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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
AFL-CIO FIELD DAY PROGRAM

AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

10:10 A.M. EDT

Governor Jim Longley, Mr. Dorsky, my good friends Senator Ed Muskie and Bill Hathaway, my friend Bill Cohen and Dave Emery, Members of the House of Representatives, where I had the privilege of serving so long in Washington, D.C., Mayor Elvin, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great privilege and great pleasure for me to be in the State of Maine, and I thank you for the very warm and very friendly welcome. It is just wonderful being here. Let me express my deep appreciation and gratitude to your fine Governor. I have gotten to know him since his election last November, and he has been helpful, cooperative, friendly, and we have developed a good personal relationship. I thank you, Governor, for your kind words this morning.

I have known, of course, Ed Muskie and Bill Hathaway, a long time and worked closely with Bill Cohen. I have also gotten to know Dave Emery. There may be some differences in party labels, but I am always delighted to work with your delegation in trying to solve not only the problems of Maine but the problems that we face in this country. I thank all four of you for being here this morning.

I especially am indebted to Mr. Dorsky for inviting me to participate in this wonderful project and to be here this morning, showing the unanimity and unity that we can have when we face some of the overall civic community projects that must be done if we are to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

Let me say on behalf of the children of the Pineland Hospital and Training Center, may I thank all of you that are here today for your participation and your contributions to provide them with this much needed therapeutic swimming pool.

If there is anyone that recognizes and values the therapeutic benefits of a swimming pool, it is myself, and I salute the Maine AFL-CIO, its members, its friends, its supporters, for bringing this pool, this means of therapy, this means of a little bit of happiness as well, into the lives of those unfortunate and troubled children.

On behalf of all your fellow citizens around the country, I express their appreciation for your efforts.

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(OVER)

Governor Longley and I have one thing in common: In college we both won our letter in football. But frankly, I am always a little apprehensive when a former football player introduces me.

It all goes back sometime ago when I was introduced by a former teammate at the University of Michigan, where I played a good many years ago. This friend of mine got up and he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it might interest you to know that I played football with Jerry Ford for two years, and it made a lasting impression on me. I was quarterback, Jerry Ford was the center. You might say it gave me a completely different view of the President." (Laughter)

As a Nation, we pause this weekend to pay tribute to our country's working people. Let us this year give this weekend a very special meaning by considering not only the working people, but the millions of our fellow citizens who are out of work, through no fault of their own.

Today, I will address myself to the working people -- and to those who are temporarily unemployed -- in Maine, elsewhere in New England and all over America.

Here in Maine, and throughout New England, you have a work ethic of individual enterprise, Yankee ingenuity, skilled craftsmanship and an independent spirit devoted to freedom. Your determination is as enduring as your legendary rock-ribbed coasts.

But you, like many other Americans, have endured more than your share. You are among the citizens who suffered the heaviest impact of the recession, inflation, unemployment, and the energy crisis. I am especially aware of the special burden of the energy crunch on Maine and your neighboring States in New England. I am also aware of the frustration of individuals on fixed income.

Labor Day is no holiday for those who are out of work. The level of unemployment in the United States is too high by any standard.

I have heard some references to so-called "acceptable" rates of unemployment. I do not recognize the acceptability of any level of unemployment as long as there are people who want to work and can't find jobs.

We, in Washington, are determined to help create enough new jobs on a sound economic basis to make every day a real Labor Day, and we are going to do it.

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When statistics are published on the loss of jobs, there are some losses which are not published. I refer to the loss of hope among the high school and college graduates seeking their first job, the loss of self-esteem among the heads of households who are laid off, the loss of security and living standards that people work for years to achieve and, most important of all, the loss of faith in America's future.

These are tragic losses. They are losses that the United States of America cannot and will not endure.

Today, I reaffirm to you and to millions all over this great country my pledge to do everything in my power to generate new jobs. But to achieve the stability that we want, I will continue to oppose stop gap programs that we cannot afford, programs conceived in panic and, to some extent, perhaps in partisanship that will lead to nothing but new rounds of inflation and even worse unemployment.

Our system in America now provides 85 million jobs. This represents some 26 million more jobs than existed in America 25 years ago. It represents about one million two hundred thousand more jobs than last March, indicating a trend in the right direction.

I agree with George Meany that jobs are what Labor Day is all about. I join with all working people on this occasion when America honors its workers, organized and unorganized, in a determined resolve to put America back to work.

The door of the White House is open, as it has been since I became President, to those who champion the cause of America's working people. As long as I remain in this office, that door will always be open.

Obviously, neither I nor the Members of the Congress, on both sides of the aisle, will close our hearts to the plight of millions who are unable to find work. There have been some favorable indicators of an easing of the recession. The rate of inflation this year is much less than it was a year ago, but the creation of new jobs is going to be a tough job for all of us.

Making sure that jobs in our economy must be jobs that provide a good future, real jobs and not make-work jobs -- this is going to be very difficult, and I don't want to kid you.

We have been making some progress, as I said a moment ago. Since March, over a million more people are gainfully employed, even though the unemployment statistics are far too high. To get back to where we were just a year ago, we must produce three million two hundred thousand more jobs and each year from now, until 1980, some five years, as our labor force expands, our economy must provide work for another 1.6 million people.

By 1980, we must have created 11 million more jobs as our population grows and our economy expands. This is a big order. It cannot be filled by Government alone or by industry alone, or by unions, or politicians acting on their own. But, the problem and will be solved if we all work together, just as you in this hall today united to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

It can be solved with the spirit of joint cooperation, demonstrated by a labor-management committee that works with me in the White House. We have developed a strong, flexible, collective bargaining system which stands, in my judgment, as a tribute to the men and women of labor and management who have devoted themselves to building a better America.

