

SUBJECT: "The 87th Congress and the Party Leaders"

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Senator Everett Dirksen (R.-Ill.)

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FLANNERY: WASHINGTON REPORTS . . . TO THE PEOPLE!

What can we expect from the new Congress? What will be the attitude of the Republicans toward the new Kennedy Administration?

Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois, Republican leader of the Senate, and Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, Democratic leader, answer these questions for you. This radio station and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations bring you first from the Capitol, the minority leader, Senator Dirksen.

Senator Dirksen, what will be the attitude of the Republican party toward the new President, Kennedy?

DIRKSEN: If I were to use a single word, I would say a constructive attitude. By that I mean this, the election is over and now it is our responsibility, regardless of the labels we wear, to work in the interest of the country. We shall do so without rancor, without bitterness, and always on the constructive side, being mindful, of course, of what the Republican tradition and the general Republican principle is. I am quite confident that there will be no blind opposition to a program.

Certainly we will be in disagreement in a great many cases on means and methods, probably not so much disagreement on goals and we will undertake to modify as we go along and, if we cannot modify, there will be times when we will have to oppose -- but it will be a constructive attitude.

FLANNERY: What do you expect the main legislative objectives of the Republicans will be in the current session, Senator?

DIRKSEN: Well, these will be determined somewhat by what the administration lead will be. As an example, there was introduced a bill for the relief of distressed areas. That will be the administration bill. Almost as soon as that was introduced I got the Senate floor and introduced our version of the distressed areas bill. It differs in some material respects from the so-called Douglas Bill. It doesn't carry quite as much money -- but we believe it is a far much better bill. We believe there is more balance in it and there are a great number of features to recommend it.

There you have a case where there is no difference so far as the objective is concerned. We freely can see that there are depressed areas in the country. We can see that there ought to be some federal action. The type of action, however, the amount of matching and that sort of thing, differs in the sense that we believe it is an inherent problem where it has got to be cured from within, and you can dump a lot of money into those areas and still not come up with a durable remedy.

But, I think that illustrates pretty well what I mean.

FLANNERY: What other legislation do you expect, Senator?

DIRKSEN: You will probably have, at an early stage in the session, a bill relating to amendments to the fair labor standards act, commonly referred to as the minimum wage bill. There again, we have a proposal, the administration has a proposal. They differ in a number of particulars.

I presume an effort will be made if they carry out the proposals in the administration platform to do something about secondary boycotts. Well, there you have a difficult problem because you can

scarcely find a substitute proposal for them. You could amend it, for instance, to exclude defense plants, let us say, but you couldn't, very well, get away from the basic principle that is involved except to oppose it as such.

Another is Section 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act. That involves the question of the rights of states to legislate in the labor field, and, very particularly, the existing laws on right to work. If you repeal Section 14-B, I rather gather, as far as my own explorations go, that all the state laws on this subject would fall and that's quite an undertaking. We might find ourselves in opposition without actually being able to bring in a substitute.

Well, those are just some of the things. In addition, of course, you have housing. You doubtless have a health bill to take the place of the health for the aged bill that we passed in the last session which conjoined the federal and state governments on a direct appropriation basis to provide help for aged and health care.

Perhaps I can set this in a single frame by saying that my experience has been -- for nearly 28 years here -- that year after year you are plowing old ground. There are just new things that come along -- housing, social security, health, federal aid for education, foreign aid, the appropriation bills -- these are things with which we deal year after year.

So, the format will not be a great deal different except in one respect -- I do not know, at the moment, what will happen so far as our relations with Cuba are concerned, not what action may ultimately be taken with respect to Laos. I have been out there twice, I know what a difficult situation it is, so you may get some new items in that field. But, in the main, as you look at the whole international and domestic picture, we are going to be considering a lot of things that will be entirely familiar to the members of both houses because they have been under consideration before and hearings have been held in the respective committees over a long period of time.

FLANNERY: Thank you very much, Senator Dirksen. Now to the Senate Radio Gallery and Senator Mansfield.

Senator, what do you expect in the current session of Congress?

MANSFIELD: Well, I anticipate that the five-point program, laid down by the President-Elect will be passed by the Congress. We have held hearings on all these measures, all we have to do now is to up-date them. I think there will be a great deal of unity behind Mr. Kennedy and I am hopeful that we will be judged, not on the basis of the quantity of legislation passed but the quality of legislation.

FLANNERY: What are the five items, Senator?

