Remarks of Under Secretary John A. Carver, Jr., Before the Banquet Meeting for the Green County Democratic Organization, Clarksville, Pennsylvania, Saturday, October 23, 1965

Among the fringe benefits of an appointive position in the Administration of President Lyndon Johnson is the occasional opportunity, such as I have tonight, of talking about that Administration on a basis broader than one's day-to-day responsibilities; of participating in the elementally refreshing experience of a political meeting of the people of a Congressional District with their Congressman; and of shaking loose for at least a few hours from the routines of government to talk with people who look at government from the other side of the counter. And one shouldn't fail to mention what a spectacularly beautiful appearance Pennsylvania presents this time of year.
Your Congressman and your President both know that in our system, sovereignty rests with the people. President Johnson has been a Congressman and a Senator; neither he nor Mr. Morgan forgets that the objective of government is to serve the people, and to be responsive to their needs.

It came to me the other day that there is little hint in the name of the Department of the Interior as to what its functions are. If you think about it, you will see that almost all the others convey some idea of what they do by their names—-the Commerce Department is involved with trade and commerce; Agriculture with farms and farmers; Health, Education and Welfare with these things; Treasury with our money; Defense with our national security and safety. Even in the specialized language of the subject, the State Department can be considered a more descriptive term than Interior, as
it refers to the unity of our federal system of separate sovereignties in its face to the rest of the world--we are one national state.

Perhaps these musings explain why tonight I want to spend a little time with definitions. We define the Interior Department in various ways: we call ourselves a Department of Natural Resources and a Department of Conservation, and we are sometimes called the Department of the West. But mostly, we tell all the things we do--administer national parks, care for Indian resources and assist with Indian welfare, reclaim the desert and generate and distribute electric power on the rivers of the West, keep track of our mineral and water resources and otherwise administer the public lands, as well as look toward the well-being of commercial and sport fisheries, run a railroad, investigate desalting of sea and brackish
waters. Then we try to tie these things together in some sort of unity, and relate the whole to other functions of government.

So Interior means different things to different people--in Pittsburgh it may mean coal more than fish, in Cape Cod it means a national seashore, and in Gallup, New Mexico, it means the Indian Bureau. What we hope is that it means something worthwhile in every case.

Perhaps it is so with some of the terms and phrases of our political lexicon.

The "New Deal" was such a term. It described a program of a national administration which cared. For segments of our society it meant different specific things. Looking back on it, we get a sense of unity and purpose, but we also remember that the components of a broadly sick society got specific remedies: the
Emergency Relief Act for the needs of the immediately hungry and homeless for whom normal welfare machinery had collapsed; the Civilian Conservation Corps and the N.Y.A., both of which attracted leadership talent which has come far since; the Agricultural Adjustment Act for the farmers; the N.R.A. for business, various regulatory and banking laws to get the financial system back on an even keel, etc.

The Fair Deal of Harry S. Truman reflected a similar breadth of compassion and concern for human values. As our country put aside the preoccupation with war production, with all its constraints, it was important that the man in the White House remembered what government's real objectives were. By the Fair Deal the American people were assured that there would remain a fair and equitable balance to our civilian economy; that we would renew the effort to achieve social justice.
Of course the Fair Deal of Harry Truman had its international aspects, too: the Marshall Plan, of course, rebuilt a free Europe; and we stood firm in Korea as we are now standing firm in Viet Nam.

I could talk also of other banners which have come to have meaning, some in a negative sense. For example, the Great Crusade assumed a hollow ring after a few years of lackluster performance.

But my real purpose is to talk about a new term, one which is getting deeper meaning each day—as with the New Deal, in different ways for different people, but still possessing a unity and sense of purpose as a whole.

The Great Society was first mentioned by President Johnson at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in May of last year. Because I would not try to paraphrase, I am going
to read certain sections of the President's charter of action, set forth for the University students:

"The challenge of the next half century," he said, "is whether we have the wisdom to use (our) wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization."

He outlined the dimensions of the challenge most graphically:

"... Many of you will live to see the day, perhaps 50 years from now, when there will be 400 million Americans; four-fifths of them in urban areas. In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, highways and facilities equal to all those built since this country was first settled. So in the next 40 years we must rebuild the entire urban United States."

and the broad outlines: