

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews

Mike Mansfield Papers

---

2-16-1962

### Address of Mike Mansfield in Las Vegas, Nevada

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Address of Mike Mansfield in Las Vegas, Nevada" (1962). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 457.

[https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches/457](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/457)

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

SENATOR BIBLE TESTIMONIAL DINNER

COPY

Address of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 16, 1962

If I remember correctly, it has been about 15 years since I last came to Las Vegas. During that time I maintained the image of a small friendly town, rather quiet during the day, lit up with excitement in the evenings--different from a hundred other towns in our West only because of the unique entertainment it offered to the tourist.

Of course, like every American, I became familiar, through the press, with Frenchman's Flat; I knew that the scope of the nuclear experiments there meant that great changes must have occurred in the life of Southern Nevada, just as they have at Cape Canaveral and Oak Ridge. But without seeing this first-hand, I could not imagine the sweep of those changes.

That is the trouble with words like "high rate of growth," "economic expansion," and the like. They are necessary for the economists and the planners, but they do not convey to the rest of us the reality of new homes, new plants and businesses, more and steadier jobs; in short, the feeling of hope and confidence you find in a growing community.



- 2 -  
COPY

And so it is my good fortune to be your guest this evening-- and to see for myself this phenomenon of growth, Las Vegas. It is in a city like this one that those cold economic terms come to life--charge the atmosphere, and change the faces of the people, so that a man would have to be comatose not to recognize it.

What makes this occasion still richer for me is that I can join you in celebrating the career of a man who has grown up with Nevada, and who, with my good friend Howard Cannon, gives this State a representation in the United States Senate second to none. You honor me by asking me to take part in this testimonial of your affection for him. Fellow Westerners, no one I know better deserves the affection of the people he represents than Alan Bible of Nevada.

On the way out here from Washington, I thought about the many ways a man is known, and how seldom these ways come together--like the pieces of a puzzle--so that a whole view of the man can be obtained. It occurred to me that the most I could add to this occasion was a view of Alan Bible as a United States Senator, as a friend and colleague in the Congress. Then, in the remarks you would make about him, and in the conversations we would have when the speech-making is done, I would learn something of Alan as a citizen of Nevada, as a lawyer, public servant, and friend of the people of his beloved State. That way we might come closer to a complete picture of the man you honor this evening.



- 3 -  
COPY

A little more than a year ago, I was asked to take on the job of Democratic Leader in the United States Senate. It is customary for the press to note that so-and-so did not seek the position; and it is customary for nobody to believe a word of it. I can only say tonight that it was true in my case. I did not seek the job; I had a sufficiency of work on my hands trying to represent the people of Montana, and I wanted to devote more time to my family, and to exploring the alternatives of American foreign policy in the 1960's. I knew, too, that Will Rogers was right when he said, "I belong to no organized political party; I am a Democrat." Our party in the Senate is famous--I almost said notorious--for a fierce independence of spirit, and for a pretty wide divergence of opinion on many public issues. It seemed to me that anyone considering the job of Floor Leader was asking for a continuing headache--sometimes mild, as when everyone had the urge to gang up on the Republicans, and sometimes thundering, when the great divisive issues were up for debate and resolution. To top it off, the man chosen for the role would be following a very great leader, who seemed to relish the task, and who set the highest standards of legislative statesmanship--the present Vice President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson.

In the light of this, it took a great deal of adding and subtracting before I made my decision to accept the job. And you, my Nevada friends, weighed heavily on the "plus" side of the scale.



# COPY

For one day, looking over the names of my colleagues, I was struck by the considerable number of men who could be counted on, in any situation, under any amount of stress, to render wise and steady service to the institution of the Senate, and to the country. I don't mean men who could be counted on to vote as I did on any question; I don't mean men without convictions of their own, only waiting to be given someone else's convictions; I mean, rather, men who seek to find intelligent solutions to the problems we confront as a people, who seek to resolve issues fairly, rather than to exploit them, and who have the tolerance and largeness of spirit to abide those with whom they disagree.

To those of you who have known him over the years, it will come as no surprise to learn that Alan Bible was among those names. And I was not wrong; throughout this past year I have had many occasions to be thankful to Nevada that it sent Alan Bible to the Senate. He is one of a number of men who lend stability to the legislative branch of government, and for that every American--not merely Mike Mansfield--should be profoundly grateful.

Now he is not, as you know, a prima donna; and yet he has achieved, by his ability as a legislator and his integrity as a man, that goal for which the political prima donna seeks in vain--the attention and concern of his colleagues.



# COPY

He is not, I think, the world's greatest artist; and yet I have never seen him move a bill through the Senate without a masterful control of every fact and argument that was relevant to it. Against such a presentation, mere glamorous rhetoric is of no avail--ninety-nine times out of a hundred.

He is aware of what is going on, not only in Nevada and the United States but in world affairs, as we all must be--there is no competent person left in America, who can read an airline timetable, who does not understand the swift shrinkage of the world that has reduced the oceans to lakes, and the continents to islands. We in the West have not always been ready to admit our country's involvement in the affairs of the world, but whether we admit it or not, the facts are inescapable. Alan Bible has acted responsibly in the light of those facts--always preserving, I may say, his Nevada independence in deciding what course he would follow.

