

Presenting

A Washington Radio Conference on the Air in

A NEW DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AGAINST NATIONAL WANT

participated in by

SENATOR JAMES E. MURRAY-SENATOR JOHN SPARKMAN-SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY  
of Montana of Alabama of Minnesota

This is Charles Parmer from Washington... As the Fourth of July, 1949, approaches, a new declaration of independence is being formulated - a bill to be introduced in Senate and House, which may guarantee freedom from want and misery...here, as the week ends, three of our Senate leaders - Democrats all - confer together - in the office of Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama, who for long has been planning such a fight. For your listening benefit, I've been permitted to place my microphone on Senator Sparkman's desk. You may now hear their plans - for the first time made public.

Sitting across from Senator Sparkman is Senator James E. Murray of Montana, who led a Congressional delegation on a mission to the White House a few days ago to inform the President of their plan. And here is Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, who has thrown himself wholeheartedly into the battle.

I'm glad to tell you that these gentlemen - realizing the gravity of our national situation - have brushed aside sectional differences; they present a united front to our common enemy - national want.

CHARLES PARMER: Senator Murray, why do you plan this bill on economic expansion?

SENATOR MURRAY: Our bill is proposed as a means of checking the development of economic conditions that might result in a serious recession. In many sections of the country there has been a general slowing down in industry, and serious unemployment is found in certain spots. Our program is designed to offset this unemployment, encourage business and industrial expansion, provide ways and means of encouraging private enterprise, and thus avoid any dangerous conditions of unemployment and business recession.

PARMER: Are conditions that bad, Senator?

MURRAY: There are not serious at this moment from a national standpoint, but in particular localities where unemployment has developed, it presents a very serious problem. A prudent government should not be expected to take steps in any other direction except to aid in preventing these conditions from spreading and creating a serious catastrophe.

PARMER: Did you say catastrophe, Senator?

MURRAY: Yes. It was our failure in the last depression to take appropriate steps in time that permitted that depression to develop into a serious catastrophe. Only the Government can take appropriate steps to aid business in a situation of this kind. Every businessman knows that, acting by himself, he is not able to contribute much toward overcoming conditions of this kind; and therefore, a democratic government must not sit by while unemployment is developing in any serious degree. The Government must look for the economic causes and provide appropriate remedies wherever possible.

PARMER: I note, Senator Murray, that you have aligned yourself with the North and the South.

MURRAY: Yes, we have; and we have aligned ourselves with the East and the West also. This is a national problem. Every section of the country is witnessing a curtailment in business and industrial activity and a rise in unemployment. These conditions are found in the New England States, in the large cities of the country, on the Pacific Coast, in the South, and in almost every area. The present situation is extremely unhealthy, and can easily become worse unless steps are taken to deal with it in a positive manner. Already unemployment has reached a figure of approximately three million and a half out of work. In addition, several million workers are on part time, and in some communities we have extreme conditions of unemployment. If the unemployment we already have continues to grow, we could very soon have six or eight million unemployed workers in the Nation. Every day the press carries articles on this subject, and members of the Congress are beginning to receive letters from their constituents about it. And so I think it is obvious that Congress should give careful attention to these conditions so as to prevent them from getting out of hand.

PARMER: I understand, Senator Murray, that you contemplate long-range public planning. Specifically, what does that take in?

MURRAY: Well, we propose a series of steps. First, we would provide for a National Economic Cooperation Board, to be composed of representatives of industry, labor, agriculture,



consumers, and others having special qualifications. This board would study the developing conditions and make recommendations to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power. This would bring the various groups in our economy closer to each other, and would provide a united front to oppose any possible recession or depression. We also propose assistance to private investors, to expand capacity and production in various fields where it is necessary, and to encourage such investment through a speeded-up amortization of such investment, and to supply insurance of such investment in State and regional organizations. Also, we propose scientific research and advice for small business, and study by the Federal Trade Commission of any existing barriers to private investment and production.

We propose also studies by the various Federal agencies of these economic problems and to promote better understanding and better cooperation among the various groups in our economy. We also provide for prompt study of unemployment which has developed in spots, so as to prevent such conditions from spreading.

PARMER: Thank you, Senator Murray..... Now, Senator Sparkman, what about this long-range public works planning program?

SENATOR SPARKMAN: Well, Mr. Farmer, I am a strong believer in a well planned public works program to be ready at any time to throw into the breach in the event that unemployment becomes so serious as to require it. I believe that the federal government should maintain at all times a flexible program that could be expanded tremendously in times of unemployment, and naturally, in times of good employment, could be contracted. So we must have a long-range public works program. With a rapidly growing national population, we should also give attention to some of the under-developed areas of the country so as to make it possible to develop our resources and create new industry and new job opportunities in those particular areas. I want to point out that one of the strong points in this measure that we are proposing is that very thing - so as to lend encouragement to industry to go into areas that are presently

underdeveloped industrially, and particularly if those industries will utilize the natural resources that may be found in those particular areas. I would like to point out also that as a part of this long-range public works program, we certainly should give very careful consideration to President Truman's recommendation of a vast program for the development of our river valley systems. We are having hearings right now, by the by, before the Public Works Committee of the Senate on the Columbia Valley administration. Senator Murray is the chief sponsor, and I believe both Senator Humphrey and I are co-sponsors with him, on a bill to improve the Missouri Valley. Other valleys in the country ought to be improved. This kind of a program would produce opportunities for employment in those particular areas; such a program would prevent any possible development of a depression in this country for a long time to come. We would have the development of low-cost power in the Pacific Northwest - we have already got it some there, but we need to expand it tremendously. Also in the Missouri Valley. I might just mention hurriedly public buildings, highways, airports, a general over-all public building - public works - program that would create jobs in great numbers if it became necessary. That is certainly a major part of the objective of this program.

