

SPEECH BY

ROBERT MORGAN  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NORTH CAROLINA

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE BANQUET  
COOPERATIVE WORK-STUDY  
MOOSE LODGE  
GREENVILLE, N. C.

MAY 3, 1973

LET ME EXPRESS TO YOU MY SINCERE THANKS FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE WITH YOU AT YOUR EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE BANQUET HERE THIS EVENING. I AM PARTICULARLY HAPPY THAT SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PRESENT BECAUSE I WANT TO TALK ABOUT A SUBJECT THAT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME - YOUTH, POLITICS AND THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

WE READ IN OUR NEWSPAPERS HOW MORE AND MORE PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, PROFESSING TO BE THE PROPHETS OF A NEW AGE, CHASTIZE OUR AMERICAN SYSTEM OF PROFIT AND INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVE. YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THEIR CRIES: "MONEY BREEDS WICKEDNESS," "BUSINESS IS CORRUPT", "PROFITS ARE THE MOST EVIL FORM OF GAIN".

BUT THE FACTS AND REALITIES OF HISTORY AND TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA MORE THAN DISPROVE THESE THEORIES. JUST LOOK AT THE THOUSANDS OF NORTH CAROLINA SMALL BUSINESSMEN WHO, STARTING WITH LESS THAN MODEST MEANS, PICKED THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR BOOTSTRAPS AND WHO, THROUGH HARD WORK AND

COMPETITIVE INCENTIVE, ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AS OUTSTANDING MEMBERS OF THEIR ECONOMY AND THEIR SOCIETY. INDEED, OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF INCENTIVE, INVESTMENT, AND PROFIT.

THERE ARE OTHERS IN AMERICA WHO WOULD SAY THAT OUR INSTITUTIONS HAVE FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES, WHO WOULD WANTONLY DESTROY ALL ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS, WHO WOULD DISREGARD THE RULE OF LAW AND SUBSTITUTE FOR IT ARBITRARY WILL AND RAW POWER, WHO WOULD TRAMPLE OVER THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF OTHERS IN THEIR EAGERNESS TO ASSERT THEIR VIEWS AND GAIN ADVANTAGES FOR THEMSELVES.

BUT IT IS THE DYNAMIC QUALITY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM BEING ABLE TO CHANGE TO MEET THE PRESSING NEEDS OF THE TIME THAT HAS ALLOWED FOR THE PERPETUATION OF OUR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM. AND IT HAS SERVED THIS NATION WELL. WE HAVE PROSPERED AS HAS NO OTHER NATION IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. WE HAVE GIVEN MEN FREEDOM AND EQUALITY AND THE CHANCE TO COMPETE, TO STRIVE FOR AND TO ACHIEVE BETTER THINGS. WE HAVE ALL SHARED IN THE BOUNTY OF A GREAT LAND AND HAVE SEEN IT GROW GREATER THROUGH UNITED EFFORT AND DEDICATION TO THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH IT WAS FOUNDED.

I WOULD BE THE LAST TO CONTEND THAT OUR SYSTEM IS PERFECT, THAT INJUSTICES DO NOT OCCUR, THAT ON OCCASION THE LIBERTIES OF ONE ARE NOT TRANSGRESSED BY ANOTHER. BUT AT THE SAME TIME I WOULD BE THE LAST TO SIT BACK AND WATCH THIS SYSTEM DESTROYED BY VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS, REGARDLESS OF CAUSE OR MOTIVATION. AND I WILL BE THE LAST TO ALLOW A NATION DEDICATED TO LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE BECOME A NATION OF ANARCHY, STRIFE, AND INJUSTICE.

BUT TO KEEP OUR COUNTRY FROM BECOMING A NATION OF INJUSTICE, WE NEED A STRONG, VIABLE POLITICAL SYSTEM AS WELL.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE IN AMERICA TODAY LIVE IN A TIME WHEN MANY PEOPLE ARE GENUINELY SUSPICIOUS OF THE MOTIVES OF MEN WHO SEEK PUBLIC OFFICE. MANY PEOPLE FEEL THAT THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF THEIR GOVERNMENT ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED. AND PERHAPS THE GREATEST SINGLE TRAGEDY OF WATERGATE IS THAT THAT FEELING OF MISTRUST MAY INCREASE.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT ONE CANNOT ADOPT POLITICS AS A PROFESSION AND REMAIN HONEST, THAT WE CANNOT SAFELY LEAVE POLITICS TO POLITICIANS. AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY STATED

SOME YEARS AGO, "THE MOTHERS OF THIS COUNTRY WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO GROW UP TO BE PRESIDENT, BUT THEY DO NOT WANT THEM TO BECOME POLITICIANS IN THE PROCESS."

