

# Text of Johnson Speech

NEW YORK, Oct. 3 (AP) — The prepared text of President Johnson's speech on his signing of the 1965 Immigration Act:

This bill is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or add importantly to our wealth and power.

Yet it is still one of the most important acts of this Congress and this Administration.

For it repairs a deep and painful flaw in the fabric of American justice. It corrects a cruel and enduring wrong in the conduct of the American Nation. It will make us truer to ourselves as a country and as a people. It will strengthen us in a hundred unseen ways.

I want to thank personally each member of the Congress who labored so long and so valiantly to make this bill a reality. I cannot mention all their names for it would take too long, but my gratitude, and

that of this Nation, belongs to this 89th Congress.

## Simple, Fair Test

This bill says simply that from this day forth those wishing to emigrate to America shall be admitted on the basis of their skills and their close relationship to those already here.

This is a simple test. It is a fair test. Those who can contribute most to this country—to its growth, and strength, and spirit will be the first admitted to our land.

The fairness of this standard is so self-evident we may well wonder that it has not always been applied. Yet the fact is for over four decades the immigration policy of the United States has been twisted and distorted by the harsh injustice of the national origins quota system.

Under that system the ability of new immigrants to come to America depended on the country of their birth. Only three countries were allowed to supply 70 per cent of all immigrants.

Families were kept apart because a husband or wife or child had been born in the wrong place.

Men of needed skill and talent were denied entrance because they came from southern or eastern Europe or from one of the developing continents.

This system violated the basic principle of our democracy—the principle that values and rewards each man on the basis of his merit as a man.

It has been un-American in the highest sense because it has been untrue to the faith that brought thousands to these shores even before we were a country.

Today, with my signature, this system is abolished.

We can now believe it will never again shadow the gate to the American nation with the twin barriers of prejudice and privilege.

America was built by a nation of strangers. From a hundred different places they have poured forth into an empty land—joining and blending in one mighty and irresistible tide.

The land flourished because it was fed from so many cultures and traditions and peoples.

From this experience, almost unique in the history of nations, has come our attitude toward the world. We, because of what we are, feel safer and stronger in a world as varied as the people who make it up—a world where no country rules another and all can

# on Signing of Immigration Act

deal with the basic problems of human dignity in their own way.

## 'Finest of Traditions'

Now under the monument which has welcomed so many the American nation returns to the finest of its traditions.

The days of unlimited immigration are past.

But those who come will come because of what they are—not because of the land from which they sprung.

When the earliest settlers poured into a wild continent there was no one to ask them where they came from. The only question was: were they sturdy enough to make the journey, strong enough to clear the land, enduring enough to make a home for freedom and brave enough to die for liberty, if necessary.

And so it has been through all the great and testing monuments of our history. This year in Vietnam men die named Fernandez and Zajac and Zelinko and Mariano.

Neither the enemy who kill them nor the people whose independence they fought to save ask them where they or their parents had come from. They were Americans. It was for free men and for America that they died.

By eliminating that same

question as a test for immigration we prove ourselves worthy of those men and of our own traditions as a nation.

## Welcomes Cubans

It is in that spirit that I declare to the people of Cuba that those who seek refuge here will find it. The dedication of America to our traditions as an asylum for the oppressed will be upheld.

I have directed the Department of State; Justice; and Health, Education and Welfare to make all necessary arrangements to permit those in Cuba who seek freedom to make an orderly entry into the United States.

Our first concern will be with those Cubans who have been separated from children, parents, and husbands and wives now in this country. Our next concern is with those who are imprisoned for political reasons.

I will send to the Congress a request for supplemental funds of \$12,600,000 to carry forth this commitment.

I have asked the Department of State to seek through the Swiss government the agreement of the Cuban government in a request to the president of the International Red Cross Committee. The request is for the assistance of the Committee in processing

the movement of refugees from Cuba to Miami. Miami will serve as a port of entry—and a temporary stopping place for refugees as they resettle in other parts of this country.

To all the voluntary agencies in the United States, I appeal for their continuation and expansion of their magnificent work. Their help is needed in the reception and resettlement of those who choose to leave Cuba. The Federal Government will work closely with these agencies in their tasks of charity and brotherhood.

## Florida Praised

I want the people of this land to know of the enormous contribution which the compassionate citizens of Florida have made to humanity and decency. All states in this Union can join with Florida in extending the hand of helpfulness and humanity to our Cuban brothers.

The lesson of our times is sharp and clear in this movement of people from one land to another. Once again, it stamps the mark of failure on a regime when many of its citizens voluntarily choose to leave the land of their birth for a more hopeful home. The future holds little hope for any government where the present holds no hope for the people.

And so we will welcome these Cuban people. For the

tides of history run strong, and in another day, they can return to their homeland to find it cleansed of terror and free from fear.

Over my shoulder you can see Ellis Island, where vacant corridors echo today the joyous sounds of long-ago voices.

And today we can all believe that the lamp of this grand old lady is brighter today—and the golden door she guards gleams more brilliantly in the light of an increased liberty for people from all countries.