

# Agnew Praises Youth for Seeking Change and Backs Vote at 18

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

WASHINGTON, June 17— Vice President Agnew praised young people today for their determination to change the governmental system and strongly endorsed their right to vote at age 18.

But Mr. Agnew cautioned, in a speech to 200 executives of the I.T.T. Corporation, that change comes slowly and requires "a generous spirit of compromise."

It was the second time in three days that Mr. Agnew had sought to open his own lines of communication to those he described today as "energetic young people of this country who are dedicating themselves to working within the system."

At a Republican fund raising dinner in Detroit on Monday, the Vice President outlined a philosophy on dissent in which he diminished considerably his outspoken opposition to young antiwar dissidents. He contended today that the

Nixon Administration, in seeking such things as Federal revenue sharing with states and cities, welfare reform and a revamping of the electoral college, was dedicated to changing the system.

Young Americans, Mr. Agnew said, "have the same goal that we do. We earnestly ask them to join us."

The Vice President recalled that he had sought to lower the voting age ever since he was Governor of Maryland.

"If a man is old enough to serve his nation at arms at 18, is he not old enough to vote?" asked Mr. Agnew. "If a woman is considered mature enough to enter a lifetime contract of marriage at 18, is she not mature enough to vote?"

"Once our young people are permitted the privilege of sounding off at the polls," he said, "there will be less need to sound off in the streets. They'll have the chance to be counted where it counts."

The Vice President made the remarks shortly before the House of Representatives passed and sent to the President a Senate bill that would give 18-year-olds the right to vote.

It was not clear immediately from Mr. Agnew's comments whether he would specifically endorse that proposal. The White House, while supporting the concept, has expressed some reservations about lowering the voting age by law rather than through a constitutional amendment.

There was no mistaking, however, the Vice President's attempt to persuade young Americans that he favors their "unprecedented interest in political affairs."

Mr. Agnew said that youths today were "showing a spirit of inquiry and concern, a spirit that will not accept the institutions of the past unquestioned."

Although emphasizing that he welcomed the trend, Mr. Agnew noted that the slowness of change "can be frustrating, especially to young people with high hopes."

The Vice President conceded that "sometimes beneficial changes are impeded by the structures of our Government, to the detriment of our nation." But he added that "for every good proposal that is hindered, 10 bad ones are sufficiently retarded that the citizens and their representatives can take the time to consider them and,

fortunately for us all, ultimately to reject them."

Echoing the theme that he struck Monday night in Detroit, Mr. Agnew said that in a system based upon majority rule

"it is not enough to dissent if you want new laws, new structures or new men. Concern about the issues and a desire for reform must be coupled with persuasion."

He called for "a generous spirit of compromise, a willingness to yield to the wishes of the majority and to do so without rancor, without harboring the bitter thought that we have not been heard or understood."

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