BUT THE CONTINUANCE OF THIS COUNTRY AS A FREE NATION DEPENDS UPON PEOPLES INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS FOR POLITICS IS THE LIFE BLOOD OF A FREE SOCIETY. WINSTON CHURCHILL PUT IT THIS WAY:

"DEMOCRACY IS THE WORST FORM OF GOVERNMENT EVER INVENTED BY MAN, EXCEPT FOR ALL THE OTHERS."  
ANY SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRACY ULTIMATELY DEPENDS UPON THE INVOLVEMENT OF ITS YOUTH. IF WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO INTEREST YOUNG PEOPLE IN BECOMING ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN POLITICS, ON WHATEVER LEVEL AND IN WHATEVER PARTY, WE WHO ARE IN POLITICS TODAY, MUST MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF TRUST AND INTEGRITY. FOR IF THOSE VALUES ARE EVER COMPROMISED IN THE PURSUANCE OF OUR OFFICIAL DUTIES, WE WILL HAVE LOST OUR EFFECTIVENESS WITH THE PEOPLE WE SO BADLY NEED.

AND SO, TONIGHT I COME TO SPEAK TO YOU ON THE DEFENSE OF POLITICS AND A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS BASED ON THE UNIVERSAL AND FREE SUFFRAGE OF THE ADULT POPULATION. I HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT TO BE A POLITICIAN, I WOULD HAVE TO BE DISHONEST. WHEN I WAS IN THE LEGISLATURE,

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT MY COLLEAGUES EVER THOUGHT SO EITHER, AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THOSE WHO RUN FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER POLITICAL OFFICES THINK SO. I DO BELIEVE THAT IF THERE ARE DISHONEST POLITICIANS, THEY WERE DISHONEST BEFORE THEY RAN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE AND WOULD HAVE BEEN DISHONEST IN ANY OTHER PROFESSION ALSO.

IN SHORT, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT POLITICS CAN SAFELY BE LEFT TO POLITICIANS.

FOR TO MY MIND, POLITICIANS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN CITIZENS EXERCISING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP. AND IF WE ARE TO HAVE A DEMOCRACY, WE AS INDIVIDUALS MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE RUNNING OF OUR COUNTIES, CITIES, STATES, AND NATION.

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW BETTER THAN I, OUR WORD "POLITICS" IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK WORD MEANING "CITIZEN" AND OUR WORD "DEMOCRACY" HAS A SIMILAR ANCESTRY MEANING "RULE BY THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CITIZENS". SUCH PEOPLE ARE AUTONOMOUS, AND AS THE ANCIENT GREEK PROVERB GOES: FORTUNATE ARE AN AUTONOMOUS PEOPLE, FOR THEY ARE FREE. A COMMUNITY OF SUCH FREE CITIZENS, HOWEVER, IS A COMMUNITY OF POLITICIANS, FOR ONLY WHEN A CITIZEN EXERCISES HIS POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES CAN HE REALLY BE A CITIZEN, A DEMOCRAT, A PATRIOT.

AS ALL OF US KNOW, BUT SOMETIMES FORGET, THE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY THAT IS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IS THE RESULT OF THE RISE OF PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND. THAT HISTORY BEGAN WHEN THE ANGLO-SAXON KINGS FORMED FOR THEMSELVES AN ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND CULMINATED IN THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION AND THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT. IT IS A HISTORY OF THE CONTINUAL TRANSFERENCE OF POWER FROM THE OFFICE OF AN AUTOCRATIC INDIVIDUAL TO A PARLIAMENT COMPOSED OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE. AND IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE RECOGNITION THAT EACH, AND NOT ONLY ONE, INDIVIDUAL IS SUPREME, THAT ALL MEN ARE EQUAL AND HAVE CERTAIN NATURAL RIGHTS, AND THAT THE JUST POWER OF GOVERNMENT DERIVES FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

THIS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT HAS COME TO BE KNOWN AS REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, BECAUSE IT IS A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE PEOPLE - THE CITIZENS REMAIN SUPREME, SINCE ITS OFFICIALS REMAIN RESPONSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE AND CAN BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE - PEACEFULLY, WITHOUT THREATS, WITHOUT VIOLENCE, AND WITHOUT VIOLATION OF OUR LAWS - WHENEVER THE PEOPLE SO DESIRE.

WE IN AMERICA HAVE A JUST GOVERNMENT. IT CANNOT ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE TO AMERICANS FREEDOM FROM ALL ABUSE, BUT IT DOES PROVIDE MEANS OF REDRESS DESIGNED IN EVERY WAY

TO PROTECT THE INDIVIDUAL. THAT THIS IS SO CAN EASILY BE SEEN WHEN ONE REMEMBERS THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND THE NUMEROUS RECENT JUDICIAL DECISIONS BASED UPON IT. THE COURTS TODAY -- AS NEVER BEFORE - ARE INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND THE RIGHTS OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED, THE INDIGENT, THE DISADVANTAGED, AND MEMBERS OF MINORITY RACES.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE COURTS HAVE STRIVEN SO HARD IN RECENT YEARS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL THAT SOME IN OUR SOCIETY HAVE BEGUN TO CLAIM THAT THE CRIMINAL IS BEING PROTECTED AT THE COST OF SOCIETY, AND THAT MINORITIES ARE BEING PROMOTED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MAJORITY. BUT LET US NEVER FORGET THAT GREAT SOUTHERNERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE CHAMPIONS OF THE PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS. JOHN CALHOUN SHALL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS A CHAMPION OF SUCH PROTECTION.

