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8-25-1960

Report to the People Vol. 4 No. 14

Florence P. Dwyer

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE
FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER - 6th District, New Jersey



1631 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Report to the People

FOR RELEASE

Volume IV, Number 14

Thursday, August 25, 1960

The current special session of Congress may yet upset the "do-nothing" predictions of those who feared that election-year politics would cause a stalemate.

Beneath the sound and fury of political attack and counterattack, there are signs that some significant legislative accomplishments may be hammered out during these few short weeks.

If so, it will not be because Senators and Congressmen have abandoned politics. On the contrary, it will be because they are acutely sensitive to the demands of politics-- that is, to the wishes and feelings and convictions of a great many informed American people.

A strong case can still be made that this special session was unnecessary and unwise-- unnecessary because proper planning by the Congressional leadership could have completed the legislative workload in the six months of the regular session, and unwise because in the midst of a national campaign important public decisions cannot fail to be obscured, if not distorted, by immediate partisan considerations.

Wanted: Responsibility

Nevertheless, the nature of American politics is such that both parties in Congress feel the compulsion to write a responsible record, especially at a time so close to the actual casting of ballots. If my observations during the past few weeks in Union County are correct, people are serious; they are concerned about problems of our economy, about jobs, about prices. And they are deeply involved with the stresses and strains of foreign policy: with Cuba and the Congo, the future of NATO and the Western European community, the increasing economic competition from abroad, with the growing power of Communist China, and the shifting patterns of Soviet aggressiveness.

Our people expect performance from their Congress-- not just fire-eating oratory. They expect that reasonable men and women can reach agreement on issues of such great importance to our country. They appreciate that there are differences in approach between our two great political parties, but these differences do not divide us radically and ideologically. Compromise is always possible.

Despite political speeches and maneuvers, therefore, neither party will want to risk national displeasure either by stubborn opposition to all legislation or by railroading through the Congress every free-spending proposal that has been advanced. In addition, there are differences of opinion within each of the parties-- differences of opinion which make it necessary, in the case of much important legislation, for the winning side to get some help from members of both parties. This fact, too, requires compromise.

In brief, responsible government is the best politics-- for both parties.

As this is written, only the Senate, which had the greater amount of unfinished business when Congress recessed, has started work. Five important measures have been passed, in addition to relatively minor business, during the first two weeks of the special session.

History-making Agreement

First came the Antarctic Treaty, which was ratified by a vote of 66 to 21, including majorities of both parties. The opposition was vociferous, and the treaty could have been postponed as being too controversial. Yet, a substantial majority of the Senate recognized the truly history-making significance of the pact, which binds the United States and 11 other nations, including the Soviet Union, to the status quo of Antarctica and to its use for peaceful purposes only. If the treaty is respected by the signatories, it will remove this vital area of the world from the dissensions of the cold war.

Perhaps even more important, however, the treaty marks the first time that the United States and the Soviet Union have reached a binding agreement which involves the prohibition of military operations and a ban on nuclear testing, together with complete freedom of inspection and aerial reconnaissance. This has been our country's principal international objective in recent years, and the present treaty represents the first small measure of solid success.

As such, the whole world will watch this agreement-- prayerfully and hopefully-- to learn whether it is safe to move ahead along the road to a secure and enforceable and lasting peace throughout the world.

The Senate has also passed four other important bills: the appropriation bill for public works projects, an increase in the President's mutual security contingency fund which will enable the United States to back up the United Nations in such situations as the Congo, authorization of the President's new Latin American Development program, and the Minimum Wage Bill.

Only the public works bill was non-controversial, and passage of the others-- especially the compromise minimum wage legislation-- were victories of political responsibility.

The fact that substantial numbers of Senators of both parties voted for the minimum wage bill in its compromise form indicates that there is no good reason why other priority items in the President's list of "must" legislation should not be considered now. Most of these bills have had lengthy and careful study. It remains to find specific formulas which can enlist the support of members of both parties.

Chief among these are: medical care for the elderly, school construction assistance, aid to depressed areas, and-- to mention one that ought to be on everyone's list-- commuter transportation legislation.

Here and There

I was extremely pleased to note that the Republican platform adopted by the National Convention incorporated recommendations I had sent to the chairman, including this plank: "A stepped up program to assist in urban planning, designed to assure far-sighted and wise use of land and to coordinate mass transportation and other vital facilities in our metropolitan areas."

Next step is for the Congress to approve legislation, which I have co-sponsored in the House, to give effect to this recommendation.

Good news, too, from the Agriculture Department, which late last week agreed with my suggestion to transfer surplus grain from midwest storage facilities into the empty Liberty ships of the "moth-ball" fleet in the Hudson River. It will save taxpayers money and bring new business to our metropolitan area economy.

Our Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations is moving fast now to determine the best ways for Federal, State, and local governments to coordinate their efforts in solving our mass transportation problems in such urban-suburban areas as New Jersey-New York-Connecticut.

One final word. As soon as possible after Congress adjourns in September, and as I have in past years, I shall send you a comprehensive report on the activities of the 2nd session of the 86th Congress-- its accomplishments and failures, its unfinished business, and an idea of how these things affect you in Union County.