, three-channel television went on the air in American Samoa, employing highly skilled teachers familiar with the medium, and using teaching concepts and examples clearly understandable to a Samoan youngster. Only five or six schools were ready to receive the signal that morning, but within a short time coverage expanded to the entire primary school system. The second phase of the operation swung in on schedule one year later, on October 4, 1965, employing the three additional channels and thereby covering Samoan high schools with instruction in such courses as English, social studies including history, homemaking, general science, biology and mathematics. Thus, all 7,000 public school students in American Samoa are now learning through television. Please note that the Samoan system makes teaching by TV the core of the educational program, not simply an enriching element. American Samoa is, I believe, the only less-developed area in the world where the school system is built around educational television.

No doubt it is still too early, 13 months after Samoan educational TV first took to the air, to deliver a final verdict on the success of the new system. Some of the byproduct social changes are only dimly perceptible even now, but we do know that the new consolidated schools are altering the old, isolated village concepts; that the new roads built for service to the system will further the process of breaking down old barriers; that the introduction of electricity will have very important effects; and that we have barely touched the potential uses of the adult education opportunities.

We cannot say for certain what all this will do to an ancient and valued culture. But as the first shock of change begins to subside, there is increasing awareness of the need to preserve what is best in that culture. The main point to keep in mind, I believe, is that the Samoans of 1965 are not Adam and Eve in Eden. They cannot be kept in suspended animation.

From the beginning, the Samoan experiment has been watched closely. It has been studied in some depth by the State Department's Agency for International Development, for its possible application to underdeveloped areas throughout the

world. UNESCO and other international agencies are watching, too, and so are individual nations. The Government of India is studying Samoan educational television, as are the governments of Western Samoa, Guam, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Tonga. Reception of the American Samoa signals is so good in the nearby independent island republic of Western Samoa that authorities there are inquiring into expansion of the system into their schools.

If foreign governments and our own foreign-aid agency have reason to think the Samoan system may be adaptable to other locales, we might do well to begin thinking seriously about its uses here at home.

For example, it is hard to get highly qualified teachers to work in the schools of remote mountain areas, specifically including parts of Appalachia. The same is true of some of our Indian reservations; and there, too, is a language barrier that has to be overcome before much else can be accomplished. Big city school officials say it is difficult to keep top teachers in slum schools, and so the quality of education in these already deprived areas continues to slide downward; the other day, the New York Times reported that a majority of that city's elementary school pupils did less well on standard reading and arithmetic tests than their counterparts throughout the country. Once again, there is a kind of language barrier involved, and a vast cultural gap to be bridged. And like Samoa, these vastly different pockets of educational poverty--the slums, the Appalachian hills, the remote Indian reservations--all have very high birth rates. All the young people attending these inferior schools will be voters in just a decade or two. Voters, and heads of families.

We dare not let these youngsters continue that dreary cycle that has characterized their parents' lives: poor schooling leading to an early drop-out, leading to technological unemployment, then adding another generation to the welfare rolls. Remember, we are speaking here of a growing number of people, despite the vaunted affluence of our society as a whole, because the birth rate of those whose schools are poor is generally far greater than average.

Yes, the War on Poverty is trying to reach them, and so are other Government programs, including several new ones put in motion by this Administration. But I suggest we think about the opportunity that exists at this moment to reach them in their classrooms--before their interest in schooling can die for lack of proper stimulation. Quality instruction is possible, and the costs need not be astronomically high.

Mr. Cohen set the key note for you Monday. Rather than harrow that plowed ground, I'd like to discuss what is going on in Government.

Under the leadership of a perceptive, persuasive President, the 89th Congress this year cleared away a backlog of major measures dealing with social, economic and physical problems of the American society.

Significant beginnings were made to raise the educational and health standards, to make cities more livable, to preserve and improve the environment, to train the unskilled and expand job opportunities, to clean contamination from streams and the atmosphere.

