1-30-1979

The Michigan Scene, delivered at the Meeting of Builders Exchange in West Michigan on January 30, 1979

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Notes for speech delivered by Arend D. Lubbers
at meeting of Builders Exchange in West Michigan
held in Grand Rapids January 30, 1979

THE MICHIGAN SCENE

I. Historical Development of the Nation

II. Similarity and Disimilarity in Michigan
   1. Kewenaw Peninsula
   2. small towns
   3. Detroit
   4. return to the country
      a. what to do about the city
      b. how to protect the environment in the country

III. Environmentalists Versus Developers
   A. Land Use - Could Force People and Business Back to Cities
   B. Use of the Great Lakes - Sports Versus Commercial Fishing
   C. Government Bureaucracy Gets Into the Act
      1. government official has rules to enforce, no payroll to meet
      2. non-productive dollars - not in payroll or capitol investment for productivity
   D. Use Of the Forests In the Past
      1. is there a happy balance - harvesting of forests - Scandanavian countries
   E. Need a Common Sense Board For Environmental Decisions
      1. what are the economic implications of an environment returned as close as possible to its natural state?
      2. what are the implications for our long range economic conditions, health, use of leisure time, etc. for considering only short term economic advantage in the use of our resources

IV. Industrial Giants and Labor Versus the Rest Of Us
   A. Capitalist and Worker Relationship Characterized the State Mining - Copper in Kewanaw Peninsula in 19th Century
   B. Capital and Labor Abuse
      1. England as an example within a free society
   C. Character of Industrial Giant
      1. inbred, myopic
      2. socially responsible as well as profit motivated
      3. gifts to society - story of French foreign officer
   D. Character of Big Union
      1. get as much as possible for members - little thought for others - create false impressions - no union is bad
      2. protect worker from exploitation - fair share of earnings
      3. provide education for workers
      4. help workers understand real condition of owners
E. A Existing and Potential Dangers to the Rest of Us
   1. corporations and unions are national - union can achieve objectives through lobbying and bargaining - make business climate difficult - grant corps can move much of manufacturing to more favorable climate for them
   2. A can get in to bed together - laws that suit them, inflated costs that help workers to not _____ Grant Corps -- only the rest of us suffer
F. A Protection
   1. other power groups - lobbying - Detroit News
   2. A aware citying
   3. A independent and mature press - media

V. A The Press - Positive or Negative in Our Society
   A. A Are the Papers Independent?
   B. Do we have state wide papers - respected, high quality - watching Detroit News
   C. APapers ride pet projects and pick targets - balance between wise investigating and mischief
   D. AElectronic media - take time to do in-depth work?
   E. AMedia, particularly press, often practice wounded animal syndrome

VI. A Education versus Education and What About the Rest Of You
   A. A Need for an aware citizen - understanding citizen
   B. Depend on education for its development A
   C. Citizens have to realize education is a power block in itself - good & bad
      1. good because it can be a countervailing force to other power groups
      2. A not been all that effective in doing so
   D. ABad - teachers spend more time in self protection and argument than in enjoying the responsibility of educating human beings
   E. A Higher education - Michigan best from one viewpoint - little bureaucracy - bad - highly political for each institution - hard for higher ed to police itself

VII. The State Reflected Through the Legislature
   A. A Recent power play in the Senate - what is reform
   B. A Once elected - a new political arena has its own battles - skill of the individual representative and senator, seniority to a degree, people represented through organizations and groups
   C. A Example - upper peninsula
   D. ALaws
      1. effect the whole state - property tax, income tax, libel laws, transportation law, fees, etc.
      2. area laws - appropriations, special grants, highways
      3. Affect the quality of life in the long run
Summary

1. Laws and programs that effect the business climate
   a. capital, profit, fair share in compensation
   b. balance between environmental protection and economic opportunity

2. Detroit - how much of states resources

3. Education - quality of teaching, attitude within the profession

4. Balance of power maintained

All for nought if there are not 51% of people or of the composite of peoples' attitudes for sharing as well as protection, for sincerely wanting a good life for all rather than thinking only of oneself and let the other guy take care of himself.
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1) Lower Peninsula
2) Small Towns
3) Detroit
4) Return to the Country
   a) What to do about the city
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Environmentalists versus developers

a) Sand Use - could force people & business back to cities
b) Use of the Great Lakes - sports versus commercial fishing

c) Govt. bureaucracy gets into the act
   1) Gov't official has rules to enforce no payroll tax
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d) Use of the Forests in the past -
   1) Is there a happy balance - harvesting of forests - Scandinavian countries

e) Need a common Sense Bd. for Environmental decisions
   1) What are the economic implications of an environment returned as close as possible to its natural state?
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IV. Industrial Giants - Labor versus The Rest of Us