WE MUST NOT, WE CANNOT, REJECT THAT HERITAGE NOW AND BE TRUE TO OURSELVES. I BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL ABOVE ALL ELSE AND IN THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES AT THE HANDS OF WHAT CAN QUITE OFTEN BE A TYRANNICAL MAJORITY; I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHAT SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS HAVE ALWAYS STOOD FOR, AND I HOPE THAT THIS IS WHAT YOU STAND FOR. WE SOUTHERNERS HAVE TOO LONG OURSELVES BEEN A MINORITY GROUP WHICH NEEDED THESE CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS TO NOW SUDDENLY WANT TO ABANDON THEM BECAUSE OF THE THREATS OF ANOTHER MINORITY.

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH CAROLINA GUARANTEE THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER PEACEABLY TO CONSULT FOR THEIR COMMON GOOD, TO INSTRUCT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR REDRESS OF THEIR GRIEVANCES, AND TO VOTE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES OUT OF OFFICE WHENEVER THEY FAIL TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES TO THE VOTERS SATISFACTION. THESE ARE THE METHODS OF DEMOCRACY, THE METHODS OF POLITICS AND POLITICIANS, AND WHENEVER SUCH METHODS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PEOPLE, NO MAN NEEDS TO TURN TO THREATS, VIOLENCE, AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AS MEANS OF PROTEST.

BUT LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DEMOCRACY AND ITS METHODS CAN ONLY WORK WHEN THE CITIZENS OF A NATION TAKE THEIR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY, WHEN THEY NOT ONLY HAVE RESPECT FOR, BUT TAKE PART IN POLITICS, AND I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER TIME FOR A PERSON TO BEGIN DOING SO THAN WHEN HE IS YOUNG. FOR ALTHOUGH POLITICIANS ARE QUITE OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS OLD FOGGIES, AND POLITICS A GAME FOR OLD MEN, NEITHER IS TRUE.

DO YOU KNOW, FOR INSTANCE, THAT TWO SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WERE ONLY TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD AND THAT EIGHTEEN MORE WERE IN THEIR THIRTIES? DO YOU KNOW THAT CHARLES PINCKNEY OF SOUTH CAROLINA WAS ONLY TWENTY-NINE YEARS OLD WHEN HE HELPED WRITE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES; THAT ALEXANDER HAMILTON WAS ONLY THIRTY AND JAMES MADISON ONLY THIRTY-SIX?



THE IMAGINATIVE AND IDEALISTIC MINDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS HAVE INDEED ADDED MUCH TO AMERICAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY - OUR NATION'S YOUNGEST PRESIDENT - SAID, "IT IS THE FATE OF THIS GENERATION TO LIVE WITH A STRUGGLE WE DID NOT START, IN A WORLD WE DID NOT MAKE. BUT THE PRESSURES OF LIFE ARE NOT ALWAYS DISTRIBUTED BY CHOICE. AND WHILE NO NATION HAS EVER FACED SUCH A CHALLENGE, NO NATION HAS EVER BEEN SO READY TO SEIZE THE BURDEN AND THE GLORY OF FREEDOM."

I AM HAPPY THAT YOU HERE TODAY ARE SHOWING YOURSELVES TO BE READY AND EAGER TO SEIZE THAT BURDEN, FOR AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY ALSO SAID, "IF WE SUCCEED IN THIS COUNTRY, IF WE MAKE THIS A GREAT COUNTRY TO LIVE IN, IF WE REFLECT OUR VITALITY AND ENERGY AND STRENGTH AROUND THE WORLD, THEN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM IS STRENGTHENED. BUT IF WE FAIL, ALL FAIL. IF WE STAND STILL, FREEDOM STANDS STILL."

AMERICA'S VITALITY AND ENERGY IS TO BE FOUND IN YOU, ITS YOUTH. IF WE SUCCEED, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL SUCCEED, AND IF WE FAIL, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL FAIL.

I REMEMBER READING IN THIS MORNING'S NEWSPAPER ABOUT FOREIGN ACCOUNTS OF THE WATERGATE DISASTER. AND I PARTICULARLY NOTED TWO EDITORIALS IN LEADING ENGLISH AND

ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS WHICH STATED THAT THE UNCOVERY AND DISCLOSURE OF WATERGATE INDICATES THAT DEMOCRACY IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE IN THIS COUNTRY. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT TO BE TRUE.

FOR I BELIEVE THAT "YOU MAKE MEN LOVE THEIR GOVERNMENT AND THEIR COUNTRY BY GIVING THEM THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT AND THE KIND OF COUNTRY THAT INSPIRE RESPECT AND LOVE: A COUNTRY THAT IS FREE AND UNAFRAID, THAT LETS THE DISCONTENTED TALK IN ORDER TO LEARN THE CAUSES OF THEIR DISCONTENT AND END THOSE CAUSES, THAT REFUSES TO IMPEL MEN TO SPY ON THEIR NEIGHBORS, THAT PROTECTS ITS CITIZENS VIGOROUSLY FROM HARMFUL ACTS WHILE IT LEAVES THE REMEDIES FOR OBJECTIONABLE IDEAS TO COUNTERARGUMENT AND TIME."