2-19-1974

Senate Democratic Conference

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

BEFORE THE

SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

Tuesday, February 19, 1974, Room S-141, U. S. Capitol, 10:00 A. M.

In a statement which the Conference and the House Leadership asked me to make to the nation three weeks ago, I cited certain legislation which would be considered prior to the adjournment of the 93rd Congress. Since the items had previously been discussed with this Conference, I felt on reasonably sound grounds in doing so.

While the reaction to the speech was generally favorable, there were also indications of a deep-seated skepticism about the competence, not to speak of the efficiency of Congress, in dealing with public problems. I might note that this view of the Legislative Branch has existed for many decades. A recent widely-circulated poll showing the reputation of Congress at its lowest ebb suggests only that the criticism has now become harsher and more widespread. That confirms what many of us have suspected about the Watergate affair and its impact on the public. Not only the Presidency, but all politics, politicians and political institutions--the entire government--have suffered a devastating blow.

With that said, I would like to review the pending work of the Senate. In it is contained, I believe, the steps that must be taken at least in an initial way if we are to restore a degree of popular faith in this government. What we do or how well we do it in the next few months is not going to work any miracles of change in public attitude. That is not to be expected and, in any event, we are not here to gain public applause. We are here to discharge our responsibilities as best we know how. That is all that this Congress or any Congress can do for the people of the nation.
In this context I would note, first, that the Committee on Rules and Administration under the leadership of Senators Cannon and Pell has ordered reported a new measure dealing with elections. Included are public financing provisions and other significant features on limitations on campaign spending. It is my understanding that the bill was approved in Committee with only a single dissent and that it goes a long way to foreclose the excessive intrusion of the factor of wealth from any private source into the electoral process. I would hope that we will be able to move expeditiously on this proposed legislation when it is before the Senate. There may be, I believe, some technical procedural problems that must be resolved prior to consideration. These matters, however, should not delay the proposal.

Of equal urgency is the fuel crisis. Later today the Senate will vote on the Conference Report covering the Emergency Energy Act which includes a price roll-back. If the President wants to veto this bill, as some vague reports indicate, that is his responsibility. This should not dissuade us from exercising our separate legislative responsibilities as we see them.

We owe a great deal to Senator Jackson for his work on the Emergency Bill. There are also other members—Senators Magnuson, Mondale, Church, Cranston and others—who have offered legislation on a wide front designed to stimulate alternate sources of energy and to bend the performance of the oil and natural gas industries more in the direction of benefit for the people of the United States. Several of these proposals could be reported to the Senate prior to the Easter recess.

As for the remainder of the legislative program, I have asked each Chairman to give the highest priority to the following significant items:
(1) An effective national health insurance system. This is a revenue measure and must be considered initially by the House of Representatives. If the House acts on a national health insurance bill by the middle of the year, however, I would expect that the Senate could take up the legislation after the Independence Day recess and, hopefully well before final adjournment.

(2) An expansion of the housing system. The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs has all but completed its mark-ups of the Omnibus Housing proposal. It should be ready for floor action in two weeks or so. Perhaps, then, those of limited means will be able, once again, to acquire and pay for homes.

(3) A fair minimum wage. The Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare has ordered reported a minimum wage bill that underwrites a modest living level in the face of an explosive inflation. It is my understanding that the report will be filed later this week so that the Senate may begin work on this measure within the next few days.

(4) A system of no-fault automobile insurance. This is an issue that has been pending in the Congress for too long. The procedural and other barriers that inhibited Senate action in the past hopefully have been erased. Many states have established their own systems of no-fault insurance. The Judiciary Committee has had an opportunity to review certain aspects of the proposed legislation. The bill is now on the Senate Calendar and it, too, should soon be scheduled for floor action.

(5) An increase of Congressional control over the budget. The budget bill devised last year by the Government Operations Committee is in the Committee on Rules and Administration on re-referral. By order of the Senate, the bill with that Committee's recommendations will be reported on February 25th.
(6) A renewed commitment to excellence in education. The Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare has reported the Omnibus Education Bill to the full Committee. The full Committee is expected to report the bill within the next few weeks.

From the Senate standpoint, then, these are the major legislative items which are to be considered in 1974. There will be others. There are programs that expire this year which must be reviewed and, as necessary, extended. There will be time, also this year, to address ourselves to the question of providing more equity in the tax structure. There are measures dealing with the economy and inflation and with pollution and the environment. There are measures of consumer protection. And, of course, there are the appropriations bills on which Senator McClellan's Committee and the Senate will act expeditiously, as soon as the House processes and passes them.

Beyond these matters, I would report that since the initial Conference of the year, the Policy Committee has held two meetings in pursuit of an effort to identify and examine emerging issues of national and international concern. Dr. Walter Heller provided us with his professional judgments on the question of energy and the economy. In a similar fashion, the Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, shared his great knowledge and sensitivity with regard to current international events in an extremely candid and highly useful encounter with your Committee.

There is one final matter which I should like to bring to your attention. You will recall that in my remarks to the nation on February 1, I set forth one proposal which I had not previously been discussed in the Conference. I think the importance of this proposal is underscored by the crash-program approach which we are currently pursuing in dealing with the ordeal of the energy crisis.
Nor is this the first of these situations of sudden storms and hurriedly-erected shelters. Our recent history is pock-marked with them. Indeed, one might say that this wasteful, inefficient form of Federal intervention or bale-outs of faltering parts of the economy is now almost built into our system. I do not know that we can bring about a change but I am persuaded that, in the interests of the nation's future, we should be examining the possibilities of a better way. What I suggested to the nation, therefore, was that we ought not stop with our concern over the current energy shortage. Rather, we should look up from our immersion in this problem and take a look at the entire manner in which our national economic life has come to be organized. We should attempt to sort out the relative importance of demands on this government's resources in some orderly fashion and to anticipate and act in advance on gathering difficulties. Unless we do have some coordinated machinery for this purpose, we will almost certainly be subject to a plague of unending crises in the years ahead. I would hope that this Conference, therefore, would give the Leadership its thoughts on this proposal and, if possible, record its support for bringing together, on a regular basis, representatives of the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch with those of industry, labor and other areas of our national life for the purpose of thinking through and thinking ahead on the needs of the nation not only today but five or ten or more years. As I said in my remarks on February 1, "We owe this nation more than a decent present. We owe this nation leadership in the reach for a decent future."
S 1770

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

February 19, 1974

Mike Mansfield Papers, Series 21, Box 49, Folder 52, Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Aiken no matter how flowery cannot help but be understated. For, with the retirement of George Aiken, the influence of the Vermont Congressional delegation will be diminished considerably. The two men—Robert Stafford and Aiken—will have no seniority whatever, in contrast to Senator Aiken’s ranking as dean of the Senate in the New England bloc.

Robert Stafford will become Vermont’s senior U.S. Senator, but he has served in the Senate for only six years, and thus will exert hardly a shadow of the influence George Aiken has been accustomed to exerting for these many years.

The retirement also is likely to end the era of the unopposed senatorial candidate in Vermont. George Aiken was the last to do so, in a general election in 1962 (though he was later unopposed in his annual presidential election). He has been the last to win after all senatorial elections promise to be hard-fought battles.

We believe that Aiken’s decision to retire was a wise one, and we are more than a little amused that he made the decision after his reelection in 1968 but told nobody until yesterday. How typical of this independent Vermonter, who now can return to his beloved White Mountains—to the quiet life of strawberries, to the nearboiness of humble people, and to the rest and peace so richly deserved.

[From the St. Johnsbury (Vt.) Caledonian Record, Feb. 15, 1974]

SENATOR AIKEN’S RETIREMENT

Vermont’s George Aiken, the eighty-one year old member of the United States Senate, announced his intention yesterday morning, not to seek reelection this November to another six year term in Washington, and this will exert an extraordinary popular George Aiken would provide for a consolidated, across-the-board committee to consider matters related to the oil and natural gas industries in the international arena.

