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Letter to President - Copper Strike

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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MIKE MANSFIELD
MONTANA

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C. 20510

C
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Y

January 10, 1968

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the copper strike is in its sixth month. There seems to be no possibility of a settlement at this time even though meetings of a sort are being conducted between Phelps Dodge and the Steel Workers Union.

In Montana the winter has been very severe, opportunities for employment limited and, therefore, the misery, the hunger and the want among the miners, smeltermen and their families has been accentuated to an extraordinary degree.

In response to my last communication to you concerning the copper strike, you dispatched Secretaries McNamara, Wirtz, and Trowbridge to discuss possibilities which would bring about a solution. At that time it was agreed with the Secretaries that a proposal be made to the unions and the companies that a fact-finding board be created to be comprised of two members from the unions, two members from the companies, and three public members to be selected, if possible, by the company and the union representatives. If this was not possible, then the three Secretaries would get together and appoint the three outside members. The unions indicated their acceptance of this proposal but, unfortunately, the companies could not see their way to compliance with the suggestion. I am, therefore, asking, as a last resort, that you intervene in this stalemated situation and consider the possibility of creating a Presidential Fact-finding Commission to endeavor to bring an end to this crippling strike. I can think of no other means to bring about a settlement except through a creation of a commission with the high prestige of your office behind it. This commission would then be empowered to bring representatives of the unions and the companies together and may be, at long last, it might be possible to get down to "bedrock" bargaining rather than the arm's length conversations which have been the only indications of interest to date and those on a very delusory and haphazard basis.

The President

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January 10, 1968

If this situation was not so critical and heart-rending, I would not call this to your attention again. However, I feel I must do this as the situation is not getting any better; may well get worse; and the economic effects on my own State of Montana as well as the States of Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico are disastrous at this time. Anything that you can do to be of assistance in this matter will be appreciated not only by me and the other Senators who are concerned, but by the people who are affected by this strike in the states mentioned.

With best personal wishes, I am

Most respectfully,

/S/ Mike Mansfield