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Speech to Natl. Assn of Internal Revenue  
Service Employees, Milwaukee, Aug. 31, 1963

The March on Washington should be an urgent reminder ~~to~~  
~~Americans~~ that millions of Americans -- white as well as black --  
do not share in the full benefits of American democracy.

As a dramatic demonstration of ~~mass~~ protest against  
racial discrimination, the March was a brilliant success. I  
have never attended a more inspiring or more challenging spectacle.

The manner and the spirit with which this tremendous throng  
of a quarter million or so moved in and out of our crowded national  
capital was a great testimonial to the high character of the ~~poor~~  
demonstrators and the professional skill of their leaders. In  
all my years in public life, I have never been associated with a  
finer or better behaved group of people. I cannot imagine a more  
stinging rebuke to the racists of the South and the frightened  
little people throughout the country who for some mysterious  
reason assumed that this gathering of Negroes would become an  
unruly mob. *That was no more a mob than the Sunday congregations  
at Barry Goldwater's Episcopal Church.*

But the March on Washington has an even deeper significance  
than the crucial question of civil rights.

The Negroes of America <sup>do</sup> face tremendous problems ~~unique~~ <sup>because of</sup>  
their race. But ~~as Walter Lippmann pointed out in a column this~~  
~~week,~~ Negroes will face other problems -- deep seated problems common  
to whites as well as blacks -- even if the racial problems are solved.

~~The major problem is poverty.~~

The major problem is poverty. The Negroes of America form  
one large division in the great army of the American poor, which is



some 40 to 50 million strong. In today's prosperity, they are largely forgotten by society and ignored by government.

We can knock down the last vestiges of slavery, which deny colored Americans the freedom of movement and the chance at happiness which our Constitution is supposed to guarantee. I hope that Congress will do that this year, by passing President Kennedy's civil rights bill.

But that will still leave a great amount of unfinished business. Negroes can never be fully accepted into life in America until they have jobs, and incomes which will allow them to eat and live and play in a manner Americans have a right to expect.

As Walter Lippmann said: *this week*:

"The economic grievances of the American Negroes cannot be redressed without a series of measures which will make buoyant our sluggish economy. The candid truth here is that this is not likely to happen soon. For measures are required to stimulate our economy which are distrusted and opposed in Congress and, it would seem, in the country as well."

When they marched in from the farms, the small towns, <sup>and</sup> the urban <sup>by</sup> gettoes of America, some 250,000 strong, the marchers this week ~~confronted the nation that~~ brought a contented nation face to face with ~~almost~~ <sup>that part of the</sup> population ~~the fourth that~~ <sup>which</sup> rarely shows on the television screen because it is hidden by the cloak of poverty.

I hope the March on Washington will inspire -- or shame -- us to ~~wipe~~ wipe out the last traces of racial bigotry. And then I hope the nation will go on to conquer the even more difficult problem of -- black and white -- that fourth of a nation <sup>which lives in poverty.</sup>



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