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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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After six months in Washington, it is good to be home again -- to see you, to talk to you, and to find out what your problems -- and mine -- are. The recent session of Congress has been described by many old timers as the hardest that they can remember. As a "greenhorn" representative I can say that it was the toughest six months of my life. I have received an average of more than 50 letters a day, attended innumerable committee meetings and all daily sessions of the House, and voted on every measure brought before the lower chamber for its consideration. I have voted my honest convictions on each bill only after long and careful consideration. My paramount thought has been: will it help my country and my state? As many of you will recall I made only one promise during my campaign, and that was to do my honest best all the time. That promise I have kept and will continue to keep as long as I am in office.

Some of the problems I have had to contend with are the O.P.A., the farm situation, labor, the Flathead Lake project, the sugar beet situation, and the conduct of the war. These are only a few of the many questions facing all Congressmen, and to the best of my ability I will try to discuss as many of them as I can. At the present time affairs on the different war fronts are, generally speaking, going very well. On the home front our condition is not so fortunate. I hear a good many complaints about the O.P.A. from all groups of people, and many of them are justified. However, it must be recognized that some controlling agency has to be in operation to help control inflation. To do that is O.P.A.'s function, and even though it has made many mistakes it has been responsible for "holding the line." By that I do not mean that it has stopped inflation or high prices, but certainly it has exercised a powerful effect in the control of inflation.
Ever war has brought inflation, and this one is proving no exception in spite of costly control efforts. In World War I it affected the economic and commercial condition and relationships of every country in the civilized world. Germany's currency was destroyed, that of France was devalued 80%, and even in this country the effect was noticeable. In 44 months of the First World War our cost of living rose 40%; in the 44th month of the Second World War our overall cost of living... Inflation arises from unbalanced budgets, excessive debts, dislocated production, scarcity of goods, heavy taxes, and the excessive buying power created by war purposes. All these factors have affected us and will continue to as long as the war continues on a world wide scale.

The debt of the Federal government is expected to reach 210 billion dollars by the end of the fiscal year. In spite of the efforts to hold down prices and wages, the cost of living and the costs of business have mounted sharply. Labor organizations are demanding new wage increases because of the rising cost of living. The producers of food, oil, housing, and other products are demanding price increases because of the increased wages and taxes. While wages in some occupations have risen much faster than the costs of living, in other occupations, and particularly in peacetime occupations, wages have lagged far behind the rising costs of living. In many of these occupations an increase in wages to offset the increase in the costs of living will force the shops into bankruptcy. Because of these factors your Congress has an extremely difficult job on its hands. In an effort to cope with this situation the O.P.A. was created, not by this -- the 78th -- Congress -- but by its predecessor, the 77th. When we consider the magnitude of the job it has and will continue to face we should be able to find charity in our hearts for the real efforts expended. Your Congress, in an effort to help in the...
administration of the O.P.A., inserted an amendment into the last appropriation act, whereby officials in price fixing and price regulating positions must have had practical business experience in the fields covering their responsibilities. It is to be hoped that this -- plus common sense -- will bring about an alleviating of some of the difficulties facing that agency.

I feel quite strongly that other changes should be considered as well. If possible I should like to see the number of regulations reduced and those that remained simplified so that Mr. Wright, my corner grocer and Mike Mansfield, his Congressman, both could understand them. At the present time only a Philadelphia lawyer could do so.

I would also like, if possible, to see O.P.A. put on a state basis with greater power in the hands of the State Administrator so that the peculiarities which mark our different political divisions could be more equitably attended to. After all, a state like Montana with its great area, scant population, and problems pertaining to gasoline, vegetables, and other necessities like the like can not be considered on the same basis as states like New York, California, and others where like situations do not prevail. This is not an unjust or unfair criticism but only a suggestion to remedy the administration of an agency necessary at a time like this.

