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February 27, 1969  
Governors' Luncheon  
Washington, D. C.

Ever since I was elected Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, it's been one of my objectives to increase the contacts and improve communications between Members of Congress and the Governors of our 50 States. I believe I have had the privilege of attending all of the recent meetings of the Republican Governors Association, but this is only the second time I have had the honor of being the guest of all the distinguished Governors assembled.

So I want to thank the Democratic Governors especially for having me here. I don't know exactly what was the cause of my good fortune, but maybe you felt that I would be sympathetic to the problems of the minority.

Speaking seriously, I don't know of a single one of our pressing national domestic problems that comes with a party label on it. Of course we try to pin our party labels on the remedies, if they work--or the other party's label if they turn out to be failures. But we all know that even the remedies are very rarely totally partisan in character. They are the result of the interplay of different ideas and approaches and of patient legislative compromise, sometimes at the State and local level, sometimes in the committees of Congress and on the floor, but more and more often in all of these places.



Let me give you an example. Last year, we on the Republican side in the House undertook to work major changes, and I think major improvements, in the proposed legislation which became the Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1968. One of these, as you know, was to cut the State governments in for a larger say in the planning and in the allocation of Federal funds for crime prevention and control, instead of letting the Justice Department in Washington deal directly with the local authorities as the administration then wanted to do. In this effort, as indeed in other of our efforts to promote the block grant or revenue sharing approach in Federal assistance, we had the ungrudging support not only of our Republican governors but of the Democratic Governors as well. And, working together, we wrote a much better law.

Just yesterday, we have a most informative and mutually beneficial exchange of views at a breakfast on Capitol Hill at which the conference of House Republican members had many of our distinguished Republican Governors as guests. I don't know how many Members have said to me since this was one of the best meetings we've had in a long time and that we should do it more often.




To briefly summarize the views expressed by the Governors, they would like to see embodied in future Federal legislation more flexibility for the States, greater cooperation and understanding from federal agencies, and of course, more money.

I don't think you would have got a much different verdict from a breakfast of Democratic Governors with the Democratic Members of the House. As I said, the common concerns that face this nation today do not--any more than those beyond the water's edge--wear Democratic or Republican labels, nor will they yield to a narrow partisan approach to their solution. I hope this correctly forecasts the spirit of the 91st Congress.

I believe, from all the evidence so far, that this increasing involvement of State governments is going to be a guiding principle of the Nixon-Agnew administration--and I am sure it's a favorable omen that we have as President a former member of both the House and Senate and a former great Governor of Maryland as Vice President.

I have resolved to speak so briefly today that I may get



invited back to your next bipartisan conference, along with my good friend the Speaker (Carl Albert) so that someday I can learn exactly what the Governor of North Carolina did say to the Governor of South Carolina.

But I do want to pass along to you what our Republican Governor of Florida said to our Republican Governor of California about our former Republican Governor of Alaska.

"All those billion-dollar beaches of yours," said the Governor of Florida to the Governor of California, "why, they aren't worth a plugged Nickel."

Thank you very much.



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