

11 a.m., July 13, 1968

SPEECH AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONY

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Governor, Overton James, and my other esteemed friend, Gene

A. Lafitte, both acting for you, have by their invitation asking that I participate in today's ceremonies, conferred on me a very high honor. It is indeed a special privilege to respond to the request that I speak at this dedication of the Public Health Service Indian Clinic now established at Tishomingo.

One of the highest honors ever conferred on me, in all the years of my life, occurred when your great Governor, in 1964, appointed me as an honorary Chief of the Chickasaw Nation. I have been so impressed by this unusual honor that my gratitude for such high esteem cannot be expressed in words. However, there is one thing the Chickasaws can well remember, and that is I shall always be leading the fight for the rights and privileges to which the Chickasaws are justly entitled to receive.

The Chickasaws are a great and honorable people. To this day, in Mississippi, the land of their origin before coming to Oklahoma, there are monuments which mark their nobility, and attest Chickasaw courage and nobility. Always a brave and upright people, the Chickasaws will eternally remain Americans

of loyalty and fidelity. I am proud, beyond the capacity of any words to express it, of the high honor of being an honorary Chickasaw Chief.

As fellow Oklahomans, we live in a State which is truly the melting pot of north and south, east and west. We have much in common with both the old north and the old south because of many of our citizens who are descendents of those who followed Grant and those who followed Lee in battles of eternal glory, and descendents of those who were the followers of the great Chiefs of the Chickasaws, and of the other civilized tribes. In common with the new South and the new North, from a blending of these racial sources, Oklahoma today possesses a citizenry of marked intelligence, courage, and patriotism-- a people who are proud of their State, and proud of the nation of which it is a part.

Oklahoma is proud of its Indian brothers, composing about one-third of all the Indians in the United States-- a population which has contributed to the advancing civilization of this country. This is shown by the statuary in the Halls of the Capitol where one sees the figures of Sequoyah and Will Rogers-- a population which has contributed great artists and painters, and orators, and in addition Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox, the greatest athlete of all time.

We are here today for the purpose of dedication. We are here to dedicate this splendid new Health Clinic established at Tishomingo by our Federal Public Health Service. This

Clinic is only one of many which have been established by our government in behalf of the Indian people of Oklahoma. In 1967, this new Clinic carried out 464 outpatient visits. And up to May of this year the outpatient visits for this one Clinic number 2,178. And to show you the extent of the work of these medical clinics now established also at Idabel, Coalgate, Broken Bow, Antlers, and Jones Academy Health Center, I need point only to the fact that in 1967 the outpatient visits totalled 2,684, and in this year, through May the number of outpatient visits reached the high mark of 9,155. And, as Dr. Jack C. Robertson, Medical Director of our Indian Health Area has stated: "We recognize the Indian people as our Board of Directors, and we solicit their advice and suggestions to help us to better meet their health needs."

My friends, this splendid health facility will serve all of you, both young and old. So, on the occasion of this dedication I congratulate all of you who will derive benefit from the Clinic in the way of better health and a happier life.

Public benefits of this type have come to our Congressional District as part of a broader, more extensive program of the present national democratic administration. It is a program which has had my earnest and active support. I believe that our government should fulfill the real purposes of its existence as set forth in the preamble to the Constitution of the

United States wherein it is written that among other things the people of the United States intend that through the Constitution the people would promote the general welfare. Not only in the field of public health such as the Clinic we dedicate today, but in countless other services the Congress has provided funds to bring the blessings and advantages of new hospitals, nursing homes, as well as school and college buildings and other advantageous facilities throughout the nation. It is impossible to estimate the full benefits to our people resulting from increased rural electrification, interest free advances for public works planning by cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the State, not to mention the new post offices, courthouses, bridges, and great recreational projects.

My friends, our Federal government is truly converting the phrase "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" from being the expression of an ideal into an accomplished reality whereby it has made great strides toward equality of citizenship, prosperity, and happiness of the citizens of the nation. Through such Clinics as the one we dedicate today, there will result untold increase in better health and happiness of the Chickasaw people.

NATIONAL ISSUES OF THE DAY

1. CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

My friends, we all realize that our beloved land is today threatened by evils springing both from foreign and domestic problems.

On the domestic scene, we have all been shocked and appalled by the epidemic of devastating, destructive, and diabolical riots occurring in our metropolitan areas.

We stand aghast at uncontrolled violence which has resulted in the shooting down of Senator Kennedy, a leading presidential candidate.

Our people are horrified.

Thank God, we have many parts of our country like Heaven with peace and law obedience-- areas which present such a contrast to the arson, assault, burglary, looting, and murder which daily takes the lives of innocent people all the way across the land from Los Angeles to New York City.

I would like for you to know that as Majority Leader in the House of Representatives, I have supported and will continue to support any wise legislation provided by our federal government which will strike the axe at the root of national lawlessness-- this malignant wickedness, this anarchy in the midst of democracy-- this conglomeration of assorted crime destructive of the domestic peace of a great nation.