The Farm question is another problem. There is no "farm bloc" in Congress, but there are "farm blocs." From my brief experience in Washington, I would venture the statement that the farm problem will never be settled because the factors involved vary from year to year. However, the two main difficulties have been lack of manpower and lack of machinery. Neither of these have been settled satisfactorily, altho draft deferments have helped in part. We allowed so little steel that the problem of machinery or even parts will not be solved this year.
We should profit from experience, tho, and realize that if the manpower is to be taken off the farm, machinery must be produced and allocated to make up for the deficiency.

Speaking of farmers brings up the question of sugar beets. I can see no reason for Marvin Jones or the Agriculture Department to keep our beet acreage at its present low level. I have protested this arbitrary and uncalled for action because it is both unjustifiable and economically unsound. With sugar as scarce as it is we should encourage more beet production not only because it is beneficial to Montana, but also because the American market is the American farmer's.

All of us in Montana — farmers, workers, housewives and businessmen — have a stake in this state. Probably the richest natural resource we possess is our water, especially Flathead Lake and the headwaters of the Flathead River. I don't own a stick of timber or a foot of ground on that lake, but it's just as much my lake as yours. It's our lake and we want to and intend to keep it just as it is. When Dr. Raver told us in Kalispell that Flathead Lake would not be tampered with, he uttered the words we had all been waiting to hear. He further informed us that he would recommend the building of a storage reservoir at the Hungry Horse on the South Fork of the Flathead, which is something that the people of northwest Montana have wanted for a long time. It is up to us of Montana to be on our toes because if we do not concentrate on the development of our own water resources, other attempts will be made to get the Flathead. It's a natural and we must not forget it.

I should like to call to your attention the attitude of your Congressional delegation in Washington over the Flathead. Senators Wheeler and Murray and Congressman O'Connor fought hard and courageously for the Lake and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. They fought constantly for us and our lake and we appreciate
their splendid efforts.

However, the real victory was won by you folks of Montana. People and organizations forgot their differences, towns forget their rivalries, and all of you stood shoulder to shoulder and with no thought of compromise. If we would always show that kind of unity nothing could stop us. You fought for a lake and a principle and in doing so you showed your strength -- and saved our resources, our farms, our homes, and our happiness. 

Speaking of happiness, one of the things which makes a Congressman's life unhappy is the filling of vacancies for postmasterships. In a Congressman's district he has the recommending power if a vacancy exists. There is one exception to this. If a Senator's home town is in the district, the Senator has the right to recommend for the post office there. I do not relish the job of selecting a postmaster for any town because the applicants are many and you can only select one. It is my contention that the Post Office Department should make the appointments on the basis of merit and that in the larger post offices promotion should be made from the ranks.

Despite all these problems referred to so far there is one problem overshadowing all else, and that is the war. We are all pleased with the way the war has been going of late months. We seem to have overcome the sub menace, we have air supremacy over Europe, we have conquered North Africa and most of Sicily, and our troops will be in Italy proper before long. We have helped to overthrow the "Sawdust Caesar" Mussolini, but -- we must not become too optimistic. We have not as yet really started to fight in Europe and the defeat of Italy will only mean another country to feed. We should -- and I think we do -- realize the fact that Germany will be a hard nation to defeat. Our pattern bombing is bound to have a deteriorating effect on German industry but it will take a lot more than that to
At home, we have accomplished an amazing job of production. The American labor, industry, the farmer, and the housewife all have contributed their share to our accomplishments. Here are a few points we should keep in mind because they tell the story of our war effort.

1. We have transported more than 2 million men overseas, and in doing so have lost less than 700 men to submarines.
2. We have supplied one piece of artillery to every 46 men in comparison with one piece of artillery for every 1100 soldiers in the First World War.
3. We have turned out 160,000 large caliber artillery, nearly 1,300,000 machine guns, 7.5 million rifles and sub-machine guns.
4. Our ordnance plants have turned out over 22 billion rounds of small arms ammunition.
5. Our navy, since Jan. 1, 1943, has added 200 warships, and today we have two fighting ships for every one we had on Dec. 31, 1942.
6. The air forces of our Army and Navy have been increased by more than 64,000 planes in the last 12 months.
7. We have overcome the U-boat menace.
8. To support our armies overseas we now have a transport vehicle and an air umbrella to match.
bring Germany to her knees. Washington opinion -- and it's no better than yours -- looks for a German collapse in 1944.