In the Department of the Interior we are especially interested in making this a livable America, and I would like to encourage all of you to make a maximum contribution to the building of a life-giving American environment.

Admiral Rickover only last week in a speech in London called attention to the need to properly harness technology. He stated:

"When technology is believed to be a force with a momentum of its own that puts it beyond human direction or restraint, it may become a Frankenstein destroying its creator. But when it is viewed humanistically, in other words, as a means to human ends, it can be made to produce maximum benefit and to do minimum harm to human beings, and to the values that make for civilized living. It may even enable man to become more truly human than it has ever been possible for him to be. Of technology it can be truly said that it is not 'either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'"

Technology--without proper thinking--and a population explosion have conspired to pollute our air, foul our water, mar our scenery, and blight our cities. The race between concerned and aware conservationists and the retrogressive forces our modern society has unleashed grows more intense each day.

Speaking in Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 1964, President Johnson said:

"The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use (our) wealth to enrich and elevate our National life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization. So I want to talk with you about three places where we begin to build the Great Society--in our cities, in our countryside, and in our classrooms."

He then spoke of decay of city center, and despoilment of suburb, of housing, and of transportation, and open space. He detailed the need for natural beauty and parks and seashores, of pure water and clean air.

The President continued: "(It is in the classrooms that) your children's lives will be shaped. Our society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination... We must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning and learning must offer an escape from poverty. But more classrooms and more teachers are not enough. We must seek an educational system which grows in excellence as it grows in size. This means better training for our teachers. It means preparing youth to enjoy their hours of leisure as well as their hours of labor. It means exploring new techniques of teaching, to find new ways to stimulate the love of learning and the capacity for creation.

"The solution to these problems does not rest on a massive program in Washington, nor can it rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism, between the National Capital and the leaders of local communities."

President Johnson is not a man to outline a goal lightly. He has called for new ideas on how to reach the goals we all believe in.

How do we make a more livable America?

We start with education. We create an awareness in our people of the need to conserve our natural beauty and where we have destroyed it, to start anew to recreate it. Everybody is for a "livable America." A livable America must be one with clean air, and clean water, with cities and countrysides which are uncluttered and pleasing to the senses. A livable America is one that gives each man a chance to meet and know nature so that he can fill his needs for renewal and inspiration.

The idea of a livable America is not a new one. It has been translated over the years into a magnificent network of National and State and city parks. More recently provisions have been made to save vital seashores and are being made to preserve our rivers.

Nevertheless I sometimes wonder if the ideas are as alive today as they were just a generation ago. I wonder, when my smog-smarting eyes see junkyards, and dumps, littered highways and city streets, and polluted, silt-laden streams if we are just paying lip service to the ideals of conservation?

Do we as a Nation realize fully what pressure 50 million more people will put on our resources in 1985?

Do we realize the urgent need for action--now--and the need for continual alertness to maintain what we have achieved?

Last week I previewed a program prepared by NBC for their Project 20 series--the American Plains Indian. This program underscored for me the dramatic impact television can have. It was designed to explain the Plains Indian's culture and it did a fine job. But it also brought a second message, a reverence for our land.

Human beings since the dawn of time have tried to find a means of expressing their love and affinity for the land and nature. A program like this suddenly makes us stop and take stock of ourselves. It makes us examine our actions and casts in bold relief the problems we are encountering with the unplanned suburban sprawl and its symbolic bulldozer.

I defy any one to come away from that powerful program without deeper reverence toward our environment. This is television at its best.

Do I sound like an enthusiast for ETV--I am. Just as I think we're going to retain and build a livable America, I think you're smart enough to finish the building job you've started with ETV--imaginative enough to use your tools creatively--bold enough to challenge your audience with new ideas--wide enough to educate, deep enough not to pontificate.

I trust you will embrace our National goals and then use this marvelous tool you have to articulate the needs and provide the dialogue against which our fellow citizens can sharpen their understanding.

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