While the Government, as I said a moment ago, can't do everything, it can do some things. It can help stimulate the private sector of the economy to create jobs, the jobs that are needed to put people to work and provide work for those entering the labor force.

During the past year, American workers and businesses received a Federal tax cut to increase purchasing power and to stimulate growth in our economy. It did generate jobs, and it did generate movement toward economic recovery.

While the unemployment insurance system is no permanent solution--we all know that, no permanent solution to the joblessness that we face today--it temporarily keeps individuals and our society functioning.

Some \$20 billion in benefits will be disbursed in 1975, this calendar year, providing a means of income maintenance for our unemployed workers. That money pumped into the economy serves as another built-in stabilizer by providing purchasing power to the unemployed worker.

This year, we increased the number of weeks of unemployment compensation from 39 to 65. We extended the coverage of unemployment insurance to 12 million people not previously protected. I have proposed to the Congress other necessary improvements to be made in such areas as adequacy and duration of coverage.

Using new insight and some of our more recent experience, we will work with the Congress to improve this system. I am fully aware that some workers in Maine and elsewhere have lost their job as a result of imports from abroad. Last May, for example, just a few months ago, some 300 employees of the Allen Quimby Veneer Company in Bingham, Maine became the first workers to be certified under the Trade Act of 1974 as eligible for adjustment assistance.

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For the first time in the nearly 40 year history of unemployment compensation in the State of Maine, your State applied this month for a \$2,400,000 Federal loan to pay unemployment insurance benefits starting in September.

This is a role that the Federal Government can play in these unique circumstances that we face, and I am glad to say that today we are granting Maine's request.

I cannot stress too much that this Administration recognizes the equal importance to recovery of controlling inflation and of creating good jobs. These joint goals, controlling inflation and creating new jobs, are essential to our programs of restoring the strength of our economy.

All of us -- labor, management, Government -- must work together if we are to achieve long-term economic health.

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I call on business, I call on industry to do everything possible to bring back our laid-off workers, to reassess the job assignments of those employed beneath their true qualifications and to give new opportunities to young people eager to join the labor force.

I appeal not only to the patriotism and the courage and determination of America's working people but to those same qualities in our business community.

I ask managers to take a new look at ways they can expand productivity to make possible the rehiring and the new hiring of workers and I ask them to be more aggressive in seeking new markets at home and abroad to create new jobs.

Economic progress depends on our ability to foster capital investment and to increase the productivity of our workers the length and breadth of this country.

The share of our gross national product committed to private investment must increase over the next few years if we are able to reach our economic potential.

Economists predict -- or I should say estimate, that the total investment requirements could be in excess of \$4 trillion. And I had the privilege of riding from the airport to this community center, of talking with your Governor, indicating to him some of the thoughts I would express here today and I was pleased and delighted to learn that in Maine he is approaching the problem in a similar way, seeking to expand industry by making certain that there is adequate investment capability.

As we look at the history of recent years, however, overall, we find that our financial ability to increase production is declining. This decline is curtailing needed growth in jobs, in income, it undermines seriously our capability to compete abroad. Once this becomes clear, I am confident that there will be an understanding of the need for tax policies to channel our resources into the expansion of productive capacity.

We must not, under any circumstances, condemn our fellow citizens to unemployment because the modern tools needed to compete in world markets are lacking.

This Administration has proposed some reform to the Congress to stimulate what economists call capital formation through tax incentives. I like a better definition, or a better combination of words; I prefer the term "job creation"

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That is what my recommendations are all about. I asked the Congress to join with me in this firm commitment to our Nation's future to more jobs, to more income and full economic recovery.

To insure a strong economic system we must maintain, of course, in conjunction, an antitrust policy which validates our commitment to competitive markets.

As we reduce Government regulation of business, we must be absolutely certain that our antitrust laws are vigorously enforced, and they will be.

Competition, when freed of Government regulation and supported by antitrust laws, is the driving force of our economy. It will drive costs down and assure new jobs. This is actually the story of America's amazing growth over some 200 years.

Let me emphasize that this is not an Administration of special interests, not of business interests, not of labor interests. We are doing our very best to make this an Administration of public interests. We will not permit the continuation of monopoly privilege which is not in the public interest.

It is my job and your job, the job of the Congress, the job of everybody, to open the American marketplace. It is our job collectively to create new jobs. And as we work conscientiously and seriously to overcome the problems of individuals, let us remember our founding fathers vision of a Nation in which people worked together for the common good.

I have often stated my deep conviction that we must have a national defense second to none. Labor has stood at the forefront of the defense of liberty, in war or in peace. But defense must rest upon more than arms, upon more than armies. Defense depends upon the strength of the American individual, the unity of the American family, the food in the American kitchen and the self-esteem that goes with the American paycheck.

We must maintain the social fabric of America for the national defense to be credible. If we cannot believe in ourselves and in our future as a Nation, what will there be left to defend?

Two hundred years ago American patriots, working people, business people, and farming people, risked their lives so that this Nation might be born. To win independence they surmounted great individual differences in background, culture and outlook. They worked, they fought and they died together for a common cause none of them could have achieved alone.

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Although conditions have changed greatly in two hundred years, I am fully confident that the spirit that saw us through in 1776 will guide us to an even greater future in the years ahead.

I know that the working men and women of America will be in the forefront. They have been in the past, they will in the future. We depend upon them and we honor them.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 10:25 A.M. EDT)