

FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

"Mediation's Role
in an Energy-Short Economy"

An Address

by

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I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE WITH YOU
IN THE MIDDLE OF MASSACHUSETTS. AS YOU
KNOW, THE MIDDLE IS WHERE I HAVE BEEN
SPENDING MY WORKING HOURS FOR THE LAST
FOUR OR FIVE YEARS, AND I HAVE DISCOVERED
THAT IT CAN BE A PRETTY UNCOMFORTABLE
PLACE AT TIMES. BUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF
MASSACHUSETTS I AM NOT STANDING BETWEEN
ANTAGONISTS BUT RATHER IN THE MIDST OF
FRIENDS. IT'S A WELCOME CHANGE.

THERE IS NO NEED TO REMIND YOU THAT
MASSACHUSETTS IS THE CRADLE OF LIBERTY,
SINCE I HAVE AN IDEA THE EXPRESSION WAS
COINED BY ONE OF YOUR NATIVE SONS.

AS EARLY AS 1770, COMMITTEES OF
WORKERS HAD TAKEN OVER THE TOWN MEETINGS
IN BOSTON, PROVIDING THE SPIRIT AND THE
SINEW OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. THEN,
IN THE 1800s, YOU HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER
AGAIN--IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT WAY.
ALONG WITH THE SMALL FARMERS YOU ELECTED
GOOD JOHN HANCOCK GOVERNOR.

YOU WERE THE CENTER OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM AFTER THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, AND YOU WERE THE FIRST TO REVOLT AGAINST ITS ABUSES. THANKS TO POLITICAL ACTION, YOU HAD A MORE FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE THAN SOME OTHER STATES: THE MASSACHUSETTS COURT, IN 1842, WAS THE FIRST TO UPSET THE COMMON LAW INTERPRETATION THAT A LABOR UNION WAS A CONSPIRACY, AND THEREFORE ILLEGAL. BUT BETTER REMEMBERED ARE THE BATTLES YOU FOUGHT, IN LAWRENCE AND FALL RIVER, LOWELL AND LYNN--IN ALMOST EVERY CITY IN THIS COMMONWEALTH, TO WIN THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE.

THERE IS A POPULAR BELIEF IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THAT MASSACHUSETTS, AND NEW ENGLAND GENERALLY, IS IN A DECLINE. IT IS TRUE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR MOVEMENT IS A DYNAMIC AS EVERY. AND AS LONG AS THAT IS TRUE, YOUR TROUBLES ARE SURE TO BE TEMPORARY. IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU.

LET ME ALSO SAY THAT I WAS VERY PLEASED WHEN JOE SULLIVAN INVITED ME TO TAKE PART IN THIS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, LEADING UP TO YOUR FIRST GOMPERS-MURRAY BANQUET. I HAD HOPED TO STAY WITH YOU AT LEAST THROUGH THAT OCCASION, BUT UNFORTUNATELY I HAVE TO GO BACK TO WASHINGTON THIS AFTERNOON.

YOU MAY KNOW OR SUSPECT THAT FOR MANY OF US, WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT IS SOMEWHAT LIKE WORKING FOR A UNION. YOU ARE SO BUSY TRYING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT YOU HAVE VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT FOR YOURSELF.

ONE OF THE REASONS I HOPED TO ATTEND TONIGHT'S CEREMONIES WAS THE OPPORTUNITY IT OFFERED TO TAKE PART IN THE RE-DISCOVERY OF SAMUEL GOMPERS--OR MORE ACCURATELY, PERHAPS, THE REHABILITATION OF HIS REPUTATION.

FOR TOO MANY YEARS THE PREVAILING VIEW OF SAM GOMPERS, IN AND OUT OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT, WAS THAT IN MODERN TIMES HE WAS "IRRELEVANT."

TRUE, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO KNEW BETTER ALL THE TIME--LED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFL-CIO ITSELF. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT GEORGE MEANY BEGAN HIS STUDY OF SAM GOMPERS WHEN HE FIRST BECAME AN OFFICER OF THE NEW YORK STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR. HE HAS READ THE PROCEEDINGS OF EVERY AFL CONVENTION FROM THE TIME GOMPERS FOUNDED IT. AND HE HAS FOLLOWED GOMPERS' CAREER THROUGH ALL ITS OTHER RAMIFICATIONS AS WELL.

