

WH6406-11-3789

Date: 1964-06-19

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.

Start Time: 16:00

Place: Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, California

SCROLLER TITLE: "When Are You Going to Pass Your Civil Rights?"

SCENE SETTER: President Johnson phoned Hubert H. Humphrey Jr. [DFL–Minnesota] to express his concern about the senator's son Robert, who had just been diagnosed with throat cancer. Johnson also discussed the progress of the civil rights bill, for which Humphrey served as floor leader in the Senate. While the two men talked, other U.S. senators made their final statements on the civil rights bill. Almost an hour later, Johnson received word that 73 senators had voted to pass the bill, assuring that Humphrey's greatest political accomplishment would come at a moment of personal pain.

President Johnson: Hubert?

Hubert H. Humphrey Jr.: Hello, Mr. President.

President Johnson: I heard about your distress yesterday, late last night, and I wanted to call you, but I got out before seven [o'clock] this morning, and I thought it would be too early, and I just wanted to tell you I was grieving with you.

Humphrey: Well, bless your heart. Thank you very much. I think it's going to come along. We're a little worried, I must confess, but just one of those things. I just don't know. We were so surprised. He's [Robert A. Humphrey's] an awfully healthy young fellow, but they discovered a little malignancy there in one of those lymph nodes. They're just having to take some more tests on him to see what it leads to.

President Johnson: Well, count me in if there's anything in the world we can do.

Humphrey: I know that. Lady Bird [Johnson] called. She was so sweet to do so. I'll—

President Johnson: I asked her to call this morning. I just got in the hotel here in San Francisco [California].

Humphrey: Well, I know it.

President Johnson: We had a mob out here of 400,000.

Humphrey: I'll bet they did. Oh, I'm glad you're out there. That's good; they need you out there.

President Johnson: Well, will you know a little more in a few days?

Humphrey: Yes, I will. I'm going out home tonight, and I'll be back Monday, and I'll surely let you know then.

President Johnson: Where is he?

Humphrey: He's at Saint Barnabas Hospital in Minneapolis [Minnesota]. The . . . his physician is the head of the tumor clinic at the university and a very fine doctor. But we may want to have him checked out a little bit more around. And we're just going to wait and see this weekend what these last tests [*unclear*]. They've been doing a bone marrow on him and, oh, lots of tests [*unclear*] . . . testing, what have you. But so far it's localized, as far as we can find, and that's a very heartening sign.

President Johnson: Are you—have you—when are you going to pass your civil rights?

Humphrey: In about 30 minutes.

President Johnson: Uh-huh.

Humphrey: And it's going to go through, about 75 votes or more.

President Johnson: Uh-huh. What's your interpretation of the significance of [Barry M.] Goldwater [Sr.]'s [R–Arizona] vote?

Humphrey: Oh, I think that he really didn't have anything else to do. It would have looked almost completely phony had he done anything else. He decided to hold his conservative vote.

President Johnson: Will it cost him the nomination?

Humphrey: I think it may. I think it may if he hasn't got it locked up, and I doubt that he's got it really locked up. It's the big money in the East here, you know, Mr. President, to move in as they've done before.

President Johnson: I've seen them do it, like in '52 when [Robert A.] Taft [Sr.] [R–Ohio] had Pennsylvania, and [John S.] Fine arrived strong for Pennsylv—strong for Taft, and next morning, when steel got through with him, he turned a flip.

Humphrey: That's right, and I think some of that can happen again.

President Johnson: What's the situation with our pay bill?

Humphrey: The pay bill, Olin [D. T. Johnston] [D–South Carolina] talked to me about it today. He told me that there was some problems on the Republican side, and I thought that we wouldn't do very much about it till we got this thing out of the way. And he's speaking now in terms of floor action. The pay bill, we ought to be ready to take that up here next week.

President Johnson: You sure ought to, because everybody—the constitution out here [in California], every state employee and local employee is tied to the federal pay wage.

Humphrey: Uh-huh.

President Johnson: And it means a lot in this state, and they're all asking me about it. They . . . some of them told us that we had some trouble in that committee. I couldn't conceive, because it—

Humphrey: Well, there's trouble on the 10,000, that's the problem.

President Johnson: Said that [A. S. "Mike"] Monroney [D–Oklahoma] is raising a lot of hell.

Humphrey: Yeah, he is. He's been just acting up something terrific. But I believe we'll track him down on it.

President Johnson: Is Olin saying when he can report it?

Humphrey: He did not tell me that. But I'm sure that he'll have it next week. By the way, [Allen J.] Ellender [D-Louisiana] told me the food stamp hearings ended today. He'd hoped to report it out early next week.

President Johnson: He's already had the hearings, then?

Humphrey: Yes, sir, all complete. The bill will be reported out first part of next week. So, we'll be able to act on it next week.

President Johnson: OK, my friend. Give your boy my love.

Humphrey: I will. I'll tell him you called.

President Johnson: Bye.

Humphrey: Thank you. Bye.

End of excerpt.

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