The really dangerous area is the Pacific. This is a global war and the Pacific, for us, is just as important and more significant than the European area. Japan is today 6 times greater in population than the United States, with greater material resources than ours. Japan is today greater than the British Empire at its point of greatest expansion, greater in population than the Empire ever was with all the Britism Dominions and dependencies thrown in. And it is now all consolidated. None of it will be "salvaged" for European and American control, if and when Japan's empire is destroyed because the old order of imperialism is dead.

Our road in the Pacific since December 7, 1941 has been a long and hard one. We have lost 40,000 Americans who are today prisoners in Japanese camps. These heroes have been marked by some victories and some defeats. We cannot carry the burden alone. Our chief reliance will be on China because she has the manpower and the courage to fight to the end. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have pleaded, time and again for more Lease-Lend to China. I have personally asked President Roosevelt to speed up supplies, and I have talked on the floor of the House and given one nation-wide radio talk, for more aid to China. Everyone has been sympathetic but the chief problem is one of transportation. With the Burma Road closed it appears the only solution is the use of transport planes. This method has been and is being used from India over the Himalayas into China. Some small amounts of supplies are being sent in from Russia over the Siukiang caravan routes but the need is for more -- more -- and more.

The defeat of Japan -- and it will be difficult -- is only one small part of the "war" for the future of the Pacific. The great stabilizing, balance force in the Pacific World after the war, must be a China able to participate on equal terms with Russia, Britain, and the United States -- in fact, not on paper.
Quite apart from China's strategic position, tradition, and size, there's a compelling reason for this. China is the only Asiatic power which has of its own gumption shared our experience of revolution -- which has the slightest understanding of what it means to struggle and die for the rights of man.

Japan is fully aware of China's importance -- aware that China is a greater potential danger to Japan, over the centuries, than all the rest of us put together. For Japan and China represent diametrically opposite ideas. We need have no fear of a strong China; rather, we should fear a weak China because then we might not be able to stay out of Asia. China's strength would be an asset, not a menace, so long as it is used to promote the rights, and not the servitude, of man. This, China is trying to do.

So much for these few, and they are only a few, of the problems which confront us. As Americans we must realize their significance, take in our belts, and stop treating the war as a bonanza. This means real unity, active support of rationing and price controls, more drastic taxes, less grumbling, and an understanding that conducting a war -- both at home and abroad -- isn't a simple matter. We have built up a gigantic -- a human -- organization which will make mistakes in its conduct of affairs, but we must realize that, regardless of inconveniences, the things that really count are, first, winning the war and, second, preserving a democratic America for our sons and daughters to return to.

Yes, friends, we will have many sacrifices to make before this war is won; more problems to contend with; and more fears and doubts to overcome. But, when the going is most difficult we should think not so much of ourselves as those who are really suffering and we should think also of that old Russian proverb, which says: "I had no shoes and complained, until I met a man who had no feet."
My fellow Americans —

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Germany will be a hard nation to defeat. Our strategy—bombers is bound to have a determining effect on German industry, but it will take a lot more than that to bring Germany to its knees. Washington opinion is lousy, yours looks for a German collapse.

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As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have pleaded, time and again, for more funds to lend to China. If I have personally asked Mr. Roosevelt to speed up supplies, i.e., have talked in the floor of the House for more aid to China, everyone has been sympathetic but the chief problem is one of transportation. With the Burmese Road closed it appears the only solution is the use of transport planes. This method has been tried, with some success from India over the Himalaya route to China. Some small amounts of supplies are being sent in from Russia over the Siberian caravan routes, but the need is for men - men - and more.

The defeat of Japan - it will be difficult - is only one small part of the "war" for the future of the Pacific. The great stabilizing influence in the Pacific World after the war must be China. Will China be able to participate on equal terms with Russia, Britain, and the U.S. - in fact, not on paper. Quite apart from China's strategic position,
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