THIS MAY BE THE REASON WHY THE ONLY OTHER TRADE UNIONIST WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS CAN BE COMPARED TO THOSE OF SAM GOMPERS IS GEORGE MEANY HIMSELF.

BUT TO MANY OTHERS, GOMPERS FOR YEARS WAS A LITTLE MAN WITH A FUNNY FELT HAT, A WATCH-CHAIN AND A CIGAR. HIS NAME WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NARROWEST, LEAST PROGRESSIVE ASPECTS OF TRADE UNIONISM--WHEN IN FACT HE WAS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE.

SAM GOMPERS WAS AN INTERNATIONALIST AND A PACIFIST IN A WORLD, AND A COUNTRY, WHERE THE IMPERIALIST SPIRIT RAN HIGH. HE WAS AMONG THOSE--IRONICALLY, ANDREW CARNEGIE WAS ANOTHER--WHO OPPOSED THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR AS AN IMPERIALIST ADVENTURE. HE TRIED ALL HIS LIFE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH LABOR MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD.

WHEN WORLD WAR I BEGAN IN EUROPE, IT WAS HIS HOPE THAT THE WORKERS IN THE WARRING COUNTRIES WOULD SIMPLY REFUSE TO FIGHT. HE DID SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES WAR EFFORT WHEN THIS COUNTRY BECAME INVOLVED, BUT FOLLOWED UP AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE BY FATHERING THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION. ALTOGETHER, A REMARKABLE MAN.

NOW, IT SEEMS, THE TRUTH ABOUT SAM GOMPERS IS COMING TO LIGHT AGAIN. IRONICALLY, THE PROCESS MAY HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY THE LIQUIDATION OF HIS OWN CIGARMAKERS UNION, WHICH AS YOU KNOW HAS MERGED ITS SURVIVING HANDFUL OF MEMBERS INTO THE RETAIL, WHOLESALE AND DEPARTMENT STORE UNION. THIS CAUSED A NUMBER OF ENTERPRISING FEATURE WRITERS TO LOOK UP THE HISTORY OF THE CIGARMAKERS--AND IN SO DOING, TO RE-DISCOVER SAM GOMPERS. IT IS ABOUT TIME, FOR MUCH OF WHAT GOMPERS SAID ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS AS VALID TODAY AS IT WAS THEN.

IN DWELLING AT THIS LENGTH ON SAM GOMPERS I CERTAINLY MEAN NO DISCOURTESY TO THAT GREAT AND KINDLY MAN WHOSE NAME YOU HAVE LINKED WITH HIS. THE TIME MAY COME WHEN PHIL MURRAY'S REPUTATION ALSO NEEDS REHABILITATION, BUT ONLY AFTER ALL OF US WHO REMEMBER HIM SO WELL HAVE GONE.

PHIL MURRAY WAS KNOWN TO ALL TRADE UNIONISTS, EVEN THOSE WHO WERE IN THE AFL DURING THE TIME OF THE DIVISION, AND WHO HAD NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH HIM. HIS QUIET ELOQUENCE, THE DEPTH OF FEELING HE PUT INTO HIS CLASSIC LINES ABOUT THE WORKER'S ASPIRATIONS--"A CARPET ON THE FLOOR, A PICTURE ON THE WALL AND A LITTLE MUSIC IN THE HOME"--REACHED US ALL. YET HE WAS AS FORMIDABLE IN BATTLE AS HE WAS GENTLE IN PERSON. YOU DO WELL TO PAY HIM TRIBUTE.

NOW IT IS SURELY TIME FOR ME TO GET INTO MY SUBJECT, AND TO DO IT I WILL GO BACK ONCE MORE TO SAMUEL GOMPERS FOR A TEXT. HERE IS A GOMPERS QUOTATION:

"WE MAKE THE LUXURIES OF TODAY THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE FOR THE MORROW . . . MORAL, SOCIAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS IS PROGRESS IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL."