MANSFIELD: There is housing, aid to depressed areas both urban and rural, there is the matter of minimum wage, there is also the matter of aid to education and one or two others which he has mentioned specifically and which we will try to bring to the floor as soon as we possibly can.

FLANNERY: You mentioned housing first, Senator. What is proposed in the housing bill, would this be a comprehensive housing bill?

MANSFIELD: Yes, it would be a comprehensive housing bill because I think it is needed and our people are in need of this type of legislation. There is a severe slump in the housing industry and this will help them.

May I point out, Harry, that all these measures are in themselves, in a certain sense, civil rights measures because they apply to all our population, regardless of race, color or creed and thereby all our population will be benefitted.

FLANNERY: What do you expect in minimum wage?

MANSFIELD: I would hope that we would be able to pass a minimum wage bill raising the figure to \$1.25. What the House will do, I do not know, perhaps over there they may not reach that level, perhaps \$1.15. But, if that's the case, then I hope that the coverage would be extended considerably.

FLANNERY: Now in regard to the health insurance to the aged. What do you expect in that, Senator?

MANSFIELD: We can't do anything in that field until and unless a bill is reported out of the Ways and Means Committee in the House, passes the House and is referred to the finance committee in the Senate and is reported out there. However, if there is no action forthcoming in that matter, I would assume that we will be ready to consider the possibility of attaching an amendment covering medicare for the aged to a bill of a different nature which may have been reported out of the House by the Ways and Means Committee.

FLANNERY: Are you hopeful that this would include the social security feature of the health care for the aged?

MANSFIELD: Yes, indeed.

FLANNERY: And what about extending this to those who won't be covered by social security?

MANSFIELD: I think we ought to give them serious consideration because many good people have gotten by on their own savings, they were not covered by social security, their savings have run out and they, too, are entitled to every possible consideration. But I think we ought to have the inclusion of those in social security as a base and then expanded.

FLANNERY: One of the most important measures, I imagine, in the session of Congress now in progress will be aid to depressed areas.

MANSFIELD: There are a large number of permanent pockets of unemployment now, in our large industrial areas. There seems to be no way to furnish them with the sustenance of life at the present time and, certainly, it is a government responsibility to see that these people, who are out of jobs through no fault of their own, are given the opportunity to live as decent normal Americans and to have jobs.

FLANNERY: What about civil rights? Do you expect anything in this field at all?

MANSFIELD: As far as civil rights legislation itself is concerned, it would be my belief that in view of what President Kennedy said during the campaign that he would use to the utmost the powers which are vested in the presidency and which have not been used up to this time. Then if these are not enough to assure that every American is given the equality of opportunity and the rights which are his under the constitution, I would assume that civil rights legislation would be introduced.

FLANNERY: These are in the domestic field. What about the foreign field? First of all in connection with defense. Do you foresee any major changes in the defense program, Senator?

MANSFIELD: I would anticipate some changes because Mr. Kennedy has been open in some of his statements relative to our defense posture. He feels that we ought to have a better conventional armed force. He feels that our strength ought to be beefed up because only on the basis of strength can we negotiate with people like the leaders of the Soviet Union. But I would think that that wouldn't take too much more in the way of money because there must be some water in the defense department which could be squeezed out. There could be a centralization, I think, on the Manhattan type project basis whereby research and development, in the field of missiles, could be taken away from the various armed services and put in one central agency, thereby concentrating manpower, material and money and I think achieving a good deal more for less.

FLANNERY: Do you think that there will be any further implementation of your proposals in connection with foreign aid? I am referring specifically to bringing Germany, Japan and other countries which have recovered sufficiently to participate in the program.

MANSFIELD: I don't know what the President's position is but I feel that he would be in favor of a more collective idea in the field of foreign aid because these countries which we have helped are now on their feet. They should assume their proportionate share of the burden and they should recognize the fact that they too, if they wish to survive, and to carry on as they want to, owe an obligation to these underdeveloped countries.

I would anticipate that the President would put more emphasis on economic aid and less on military assistance. I would anticipate that he would do away with the waste, the overlapping and the duplication which has been inherent in foreign aid programs under both Democratic and Republican administrations and that in return, we would get more in the way of value for the dollars expended. I would say furthermore, Harry, that the President does not believe that dollars alone are the answers to our problems overseas.

FLANNERY: Thank you, Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, majority leader and Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois, minority leader.

Each week this radio station and the AFL-CIO seek to keep you up to the moment on Congress with interviews of both Republican and Democratic leaders.

This is Harry W. Flannery who invites you to be with us next week at the same time for the next program in this public service educational series, WASHINGTON REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE.