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Florence P. Dwyer

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



Volume II, Number 3.

January 30, 1958

Last week, during debate in the House on a supplemental appropriations bill for the Armed Forces, one of my colleagues -- a veteran Member of Congress -- remarked to me:

"This is a drastic change of heart from the years between 1947 and 1952 when we, as a nation, spent more for peanuts than we did for missile development."

Intrigued by this Peanuts vs. Missiles statement, I engaged in a bit of research. Here is what the record disclosed:

During that period, Congress appropriated a total of \$117.7 million as subsidies to Southern peanut growers, and less than \$1.7 million for the development of intermediate and long-range missiles.

Today, however, Congress is not so peanut-conscious. Instead, it is evident -- in action on the House floor and in the talk in the cloakrooms -- that there will be strong and generally unified support in the Congress for an all-out defense effort.

CONGRESS AT WORK

This determination to get on with the job is especially strong in the vital field of new weapons -- our research, ballistic missiles, nuclear and earth satellite programs. There seems to be general recognition of the fact that we cannot afford hesitation or equivocation if we hope to adequately overcome existing lags in these fields.

I am heartened by the fact that Congress, which traditionally is slow getting down to work during the first months of a session, has shown no such lethargy this year.

Unquestionably spurred by Sputnik's challenge and the critical international picture, the House during these first weeks of January already has acted in three major legislative fields closely linked to our national security.

On January 15 -- just 12 days after the opening of the session -- the House passed by a 374-0 roll-call vote a bill authorizing expenditure of \$549,670,000 by the Secretary of the Air Force for construction of emergency defense facilities, including a ballistic missile detection system and ballistic missile sites.

This bill also authorized the establishment of an Advanced Research Projects Agency by Defense Secretary Neil H. McElroy. This Agency will have the power to enter into contracts for research and development, and to direct the Defense Secretary to assign developed weapons systems to the military services for production and operation.

OTHER MAJOR ACTIONS

Then, on January 23, the House passed two major bills. The first was a measure to temporarily increase the public debt limit by \$5 billion.

I supported this legislation by the House Ways and Means Committee because I felt we in Congress -- in the face of costly and critical defense needs -- could not impair the full faith and credit of the U. S. Government by allowing it to default in payment of its obligations.

I was particularly impressed by one point stressed in the committee report recommending the temporary debt ceiling increase. The report noted:

"In providing for such increase, your committee places primary reliance upon the Secretary of the Treasury's assurance that those in the Administration will exert all of their abilities to achieve the utmost economy in governmental operations and to manage the public debt as best they can in the national interest."

Following action on the debt ceiling, the House gave quick approval to a \$1,260,000,000 emergency appropriations bill for the Armed Forces. President Eisenhower had requested these emergency funds for fiscal 1958 to speed missile development and expand air defense.

COMPLEX TASKS AHEAD

It is most important that Congress maintains this determination to get the job done without delay or hesitation, for there are many complex tasks ahead of us which have a direct bearing on the welfare and security of the American people.

Aside from defense, certainly the ever-increasing cost of living and the growing unemployment problem are two areas in which prompt and decisive action is needed.

I am greatly concerned over the unemployment problem, which has become increasingly serious in New Jersey and other areas of the nation.

We, as a nation, cannot resolve the grave challenges which face us if our economy is to be weakened by a continuing problem of unemployment. No doubt, increased defense spending will help reverse this serious trend, but I also believe that positive action by Congress and the Administration is needed to assure our people of jobs and freedom from hardship and economic insecurity.

PRESSURES OF JOB

The tragic heart attack death in the House cafeteria last week of Rep. Lawrence H. Smith of Wisconsin -- the latest of a series of deaths in the 85th Congress -- served to place a sobering emphasis on a recent warning by a Washington doctor that Members of Congress "slow down their pace" during these trying days.

There is no question that the vast and critical problems of the times -- both at home and abroad -- are placing increasing pressures and worries on Members of Congress.

All of us in Congress, I am sure, would welcome a chance to "slow down the pace," but that is easier said than done.

If we are to provide sound and effective representation, we must constantly study and analyze the legislative issues facing the Congress. This is a never-ending task that requires careful reading of committee reports, newspapers and magazines, and conferences with other Members and department heads.

In addition, we have our committee work, the answering of a great volume of mail, the maintenance of many services for our constituents, the detail work on immigration, military hardship and other cases, plus a myriad other daily chores.

Despite the doctor's warning, I do not feel we in Congress can slow down our pace now. We have been elected by the people to represent them in government; we cannot relax on that responsibility, for if we are to ask the American people to make sacrifices and dedicate their energies and resources to meeting today's critical problems, we in Congress can do no less.

ACADEMY APPOINTMENTS

The time of the year is here when qualified young men in Union County should be giving serious thought to the possibility of applying for entrance to one of our nation's Service academies -- West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force and Merchant Marine Academies.

Thus, I would like to briefly explain the necessary procedures, and to once more emphasize that I do not utilize for purposes of political favors or patronage the Academy appointments allotted me.

I base my appointments solely on merit. I require all Academy applicants to take competitive Civil Service examinations, and I give the appointments to the young men receiving the highest scores in the tests.

I believe this is the only fair method to assure all young men in my district an equal opportunity for obtaining these highly prized appointments. Also, it gives our Service Academies the highest type young men necessary for dedicated government careers.

Young men interested in an Academy appointment should write to me at my Washington office, Suite 1631, House Office Building, Washington 25, D. C. In return, I will send them complete information, and place them on my list for this year's competitive examinations.