There is little wonder why this man is a legend in the Green Mountain State.

Mr. JAVITS. Mr. President, I would also like to say a word about Grooss Aiken, with whom I have been associated for so many years and in such an intimate manner, and lately as a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which he is the senior member of our party.

He is quite an exemplar of the New England politician as he is a man who has ably served his constituents precedent. He remains a symbol of the moment’s noble instincts within the American democratic system. Both the Republican and Democratic Parties in Vermont will be hard-pressed to find a senatorial candidate equal to the stature of this man, who has served his constituents for over four decades.

Aiken’s rise to political prominence within the Democratic Party in the 1930’s when his fellow Vermonters selected him as a state representative from Rutland, Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives, Lieutenant Governor and then as chairman of the state Democratic Party in the Green Mountain State. Upon Aiken’s election to his first term in the United States Senate in 1940, the dedicated public servant rapidly won the bipartisan respect of official Washington, and attained national recognition as the highest ranking Republican member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

But despite the fact that Aiken’s impressive legislative abilities rendered him an effective spokesman for Vermont’s interests on the Hill and in the councils of six consecutive Presidents, Democratic Senators Chairman Philip Hoff indicated last fall that he feared the state would be without a campaign issue in the forthcoming elections. Although the “age issue” has been heavily contested to the electoral defeat of such senior legislators as Maine’s Republican Senator Chase Smith and Brooklyn Democrat Emmanuel Celler—there is no doubt for one moment that the extraordinarily popular George Aiken has been overwhelmingly reflected to yet another term in the United States Senate.

Aiken announced in the same statement that he intends to retire (a statement which may well have been more damage to Hoff’s future political ambitions than to Aiken) we suggested that if age, in and of itself, is a parameter of noteworthy consideration, the “youngest” of the 1972 Committee on Re-Election of the President’s credit to his country, and this was decidedly not the case. But yet we think the Senator made a wise decision not to seek re-election. We are inclined to believe that the rigorous workaday schedule of hectic Washington certainly has contributed strain upon any senior citizen and particularly a legislator as conscientious as Senator Aiken.

In any event, Senator Aiken sorely misses the life of Vermont and thus has chosen to retire to his state and its people. Upon his departure from Washington, George Aiken will leave to his Senatorial successor a political legacy which includes the championing of Vermont’s economically hard-pressed farmers, a successful battle to restore some semblance of passenger rail service to our state, and a strong position concerning the intricate nature of the international area.

There is little wonder why this man is a legend in the Green Mountain State.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MANSFIELD BEFORE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a statement I made before the Democratic Conference this morning be printed at this point in the Record. In addition, I should note that the conference went on record, unanimously, as favoring an effort by this leadership to establish a joint executive-legislative governing body to meet with approaching representatives of industry and labor with a view to trying to look ahead on the Nation’s needs.

The conference also gave unanimous support to a proposal by Senator George Aiken to call upon the Senate to retire (a statement which may well have

The statement was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA) BEFORE THE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

In a statement which the Conference and the House Leadership asked me to make to the next three weeks would be the enactment of legislation which would be considered prior to the adjournment of the 93rd Congress. Since many of you had previously discussed with this Conference, I felt on reasonably sound grounds in doing so.

While the reaction to the speech was generally favorable, there were also indications of a deep-seated skepticism about the competence, not to speak of the efficiency of Congress, in dealing with public problems. I might note that this view of the Legislative Branch has existed for many decades. A recent widely-circulated poll showing the reputation of Congress at its lowest ebb suggests only that the criticism has now become harsher and more widespread. That confirms what many of us have suspected about the Watergate affair and its impact on the public. Not only the Presidency, but all political processes, and politicians, and political institutions—the entire government—have suffered a devastating blow.

