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## Extension of Surtax

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Insofar as the leadership is concerned, it has no intention of calling the surtax extension up at this time in this context; under the rules, however, any Member of the Senate is at liberty to do so by a simple motion which, of course, is fully debatable.

It should be noted that an attempt to call up the surtax measure and make it the pending business will be at the expense of consideration of the vitally important military procurement authorization bill which is now before the Senate.

There may well be a prolonged discussion of the question of displacing military construction as the pending business and taking up the surtax measure at this time. The question is procedural, and every hour spent on it will be an hour wasted insofar as considering the substance of either issue is concerned.

If the Senate votes to take up the surtax extension in preference to continuing on military construction, what then? Amendment after amendment can be offered, debated, and tacked on to the surtax extension—reform amendments, special interest amendments, exemption amendments and what-not amendments—until, as I have said on many occasions, the bill is an overloaded Christmas tree.

After that there are two alternatives: send the bill back to the Finance Committee to lop off the decorations and start all over again or forward it, packed with goodies, to conference with the House. In conference, the process of reducing the bill once again to reality will get underway, the process of undressing the Christmas tree will begin. How long it will take is anyone's guess.

If the measure comes out of conference stripped to the bare essentials, it will be in jeopardy in the House, where it passed in that form on the first round by only the skin of its teeth.

A stripped-down conference report, moreover, will also be in jeopardy in the Senate, where a very serious determination exists—as evidenced by the unanimous decision of the Democratic policy committee—that reform in the direction of more equitable taxation for Americans of moderate and lower incomes is no less significant to the economic health of this Nation than continuing the burdens of the surtax extension which also fall heaviest on these groups.

What started out, therefore, as an understandable effort on the part of the Finance Committee to hasten the extension of the surtax may well end up without any extension at all, along with a long delay in the military procurement authorization bill, and with uncertainty for many weeks for the Nation's economy. What may well come out of this action, in short, would be an exercise in futility or, worse, in legislative mischief.

Whether to move this bill now in the context in which it has emerged from committee is a judgment which rests with the Senate. In my judgment, however, it will hurt American wage earners and salaried employees, it will hurt the Senate, it will hurt the President, and it will hurt the Nation.

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#### THE SURTAX EXTENSION AND TAX REFORMS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, the Finance Committee overrode the judgment of its own chairman, Senator LONG, in voting out the House bill on surtax extension at this time; the action was regrettable, even though the committee was within its rights in doing so, because Senator LONG was seeking a way to break through the impasse which had been developing.

On top of that, the tax extension came out by a seriously split vote of 9 to 8, without hearings; yet, this is a most controversial bill which passed the House by only a handful of votes.