I'M SURE NO ONE IN THIS ROOM WILL DIS-
AGREE WITH THAT--BUT IT'S ALSO A LONG-RANGE
FORMULA FOR THE ENERGY CRISIS. AND IT ALSO
ILLUSTRATES WHY--DESPITE THE EASING OF GASO-
LINE SUPPLIES AND ALL THE OTHER RECENT RE-
LAXATIONS--THE ENERGY CRISIS IS GOING TO
BE WITH US FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

IN ONE SENSE, THE ENERGY CRISIS IS A
SIDE-EFFECT OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT'S SUCCESS.
TURNING LUXURIES INTO NECESSITIES MEANS MORE
GOODS THAT CONSUME MORE RAW MATERIALS
--GOODS WHOSE PRODUCTION REQUIRES MORE
ENERGY AND CREATES MORE POLLUTION.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT THIS; PESSIMISTS LIKE THE GROUP CALLED THE CLUB OF ROME HAVE BEEN WARNING FOR SOME TIME THAT THE ONLY WAY ANYONE WILL SURVIVE IN THE 21st CENTURY WILL BE IF TWO-THIRDS OF THE POPULATION IS WIPED OUT--PROBABLY BY STARVATION--AND THE REST TAKE TO LIVING IN CAVES. I AM NOT GIVING A LITERAL ACCOUNT OF THEIR PREDICTIONS BUT THAT'S THE GENERAL DRIFT OF THEM. AND AS YOU ARE PROBABLY AWARE, THESE PROPHETS OF DOOM ARE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

I SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT LARGE PARTS OF THE WORLD POPULATION WILL STARVE TO DEATH OR THAT WE WILL GO BACK TO LIVING IN CAVES. BUT I DO BELIEVE WE--AND I MEAN ALL OF US ALIVE TODAY--MUST FROM NOW ON BE AWARE THAT A DISASTER COULD HAPPEN UNLESS THE WORLD'S RESOURCES ARE SENSIBLY CONSERVED.

IN THAT SENSE, THE SUDDEN SHORTAGE OF OIL DID US, AND THE GENERATIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW US, A FAVOR. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING THAT COULD HAVE BROUGHT THE MESSAGE TO SO MANY PEOPLE IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.

I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A BLESSING WHILE IT WAS GOING ON. IT WAS A GOOD DEAL MORE TROUBLESOME FOR ME THAN THE PROBLEM OF GETTING GAS IN MY TANK.

SINCE I HAVE TAKEN ON THE ADDITIONAL JOB OF SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT, WE AT THE FMCS HAVE FOUND OURSELVES INVOLVED IN DISPUTES THAT ARE EVEN MORE COMPLICATED THAN THOSE BETWEEN LABOR AND MANAGEMENT.

THE WORK STOPPAGE OF THE INDEPENDENT OWNER-OPERATOR TRUCKERS IS AN EXAMPLE.

YOU WILL REMEMBER HOW IT TOOK ONLY A FEW DAYS FOR THE AMERICAN ECONOMY TO FEEL THE PINCH WHEN THE WHEELS OF MORE THAN 100,000 OVER-THE-ROAD TRUCKS STOPPED TURNING.

THE TRUCKERS THEMSELVES WERE IN A SQUEEZE. THEY WERE HAVING A TOUGH TIME GETTING THE FUEL THEY NEEDED--AND WHEN THEY GOT IT, THE PRICE WAS SO HIGH THAT IT SOMETIMES ELIMINATED THEIR PROFIT.

SO WE FOUND OURSELVES TRYING TO SOLVE THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF A POORLY ORGANIZED INDUSTRY--THE INDEPENDENT OWNER-OPERATORS-- AND A COMPLEX SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

IT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED TO MOST CITIZENS-- CONSIDERING THE RESULTS--THAT THE TRUCKERS WERE A WELL-ORGANIZED GROUP. JUST THE OPPOSITE WAS TRUE. AT ONE TIME WE KNEW OF 47 DIFFERENT INDEPENDENT OWNER-OPERATOR ORGANIZATIONS, AND I KNOW THAT I MET WITH MORE THAN 200 TRUCK DRIVERS PERSONALLY.

