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Senate

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 1964

(Legislative day of Monday, March 9, 1964)

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President.

Face the issue: that is all the majority leader requests of the Senate. Argue the substance of this bill; amend it if that is indicated. In the end, approve it or reject it, as we will. There will be time enough on the floor—that much is a certainty—to consider every last comma, to reach a decision on the basis of full and complete understanding. But there is not so much time available that weeks, if not months, more can be allocated to procedural matters.

We may go away from this issue by referral, by a repetition of days more of debate on taking up, or by any of the countless provisions of the rules which permit delay, postponement, and evasion.

We may go away from the issue. But the issue will not go away from the Nation.

It seems to me that we owe it to the President to face this question and to face it now. We owe it to the House of Representatives. We owe it to the Senate as an institution. We owe it, in the last analysis, to the Nation and to ourselves.

Senators individually are responsible to their consciences and their constituencies. But the Senate as a whole is responsible to the Nation as a whole. I ask Senators to act individually so that the Senate as a whole will not abdicate that responsibility. I ask Senators, regardless of their views on merit, to permit the Senate to stay with the bill with a single-minded and resolute purpose until we find out what its merits may be and then dispose of it by votes, one way or the other.