With that, I would like to review the pending work of the Senate. In it is contained a host of bills dealing with legislative and administrative items. Among them, I am happy to note that not only has the Senate, but the House as well, has decided to take up the issue of campaign financing and other significant features on limitations on campaign spending. It is my understanding that the bill was approved in Committee with only a single dissent and that it is now going to the floor to foreclose the excessive intrusion of the factor of wealth from any private source into the election process. I would be able to more expeditiously on this proposed legislation when it is before the Senate. It may be that I am one of those who believe that procedural problems that must be resolved prior to consideration. These matters, however, should not delay the progress.

Of equal urgency is the fuel crisis. Today the Senate will vote on the Conference Report covering the Emergency Energy Act, which includes a price roll-back. If the President wants to veto this bill, as some vague reports indicate, that is his responsibility. This should not dissuade us from exercising our separate legislative responsibilities as we see them.

We owe a great deal to Senator Jackson for his work on the Emergency Bill. There are also other members—such as Senator Mondale, Church, Cranston, Stevenson, Hart and others—who have offered legislation on a wide front designed to stimulate alternative sources of energy and to bend the performance of the oil and natural gas industries more in the direction of benefiting the people of the United States. Several of these proposals could be reported to the Senate prior to the Easter recess.

As for the remainder of the legislative program, I have asked each Chairman to give the highest priority to the following significant items:

(1) An effective national health insurance system. This is a revenue measure and must
February 19, 1974

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE S 1769

In most all quarters, though, despite the scrambling, most seem to be viewing Sen. Aiken's decision with complex and mixed emotions. For Sen. Aiken's own part it can be no easy matter for a man with 33 years in Washington, much of them in the highest places of power, to decide to resign. And in these decidedly unsteady times it will be no easy matter for the Senate to lose a senator so respected as Sen. Aiken.

Yet by calling it a day at what will be age 82 this August, the senator has displayed the same kind of practical, no-nonsense wisdom that helped get him elected to the Senate in 1940, and four successive terms in the first place.

And yet, he will be greatly missed in the Senate where he is the distinction of a frequently windy, overstatesing group of political people, of delivering speeches on the Senate floor that not only gained strength in understatement but were actually frequently listened to.

The retirement of U.S. Senator George D. Aiken will dramatically change the nature of Vermont's political life. It is the latest in a series of retirements of one of its few truly independent legislators.

For four decades George Aiken has been something of an institution in Vermont. The senator has said he will do no more campaigning or political activities after his expected retirement in August. His wife, Eunice, has served him faithfully, with a service in both chambers, in the 1930s through his two terms as governor and his initial election to the U.S. Senate in 1940. And the Aikens have served their fellow Vermonters with an independence of mind which is unlikely to be duplicated by anyone who follows.

His contributions to the wellbeing of our state and our nation have been enormous, particularly in the fields of agriculture, foreign relations and atomic energy. He has championed the interests of rural America, but has never been a captive of those interests. He has been a personal friend of many presidents, notably Harry Truman, and his greatest influence undoubtedly was exerted behind the scenes away from the spotlight where he was merely the superficial and the ambitious.

Senator Aiken's great good friend, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, spoke yesterday of "this rock of integrity, this independent New Englander, this son of Vermont, who has served the state, the nation and a better world understanding," who will be missed by a many who told him the following days—but unlike those accorded to most aging politicians, the tributes to George Aiken.
SENATE 1771

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TRANSACTION OF ROUTINE MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a
period for the transaction of routine morning business, not to extend before the
hour of 1:30 p.m., with statements made therein limited to 3 minutes.