THE CHALLENGE WAS TO TAKE THE PROGRAMS OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS AND THE VARIOUS AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND BRING THEM INTO SOME KIND OF FOCUS. THIS FINALLY HAPPENED. BUT AS PHIL SHABECOFF LATER WROTE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, NO ONE REALLY KNOWS HOW IT HAPPENED.

I LOOK AT THE TRUCKERS' EXPERIENCE AS AN ALMOST CLASSIC EMBODIMENT OF WINSTON CHURCHILL'S PRONOUNCEMENT THAT DEMOCRACY IS THE WORST POSSIBLE FORM OF GOVERNMENT-- EXCEPT FOR ALL OTHERS.

THE PARTIES WERE POORLY ORGANIZED AND THE REAL ISSUES WERE VAGUELY DEFINED. THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT WAS UNPRECEDENTED AND THERE WAS NO CLEAR-CUT MECHANISM FOR DEALING WITH IT.

IT WAS A HOPELESS SITUATION--BUT IT WAS SETTLED.

OF COURSE, THAT WASN'T THE ONLY SHOW IN TOWN. THERE WERE PLENTY OF OTHERS INCLUDING THE THREATENED SHUTDOWN BY THE INDEPENDENT SERVICE STATION OPERATORS. BUT LET ME MOVE ALONG TO ONE THAT EMPHASIZES MY BASIC POINT.

IN TERMS OF THE ENERGY CRISIS, THE COAL MINERS WERE REALLY IN THE MIDDLE. WHAT THEY PRODUCED WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO MEET THE NATION'S DEMANDS. YET THEY THEMSELVES WERE CAUGHT IN A CRISIS OF THEIR OWN--THE SHORTAGE OF FUEL TO GET THEM TO AND FROM THE MINES.

I WANT TO SAY THAT THIS GENERAL PROPOSITION WAS TRUE OF ALL THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THESE SHUTDOWNS AND DEMONSTRATIONS. THEY DIDN'T WANT TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTRY; THEY WERE ACTING IN DESPERATION, CALLING ATTENTION TO THEIR GENUINELY DESPERATE NEEDS. OUR ROLE IN THE FMCS, ALONG WITH THE OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, WAS TO TRY TO FIND SOLUTIONS.

IN ANY EVENT, SOME 20,000 COAL MINERS IN WEST VIRGINIA STOPPED WORKING BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO FIND ENOUGH GASOLINE TO GET THEM SAFELY OVER THE MOUNTAIN ROADS TO AND FROM THE MINES.

DURING THE THREE WEEKS THAT THE FEDERAL ENERGY OFFICE, THE UNITED MINE WORKERS LEADERS, THE MINE MANagements, THE GOVERNOR OF WEST VIRGINIA AND I WRESTLED WITH THIS PROBLEM, WE CAME UP AGAINST ANOTHER FACT. WE FOUND THAT WHEN THE FLOW OF COAL TO THE STEEL MILLS IS INTERRUPTED, IT TAKES ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE STEEL PRODUCTION ITSELF IS THREATENED--ANOTHER REMINDER THAT WHEN ANY ONE SEGMENT OF OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM HOLDS BACK ITS PRODUCTION OR SERVICES, THE WHOLE NATION CAN BE PLACED IN JEOPARDY.

IF THIS ONE STRIKES YOU AS OBVIOUS, HERE IS ONE THAT GETS RIGHT DOWN TO THE NITTY-GRITTY. IT COMES FROM THAT SAME COAL MINING CASE.

MINES, AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, REQUIRE HEAVY SHORING OVERHEAD. THE BEAMS ARE KEPT IN PLACE BY ROOF BOLTS.

A SHORTAGE OF THE PARTICULAR STEEL USED IN MAKING ROOF BOLTS HAD KEPT THE SUPPLY LIMITED. THEN EARLY IN FEBRUARY, A STRIKE BY 170 PRODUCTION WORKERS CLOSED A SMALL PLANT IN MINGO JUNCTION, OHIO, THAT MAKES THESE ROOF BOLTS.

