

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen  
16th (ILL.) District

7/13/46

THE UNADORNED HISTORY OF THE EFFORT BY 48 STATES  
TO RECAPTURE A STATE FUNCTION WHICH WAS LOANED  
TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN 1940.  
(In 10 episodes)

EPISODE 1. On December 19, 1941 President Roosevelt telegraphed the governors of the various states asking them to loan the United States Employment Service to the Federal Government to aid in recruiting manpower for the war effort. This transfer, including all records, facilities, personnel and property, was completed on January 1, 1942 in the short space of eleven days.

EPISODE 2. In the Appropriation Bill for the Federal Security Agency for the fiscal year 1946 it was recognized that the transfer of the Employment Service was only a loan and a provision was inserted in that bill to the effect that these facilities "loaned by the states shall be returned not later than three months after termination of hostilities in the war with Japan as determined by presidential proclamation or a concurrent resolution by Congress".

EPISODE 3. After V-J Day no effort was made to return the Employment Services to the states. Instead a bill was introduced by Representative Ramspeck of Georgia on October 18, 1945 to keep the Employment Service in the hands of the Federal Government until June 30, 1947. This bill also contained other control features and even went so far as to authorize the Secretary of Labor to create duplicate systems in the various states if he was not satisfied with the manner in which the employment offices were being operated.

EPISODE 4. On January 15, 1946 Congressman Dirksen of Illinois offered a substitute bill which would return these offices to the various states on or before June 30, 1946 without any strings attached thereto so that they would be restored to the same position which they held before they were loaned to the Federal Government by the various states. This substitute bill was adopted by the House of Representatives on January 29, 1946 by a vote of 254 to 125. This substitute bill had the support of at least 46 of the 48 governors.

EPISODE 5. This substitute went to the Senate on the same day that it passed the House and slumbered peacefully in a ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> ~~con~~ <sup>con</sup> ~~hole~~ for nearly four months. It was finally dusted off and passed by a close vote of 36 to 32. The Senate, however, had restored all the objectionable provisions of the Ramspeck bill.

EPISODE 6. On June 11, 1946 the House of Representatives passed the Labor-Security Appropriations Bill which provided funds for the operation of the Federal Security Agency and the Department of Labor. This bill carried a provision which would have forced the return of these Employment Service offices to the states on or before September 30, 1946.

EPISODE 7. On June 29, 1946 the Senate passed the Labor-Security Appropriation Bill but instead of passing it substantially in the form in which it passed the House it inserted seven full pages of new legislative material which in effect included all the objectionable features of the original Ramspeck bill and sought to delay the transfer of these services.

EPISODE 8. This Appropriation Bill was then sent to a conference committee made up of members from both House and Senate, and after considerable labor agreed on the final form of this appropriation bill. Most of the objectionable provisions of the Ramspeck bill were removed or modified and the agreed date for the return of these Employment Services was fixed at November 15, 1946. Meanwhile, the original Ramspeck bill as amended by the Dirksen substitute was sent to the Rules Committee of the House where it reposes as of this moment and it may be that no action will be taken thereon so that the bill will die in this session of Congress.

EPISODE 9. The Labor-Security Appropriation Bill with the provision for the return of these services to the states on or before November 15, 1946 was finally approved by the House and Senate this week.

EPILOGUE. Such is the tortuous and long drawn out effort to bring about a bit of decentralization in government and to return certain functions of government to the grass roots where they belong.