A. Capitalist and worker relationship characterized the state - Mining - copper Keweenaw Peninsula in 19th century

B. Character of giant corporations, capital & labor, abuse
   1) England as an example within a free society
   2) Creating potential dangers to the rest of us, which
      a) Corps & Unions are national
      b) Unions can achieve their objectives through lobbying + bargaining
C. Character of Industrial Giant
   1) Inbred, irreligious
   2) Socially responsible as well as profit motivated
   3) Gifts to society - story of French Foreign Legion

D. Character of Big Business
   1) Set as much as possible for members - little thought for others - create false impressions - no union is bad
   2) Protect workers from exploitation - for share of earnings
   3) Provide education for workers
   4) Help workers understand real condition of owners

E. Creating & Potential Dangers to the Rest of Us
   1) Corp. unions are national - union can achieve objectives
      though lobbying + bargaining - make business climate difficult - Grant Corps can move much of manufacturing to more favorable climate for them
   2) Can get in to bed together - laws that suit them - inflated costs that help workers do not hurt Grant Corps - only the rest of us suffer

7. Protection
   1. Other power groups - lobbying Detroit News
   2. Aware citizenry
   3. Independent press + mature press - media

V. The Press - positive or negative in our society
   A. Are the papers independent?
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   D. Electronic media - take time to do in depth work?
   E. Media particularly press - often practice wounded animal syndrome

VI. Education versus Education + what about the rest of you
   A. Need for an aware citizenry - understanding citizen
   B. Depend on education for its development
   C. Cynics argue to realize education is a power block in itself - good + bad
      1) Good because it can be a countervailing force to other power groups
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D. Bad - teachers spend more time in self protection + argument than in educating human beings.

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   1) Effect the whole state - property tax, income tax, health laws, transportation, low fees, etc.
   2) Area laws - appropriations, special grants, always.
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January 30, 1979

Annual meeting of Builders Exchange of Grand Rapids and Western Michigan

Guest Speaker: President Lubbers

His Topic: "Michigan Scene"

Grand Rapids builders gather at annual meeting

The 67th annual meeting of the Builders Exchange of Grand Rapids and Western Michigan attracted a crowd of over 100, with the festivities held recently at the Grand Rapids Elk's Country Club.

Introduced to the membership as new directors of the Exchange were Kenneth E. Holtvluwer, Standale Lumber & Supply Co.; Bernard G. Malewitz, Hertel Plumbing & Heating Co.; and James G. Stephens, Grand Rapids Steel & Supply Co. Each will serve three year terms.

Early this month the Exchange also announced its officers for the coming year. Serving as president is Herbert J. Ritsema, the Herb Ritsema Co.; John W. Potter, John W. Potter Inc., is vice president; and A. Robert Poggi, Poggi-Harrison Agency, is treasurer.

G. Winston Burbridge is starting this 25th year as executive vice president of the Exchange with Keith E. Petersen serving in his 21st year as its assistant secretary-treasurer.

Dr. Arend D. Lubbers, president of Grand Valley State College, was the guest speaker for the annual meeting, delivering a talk on the "Michigan Scene."

Much of Lubber's address concerned itself with responsible land use. He discussed the return to the "county phenomena" in residential development and called for a "common sense," across-the-board approach to the formulation of environmental decisions.

"Picture yourself as a bureaucrat, assigned to enforce environmental laws," he said. "You'll find yourself developing rules in a vacuum, where business interests are ignored."

Citing certain features of the Scandinavian countries as potential models of environmental management, Lubbers said that in adapting principles from such systems to our own system, one must be careful in weighing their effects upon the business environment.

A temperate approach to such problems is probably the best, he said. "America has always succeeded whenever it has followed a middle path." However, he went on, "corporations can do the greatest good when they are socially responsible."

Besides the issues posed by a state attempting to obtain and maintain environmental standards while not hampering a healthy business climate, Lubbers briefly discussed two other areas that impact upon the function of Michigan's society: The role of the news media and that of education.

"Do we have a competent, state wide media?" he asked. An independent, mature press that delves comprehensively and responsibly into issues that affect Michigan is one ingredient of a healthy society, he said.

Coupled with such an institution should be an "aware citizenry," Dr. Lubbers continued, served further by a well managed and effective educational system. "The quality of education (given) over the next decade will affect the state for the next century," the college president noted.