Federal action aimed at bringing this mass criminality to an end must now become the priority of the day.

The federal government has already enacted into law the omnibus anti-crime bill, the anti-riot bill, and other new laws aimed at overcoming Supreme Court decisions which have made good law enforcement difficult to say the least.

It is now a federal felony to use interstate facilities with the intention of inciting riots.

I think this bill will extend the nation's helping hand to dedicated state law officers whenever required.

My friends, we must add, in coming weeks, other anti-crime legislation because crime now costs this country each year as much money as it takes to fight the war in Vietnam.

Our people must be re-educated so that a spirit of law obedience will prevail throughout the nation.

In the words of Abraham Lincoln: "Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, and proclaimed in legislative halls. Let it be enforced in courts of justice."

We have already taken steps in the House to curb crime-- by passage of legislation aimed at the destruction of lawlessness by education-- by development of superior police techniques-- police equipment-- and development of new methods of riot control.

We have also enacted legislation to provide federal compensation for State and local officers injured in the line of duty in making an arrest for a violation of a law enacted by Congress.

In support of that bill I said to the Congress: "...in many cases the States or municipalities do not have adequate compensation for the injured or for the survivors of heroic officers who have been disabled or who have given their lives in the defense of the laws and institutions of the nation."

2. MY OPPOSITION TO FEDERAL REGISTERING OF GUNS AND LICENSING OF GUN OWNERS

My friends, all of you know from the television, news, and radio media that I have taken a stand against federal laws forcing the registration of guns, and licensing of gun owners. I have stated that I would support a simple straight-forward bill to prohibit the sale of all guns through mail order houses. When the bill known as the Safe Streets Act was before the House for action, it had my unqualified support. I have supported all wise federal legislation which would bring about increased and effective law enforcement. However, there is, as a result of the Constitution of the United States, a reservoir of State control over police power, crime, and law enforcement, and the Federal Government, observing the spirit of the Constitution should not strike down the rights of the States

in this respect unless situations arise which make Federal intervention absolutely necessary, wise, and unavoidable. It is my contention that this is not the case in regard to gun control legislation. In this respect, State laws can be more effective than federal statutes. Take for example, the effective gun control laws of the State of Oklahoma; laws which have been on our Statutes books for many years. By its law, Oklahoma fingerprints every person unlawfully carrying guns. Rioters carrying guns are certain to face serious punishment by the provisions of Title 21, Section 1312. In Oklahoma, assault and battery with any dangerous weapon is punishable by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years. Shooting with intent to kill, by provision of Section 652, Title 21, is punishable in the State Penetentiary not exceeding twenty years. In Oklahoma, it is unlawful for any person to carry concealed on or about his person a pistol or other deadly weapon, and if found guilty for the second time of such a violation is punishable by a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than two hundred and fifty dollars or by imprisonment in the County Jail not less than thirty days nor more than three months, or both, at the discretion of the Court. Oklahoma statutes have long provided the law now advocated by some Presidential candidates whereby punishment is increased when a gun is used in the commission of a crime. Section 801, Title 21, of our statutes provides a serious

penalty for robbery with firearms. The offense can be punishable by imprisonment at hard labor not less than five years, or by death. If in our State one person points a gun at another in anger or otherwise, the minimum penalty is three months in jail. After a person is convicted of a felony he is prohibited under our laws from carrying firearms, and if he does so he is held guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment in the State Penitentiary for not less than one nor more than ten years. In Oklahoma, it has long been the law that it is unlawful to sell weapons to a minor, or give weapons to a person under age. My friends, if all the States had the effective gun control laws of the State of Oklahoma, our entire country could eliminate most of the crime committed with the use of weapons. I think WE SHOULD TAKE AIM AT THE CRIMINAL AND NOT AT THE RIGHTS OF THE LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN. In my judgment, a criminal intent upon assassination, or murder, will not hesitate to violate a law requiring him to have a registered gun. And, furthermore, my friends, let us assume that gun registration and licensing of the owners will cause criminals to throw away their guns. What about their Molotov cocktails? How are you going to register their Molotov cocktails, such as those would-be assassins intended to use against Governor Reagan of California?

There are far more effective means of controlling illegal use of guns than a federal registration act. Efficient state laws, rigidly enforced, constitute a far better remedy than the bills now advocated by some in the House and Senate of the Congress.

My friends, for one, I have faith that this great country of ours can solve the difficulties which we face.

In this day of the strength, the wealth, and the power of our Republic, we must not allow a spirit of defeat to overcome our trust in the nation of our birth.

We can conquer our domestic problems.

We can surmount the wolves of faction.

We can destroy civil discord.

We can banish violence.

We can establish law and order.

As we gather here today, in dedication of your new health clinic, think of all the good to flow from the higher standard of living, contentment, and happiness because this project is now a reality in your community.

Let us move out from the shadow of pessimism and into the sunshine of a new hope.

Let us rejoice in the strength and spiritual power of our nation.

Let us recall the greatness of our State of Oklahoma, for in the future we will be traveling on to an era of peace, an age of greater progress in all the future years.