PARMER: Now, Senator Sparkman, how much do you estimate such a vast program would cost?

SPARKMAN: Well, Mr. Parmer, I don't know that that could be estimated. You probably have in mind the feature in the bill in which we recommend a fund of 15 billion dollars. That I think would be referred to more or less as working capital for all of these various objectives, and that figure certainly should not be used as the estimate of the cost of the public works program. Of course, we never get through with public works in this country. The big question is, how much do you want to congest them in any one particular given period of time?

PARMER: Thank you, Senator Sparkman. And now, Senator Humphrey - you, sir.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Mr. Parmer, I am very happy to be just a little part of this program. You have heard from the

two distinguished members of the Senate, who are literally and truly experts in the field of our economy. I come in more or less, as you say, just to give a few general observations. I look upon the economic situation that now confronts us, which surely is not alarming but is one that deserves our consideration, as similar to any situation that might exist in international affairs. For example, in 1935 and 1936, we knew that Hitler was a menace. We knew that he was taking certain steps that were aggressive and that could cause great trouble. The question at that time was, should we quarantine the aggressor before he gets out of hand? Or should we wait until he did - and as we did, at Pearl Harbor, when everything was out of hand. In other words, should we take preventive measures to stop aggression or should we wait until a full scale war comes upon us? So we waited, for a full scale war, and we spent not only hundreds of thousands of lives but billions and billions of dollars, into the hundreds of billions. Now, the same thing is true in economics - in our economy. Should we wait until we have what Senator Murray has referred to as catastrophe - or, back a step, depression - or should we attack these islands of depression, recession, unemployment, where we see them? When we see them and at the time that we see them. I believe in quarantining unemployment; I believe in putting up a public notice that here's a place where we need preventive economic medicine. We need to come in and cure the problem right where we see it, at that moment.

PARMER: Now, right there, Senator Humphrey, how are you going to do it? And will this bill embody such provisions?

SEN. HUMPHREY: I think it will. And I think that the one word in this bill that indicates what we're after is what Senator Murray pointed out - the National Economic Cooperation Board - cooperation between government and the people, government and business - cooperation with the government in the factors of the economy and as Senator Sparkman has pointed out, public works is one great aspect - but not just public works. We also talk about coordinated planning, integrated planning, on the basis where you can project it into the future. It is like visualizing an attack on the part of an enemy. What are



you going to do about it? You have long-range plans. And then the substance of this bill is centered around the very nature of our economy - private enterprise. The independent business man working with the established institutions of our economic system - in other words, this is a bill that works within the framework of the American economic plan; and as Senator Murray pointed out, a great portion of this Bill is dedicated towards strengthening the productive capacities, providing loans and credits and quick amortization of plant. In other words, using American management, American capital, to meet a problem in our own country. I want to say that there are only two dangers that this nation faces - one is on the outside, from totalitarian aggression, and I think that danger is even less than the danger of breakdown within - our own economy. And surely if we can appropriate billions and billions of dollars to stop a potential international aggressor, we ought to at least be willing to make plans - sensible, long-range plans within the American pattern, to stop any kind of economic disaster within our own economy. That's why I think this is a well planned bill. It is called the Economic Expansion Act. It is based upon a growing economy. We can't have the status quo, Mr. Parmer. Every year we get from 500 to 700 thousand new people in our work force; we have to think of America as a growing country - a young nation still growing and moving ahead and unwilling to stand on past laurels.

PARMER: Thank you, Senator Humphrey. Now Senator, just a day ago I heard you, down on the floor, say that you did not stand for nationalization of industry.

HUMPHREY: Well, that's certainly true.

PARMER: Senator Sparkman, is this going to bring about any nationalization of industry whatsoever?

SPARKMAN: No. As a matter of fact, it is the one insurance against it.

PARMER: Now, Senator Murray, how do you feel about that, sir? Is there any danger to what the old-fashioned leaders talk about - our American way of life?

MURRAY: Absolutely not. The bill emphasizes the idea of having this done within our economy. It should be emphasized

that the proposed legislation in no manner whatsoever authorizes government operation of business. This is to stimulate business - not to operate business.

PARMER: Thank you, Senator Murray. Ladies and gentlemen, we have just sat in the conference of Senate leaders fighting for economic expansion - to save this nation from depression. The conference was held in the office of Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama - and with him are Senator James E. Murray of Montana, and Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota. These three gentlemen - from north and west and south - have united in forming a new declaration of independence - independence from national want and misery. Gentlemen, our appreciation to you for letting our radio audience listen to your plans, today. This is Charles Parmer from Washington, who will be with you again next week, same time and same station. So long till then!

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