Is there morning business?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Mr. President, I sug-

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE
February 19, 1974

REPORT OF SALE OR OTHER TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT OWNED COMMUNICATIONS IN ALASKA
A letter from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, on the sale or other transfer of Government-owned communications in Alaska. Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

REPORT OF REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
A letter from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of Real and Personal Property of the Department of Defense, as of 30 June 1973; OASD (Comptroller), Directorate for Information Operations (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

REPORT OF REDUCTION OF TOTAL MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
A letter from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, reporting, pursuant to law, a report on the reduction among the services of total military strength of the Department of Defense (with accompanying papers). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON CERTAIN MILITARY ACTIVITIES
A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the design and construction supervision, inspection, and overhead fees charged by the several construction agents for military construction of the military departments and defense agencies, for fiscal year 1973 (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

REPORT OF PERSONNEL ABOVE GRADE OF MAJOR RECEIVING FLIGHT PAY
A letter from the Acting Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Department of the Army personnel above the grade of major receiving flight pay for the year ended 30 June 1973 (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

REPORT ON REDUCTION OF CERTAIN MILITARY ACTIVITIES
A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Installations and Logistics, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the facts, and justification of military activities at the inactive Military Ocean Terminal, Brooklyn, N.Y., to the Military Ocean Terminal, Bayonne, N.J. (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
A letter from the Secretary of the Navy, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to amend 32 U.S.C. 2570 of Title 10, U.S. Code, to provide for more efficient disposal of lost, abandoned or unclaimed personal property that comes into the body or control of military departments (with an accompanying paper). Referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
A letter from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting a draft of proposed legislation to amend the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 as it relates to the conduct of charter flight operations by grantees of Federal financial assistance, and for other purposes (with an accompanying paper). Referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

PROPOSED UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1974
A letter from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting a proposed legislation to amend title 23, United States Code, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, as it relates to the design, and other related projects, to establish a unified transportation assistance program, and for other purposes (with accompanying papers). Referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, the Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Public Works.

OCEAN POLLUTION
A letter from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of reports required to be transmitted to the Congress on ocean pollution. Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

REPORT ON FAIR PACKAGING AND LABELING ACT
A letter from the Chairman, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report concerning the implementation and administration of the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act by the Commission during fiscal year 1973 (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

REPORT OF MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
A letter from the Chairman, Marine Mammal Commission, pursuant to law, a report of the Commission for calendar year 1973 (with an accompanying report). Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

REVISED PROSPECTUS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S FACILITY
A letter from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a revised prospectus for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Compliance Test Facility which is to be constructed near Columbus, Ohio (with accompanying papers). Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

PETITIONS
Petitions were laid before the Senate and referred as follows:

By the President pro tempore:

A resolution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

"RESOLUTIONS MEMORIALIZING THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENACT LEGISLATION PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME"

Whereas, sudden infant death syndrome is the largest killer of infants between the age of one month and one year and there is no known cause, preventive measures or cure for this affliction; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth has in mind a hundred and seventy-three enacted several statutes which aid in the detection and research relative to sudden infant death syndrome, but federal financial assistance is necessary to effectively eliminate sudden death syndrome; and

Whereas, the Congress of the United States is presently considering two proposals, S. 1745 and H. R. 10490, which provide funds for research activities and study of this syndrome; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the Clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States, to the presiding officer of each branch of the Congress and to each member thereof from the Commonwealth.

A resolution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Ordered to lie on the table:

"RESOLUTIONS MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ALLEVIATE THE BURDEN IMPOSED UPON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BY THE ENERGY CRISIS"

Whereas, The United States Department of Justice has the power to investigate and prosecute any illegal activities engaged in by corporations controlling the flow of energy to homes and businesses; and

Whereas, The Federal Power Commission has the authority to protect consumers from being penalized by the Multiple Industry profits gone unchecked; and

Whereas, Said aforementioned agencies have the power to regulate the discovery, production and bulk delivery of oil products and, as oil profits while the people of the United States endure an unconscionable sacrifice and bear a tremendous financial burden, and be it further

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the Clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States, to the presiding officer of each branch of the Congress and to each member thereof from the Commonwealth.

A resolution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Referred to the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare:

"RESOLUTIONS MEMORIALIZING THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO ENACT LEGISLATION PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME"

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