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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Remarks by John T. Barry at Democratic State Convention in Brewer

Date: March 23, 1956

Recording number: Tape 20, part 2

Length of recording: 8:34

[Transcript begins]

MINCHER: The following material is excerpts from the keynote speech made at the Democratic State Convention in Brewer, March 23rd 1956, by John T. Barry.

BARRY: One feels a certain sense of awe as he stands facing this magnificent gathering of democrats in a state where the mere mention of our party's name brings an arched eyebrow and a whimsical smile. And why? Because you will find that our opposition as such, is stamped mainly from expediency. They say it's fashionable and I look back with honest pride when in my travels throughout the country, and in the armed services, I was looked upon and treated with the greatest respect because I was a Democrat from the state of Maine [Applause] And I didn't conceal that fact for one moment. It was truly an honor. But I mentioned my feeling because in this gathering here tonight are great Democrats. Men and women of solid and sound principles and I think back on the long list of departed greats, giants in their day, who although Democrats were for works of strength in our state of Maine. I am a great believer in American history, the fascinating study of state and nation, and those who built them with their sweat and toil and blood and sound judgment. And whoever ventures into such a study, ventures into a veritable field of the cloth of gold. I am a Democrat through heritage, through belief, and through study. And now most certainly the time is common we Democrats in the state of Maine can hold our heads high. Now the time has come when we can appreciate our strength and serviceability. We have the opportunity, the responsibility, yes, the sacred duty, of proving our devotion to our beloved state. We do not fear any comparisons that the opposition may make. We make our stand firm. We meet their challenge in the open, face-to-face. We have great faith in our state's future. We are not discouraged by the obstacles and the untruths that are thrown in our way. We welcome all comparisons and meet them with sincerity, with vigor and abounding loyalty.

[A few seconds of silence.] For the well-being of the state of Maine, my friends, we must have a strong two-party system. We have been puppeted in the past, it is true. But our heads never bowed. We've fought back and fought back well and in the final analysis, the value of the political party to both the state and the nation is twofold. It must propose a program which we certainly shall do with this convention, and I must carry its program into action by electing our representatives to office throughout the length and breadth of this state. We must and we shall be sincere and honest for the people of Maine and assure them that our promises are not made for expediency or in a gesture of opportunism. We consider them sacred documents built on infallible promise.

[A few seconds of silence.] At this point, let us pause momentarily, in retrospect. Let us take steps in treating a festering sore on the blistered back of our executive department. Let us dwell briefly on a gross miscarriage of justice. Let us point an accusing finger in the direction of a constituted act. Let us rip the mask from a duly authorized body call the Executive Council. [Applause] Under what guise can the people of Maine, who called for the two-party system to protect their only voice and government, swallow such a controlling branch? Is the council so created as to protect only the interests of the opposition party who is its manipulator? Must the governor of our state be hamstrung and continually blocked in his strict observance of fairness and progressiveness for the state and its citizens? Our forefathers constituted the Council to lend assistance and give advice to the people's elected representatives and to give stability to government, not to serve as errand boys of a hostile opposition state committee. [Applause] A State Committee who punish their own party members when they show outward fire in the courage of their own convictions. Is not constitutional reform needed here to remove a concentration of political power which is divorced from direct responsibility to the people?

For the first time in two score years this convention welcomes and will be addressed by a Governor of the State of Maine [Applause], a Governor of whom the entire state and nation is justly proud, and rightly so. Maine has a Governor today that has lived by his promises, a Governor whose every trait exudes honesty, the honesty that hates hypocrisy of any type and cannot live with concealment and deceit. He has aroused citizenship participation in government and has assumed and bears well the responsibility for our state's progress. He has displayed the greatest of qualities and although burden from opposition from the majority, of those who surround him in legislative and executive positions, he has met every problem fearlessly and without bias. Every situation with deep resource and dignity. His personal leadership has been fundamental in his great success. He appealed personally to the voters of Maine from state line to international boundary and carried on with him forward his message of truth and deep sincerity and the people of Maine awoke from their lethargy and admired his honesty and perseverance and in a simple statement said, he's the man for Maine. And how right they were. [Applause]

MINCHER: The previous material was voiced by John T. Barry, Bangor City Councilor, at the Brewer Democratic State Convention, March 23rd 1956.

[Transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

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