WITHIN DAYS, THE MINING INDUSTRY FOUND ITSELF COUNTING ITS BOLTS TO SEE IF IT HAD ENOUGH ON HAND TO EXTEND ANY MINES.

FORTUNATELY, WE WERE ABLE TO BRING THE PARTIES TO AN UNDERSTANDING AFTER A FEW WEEKS AND THE FLOW OF THE VITAL ROOF BOLTS RESUMED.

I AM WELL AWARE THAT SMALL AND SEEM-
INGLY INSIGNIFICANT ITEMS HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE IN THE PRODUCTION
OF GOODS. EVERYONE WHO COMES OUT OF AN
INDUSTRIAL UNION KNOWS HOW A HALF A DOZEN
WORKERS IN A KEY DEPARTMENT CAN CLOSE DOWN
THE WHOLE OPERATION.

YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT IN WORLD WAR II,
THE U.S. BOMBERS DEVOTED A GREAT DEAL OF
ATTENTION TO GERMAN BALL-BEARING PLANTS.
WE HAVE SINCE LEARNED FROM ALBERT SPEER,
HITLER'S PRODUCTION CHIEF, THAT IF WE HAD
CONCENTRATED ON THOSE TARGETS ALONE, THE
NAZI WAR MACHINE WOULD HAVE GROUND TO A
HALT MANY MONTHS SOONER.

TODAY, ALMOST EVERY LITTLE THING IS A VITAL ELEMENT IN ITS OWN WAY. THE ENERGY CRISIS MAY HAVE EASED ON THE SURFACE; THE GAS STATIONS ON CAPE COD AND IN THE BERKSHIRES MAY BE OPEN ON SUNDAYS; BUT THE BASIC CRISIS IS STILL WITH US, AND IN PLAIN TRUTH MAY ALWAYS BE.

THE LITTLE THINGS LIKE 10 MILES AN HOUR OR 10 MILES ON A GALLON; LIKE TWO DEGREES ON THE THERMOSTAT; LIKE COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS OF PAPER, BOTTLES AND CANS--THESE LITTLE THINGS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MINOR INCONVENIENCE AND A MAJOR EMERGENCY.

AS MANY OF YOU HAVE LEARNED AT FIRST HAND, AN ENERGY EMERGENCY GOES FAR BEYOND GETTING ENOUGH GAS TO GET TO WORK; IT CAN ALSO MEAN NOT HAVING A JOB TO GET TO.

ENERGY MAY BE THE MOST SERIOUS OF THIS COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS OVER THE LONG HAUL, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY NOT THE ONLY ONE. THERE IS A GENERAL SHORTAGE OF MATERIALS, AND IN THE FOREFRONT FOR EVERY FAMILY TODAY, THERE IS INFLATION. ALL OF THESE COMBINE TO POSE NEW CHALLENGES TO YOU IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT--AND TO US IN THE MIDDLE.

BUT I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT WE WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE BUT WILL CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS TOWARD A BETTER, MORE REWARDING SOCIETY FOR ALL AMERICANS, AND FOR THE PEOPLE OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD: THE CONTINUING PROGRESS TO WHICH MEN LIKE SAM GOMPERS AND PHIL MURRAY DEVOTED THEIR LIVES.

SAM GOMPERS AND PHIL MURRAY WERE GREAT MEN--GREAT LEADERS. BUT THIS NATION IS BLESSED WITH THE CAPACITY TO FIND GREATNESS IN EVERY GENERATION. THERE ARE LEADERS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT OF TODAY WHO ARE WORTHY SUCCESSORS TO THESE GIANTS OF THE PAST, WHO ARE PERFECTING THE SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING THEY DID SO MUCH TO CREATE, AND WHO ARE CARRYING FORWARD, STRIDE AFTER STRIDE, THE MARCH TOWARD THE SOCIETY OF PEACE AND PROGRESS THAT WAS THEIR DREAM. YES, I AM CONFIDENT IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND I AM CONFIDENT IN AMERICA.

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