Indeed, the word "responsible" is probably the most appropriate term we can use about him. His responsibility is expressed in many ways--one of them very far, on the surface at least, from the concerns of Clark County. That is his chairmanship of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. Of all the Committees in the Congress, this is generally thought to be the least rewarding. It is time-consuming, it is involved and complex, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to translate service



COPY

on the committee into votes back home. It is a job that, done poorly, can disrupt or even oppress the lives of two million people in Washington and its suburbs. So its rewards are few, and its disadvantages many.

One of those rewards, however, is the satisfaction of performing a hard and necessary job in a way that enhances the life of the city. And remember this: the stewardship of that city is a responsibility assumed for all of us--because Nevadans and Montanans have a stake in the character of Washington; it is our city. Alan Bible's job is frequently called a "thankless" one, but it is not; whether the people of the Federal city, or we of the Federal Republic express our thanks to him in so many words, our gratitude is nevertheless real and unfeigned.

Besides serving as the Mayor of Washington, Alan holds down two jobs of more immediate concern to you here in Clark County. He is the only Democrat in the Senate to sit on both the Interior and Appropriations Committees. Over the years these two committees have had such an effect on the West--in helping to sustain its growth or by choking off the support necessary for its growth--that I do not need to spell out, for this audience, the benefits that flow from a Nevadan's service on both of them. When Alan Bible leaves a meeting of the Interior Committee, and walks around to a mark-up in the Subcommittee on Interior Department appropriations, the West is getting adequate representation. And as Alan will tell you, it doesn't hurt that the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee is his friend, the great Carl Hayden of Arizona.



COPY

Now, I shall not claim on his behalf that his membership on these committees, or even the great respect and affection in which he is held in the Senate, is responsible for the terrific growth and prosperity of Southern Nevada. What a people's representative in Washington can do to help them depends, ultimately, on what the people are doing for themselves back home. You have provided the brains and muscle, the faith and determination, that have made this the fastest growing area in the entire United States. When I looked at the astounding figures representing economic activity in this county last year, I was struck by the fact that they cover every aspect of business and social growth: bank deposits, housing starts, payrolls, and so on. The vigor of your economy is deep and genuine. Obviously it has received quite a kick from developments at the test site, and from the work being done on Projects Rover, Pluto, and Nerva. But the Government's commitment in the Las Vegas area, while it is a prime cause of your growth, is not the only cause. You are building a new society out here that will survive the vicissitudes of Government spending. And what you, and all of the West, build with is faith. It is rough country even with faith, it is impossible country without it.

Faith is not, of course, an abstraction. Out here it has meant the willingness to convert barren land into a living and working area for the generations to come. There have been plenty of sacrifices, and many



COPY

disappointments along the way; life being what it is, there will be more to come. But you have persevered. Because there were men of vision out here and in Washington, your lives are enriched, and new possibilities have been opened for you. Hoover Dam, Parker and Davis Dams, and the coming Glen Canyon Dam, give you a firm base of power for growth. Alan Bible is pushing hard for a new dam on the Colorado in Arizona, Bridge Canyon, which would step up the power resources available to Southern Nevada. With men like Alan and Howard Cannon representing you, you cannot fail to be heard in the power-planning councils of the future.

There is much more to be said about our problems in the West, particularly the problem of water, and about the contribution Alan Bible has made to solving them. But I have a hunch you will be hearing a great deal about these things in the months to come, and I know you'd rather hear it from a Nevadan than a Montanan. Let me say only this, at the risk of being charged with intervening in your affairs. This Montanan will be very grateful to you Nevadans if you send him back to represent you in the term ahead.

In my opinion, he is the kind of man Nevada, the West, and the country at large needs in the United States Senate. He is not only a steadying force, but a representative force as well-representative of the good sense of our people. We have a thousand shades of political opinion in the country, and quite a number of these have their voice in the Congress.



COPY

I am happy that that is so, because it is our pluralism--our wide variety of tolerated opinions--that distinguishes us from the totalitarian world, and that is, despite the annoyances of the moment, more consistent with the world that is developing in Latin America, Africa, and Asia than is monolithic communism. We have people on the extremes of opinion who see the complicated, interwoven problems of this day in terms of some single evil, from which every misfortune proceeds; hunt out a communist here or there, or expose the timid, week-kneed Marines for what they are, or attack a certain business or labor leader, and these extremists say the world will come back into joint. I would be the last to deny these people their right to preach their gospel. But I utter a daily prayer of thanks that they do not command the support of a majority of our people.

Nor will they. Americans have too much sense to believe that our problems can be solved by anything less than long, patient, tolerant, continuous and enlightened effort. It is true in our daily lives, and we know it is true nationally.

Tonight you honor a man who is eminently capable of that kind of effort. I commend you for that, and for your choice in the election of six years ago. I hope you will repeat it this Fall, and return Alan Bible to the Senate to represent the people of Nevada.