

1917 to the burgeoning population of 275 million people today. At the beginning of my life, the nation was still in its horse-and-buggy days. Now we are in the age of instant communications, the Internet, jet-propelled planes, inter-planetary exploration, medical miracles, and the highest standard of living that the world has ever known.

We live in a country whose greatness seems to have been foreordained by her fortunate geography and rich natural resources, her agreeable and temperate climate, and by the hardy and industrious race of men and women who hewed her forests, cultivated her fields, bridged her rivers, built her cities, and created the American Dream that has excited the envy and won the admiration of mankind around the globe. How blessed we are to have inherited this pearl of great price! And how thankful we should be to the provident hand of that Omnipotent Being, who has favored our undertakings from the pre-dawn infancy of the colonial experience to the present-day meridian of the American Republic!

I am grateful for the Divine hand that delivered me, in my infancy to my home in West Virginia. I am grateful for wear-worn shoes; for the callouses of honest labor; and for the challenges of an unforgiving terrain. I am thankful for wrong turns that led to the right paths; for good people who inspired me to strive for great things; and for the rich experiences that taught me the difference between knowledge and wisdom.

I am grateful to the people of West Virginia for placing their trust in this adopted son of a poor coal miner, a mere "scrap boy" who used to go door to door gathering bits of food to fatten up the hogs raised by my foster father in a pen by the railroad tracks.

I am grateful to the people for giving me the opportunity to serve our state and our nation; to stand in the midst of history, among men and women who have changed the course of destiny, at the pinnacle of power in the greatest legislative body ever to grace the Earth.

And I am grateful to the people for their many kindnesses to Erma, my wife of 64 years, to whom I owe so much. She has been God's greatest gift to me.

West Virginians have given so much to me. Without your faith in me, I do not know where I would be today, but one thing I do know: I would not be here.

Never having forgotten my roots, I continue to be aware that my highest duty is to West Virginia and to the people of our state, who have honored me with public office for more than a half century.

My own less-than-modest beginning and the poverty of my state during my boyhood years have never faded from my view, and it has been my constant desire to improve the lives of the people who sent me to Washington. In many ways, I think that I have succeeded, but there is still work to do.

I am blessed to have had at my side a wife who, for 64 years, has been the central pillar of my home and my career. Erma and I grew from childhood to adulthood during the years of the Great Depression and in the coal mining towns of Southern West Virginia. The bottom rungs in our Ladder of Life were missing, but with God's help and by His grace, we have weathered storms of adversity and come through times of sorrow as well as joy to the present moment.

Not least of all, I owe much of my phenomenal success in serving the people of my state and my country to the many extraordinary men and women who have worked on my staff throughout my long career in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

As we have now crossed the threshold into a new century, I take this opportunity to

urge my fellow West Virginians to build their future on the development of the human mind and the rock of the human spirit. I hope that more and more West Virginians will understand the imperative of education and the value of our schools, and that we will restore education to its rightful position as the primary key that opens doors onto the classic American dream of fulfillment in life as individuals and as a society. I hope that increased numbers of parents will become involved in monitoring their children's learning progress, in encouraging better performance at all levels of their children's schoolwork, and in applauding the achievements of good teachers.

I also hope that increased numbers of children will discover and rediscover the joys of reading, that more and more students will find unfathomed challenges in mathematics and the sciences and in history, and that a new generation of well-educated, keenly interested, and highly dedicated and industrious students will emerge from our schools to assure our State's preeminence in every field of learning, business, industry, and endeavor known to man, and many fields yet unknown but waiting for some blade-sharp West Virginia intellects to invent and open doors to them.

I hope that West Virginians will continue to preserve and honor the old values that guided and sustained our fathers and mothers and more distant ancestors in their daily lives and in the life of our state from its earliest beginnings.

The Biblical proverb admonishes us, "Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set."

My foster parents on their knees influenced my life from my early beginnings. I am sure that many of you can say the same thing.

Man is a spiritual creature. But if that spirituality is ignored—if man's soul is allowed to starve—the result is spiritual death. And no task of national renewal will be possible unless that effort is also a task of spiritual renewal.

George Washington in his farewell address, made the point succinctly:

... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Scientists have long sought the so-called "missing link." The real missing link in our national cultural life is God.

From the depths of my heart, I thank Governor Bob Wise, House Speaker Bob Kiss, Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin, the members of both the House and the Senate, but most of all, I thank the people of West Virginia for the many years in which they have reposed their confidence and their faith in me. I have done my best.

May God always bless the State of West Virginia.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet, knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you and my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Senator BYRD as "West Virginian of the Century," and in thanking him for his tireless work on behalf of the great State of West Virginia and its millions of residents.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RAHALL, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Member (at the request of Mrs. CAPITO) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. NUSSLE, for 5 minutes, today.

#### SENATE BILL AND CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS REFERRED

A bill and concurrent resolutions of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 657. An Act to authorize funding for the National 4-H Program Centennial Initiative; to the Committee on Agriculture.

S. Con. Res. 35. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Lebanon, Syria, and Iran should allow representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the four Israelis, Adi Avitan, Binyamin Avraham, Omar Souad, and Elchanan Tannenbaum, presently held by Hezbollah forces in Lebanon; to the Committee on International Relations.

S. Con. Res. 42. Concurrent resolution condemning the Taleban for their discriminatory policies and for other purposes; to the Committee on International Relations.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 21, 2001, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows: