

Address delivered by The Honorable John E. Fogarty, Congressman from the second Congressional District, R.I. over station WPRO, Providence - 6:30 PM Monday, October 18, 1948

The arsenal of democracy contains many weapons. The most effective of all - and one which grows in effectiveness in direct proportion to the extent of its use - is your sacred right to determine who shall conduct the affairs of your government.

We are approaching another election day. I want you to believe that I am sincere when I say to you that it is more important that you cast your vote on election day to demonstrate your faith in your country's future than that you do any other thing.

The fact that you vote is of far more importance than for whom you vote!

I know you have often heard it said that one who fails to exercise his right of franchise has little, if any, right to criticize his government. But the importance of the matter goes far deeper than that.

If you fail to vote - you are failing to practice one of the fundamental principles of our system of government. Your repeated failure will breed indifference and you will not be alone in that indifference. If indifference should become widespread then there is little reason why elected officials should feel responsive to the will of the people. Such indifference helps to establish the belief that any kind of government can get by - and the natural result will be a lowering of the standards which have made this nation so great.

Tonight, I address myself, particularly, to the people who live in the Second Congressional District, because I am their Representative in the Congress of the United States.

You may be sure that I am deeply grateful for the honor which you have paid me over

the past eight years. I Hope I have proved myself worthy of the trust you have placed in me. I would like to have your continued confidence - but above all else - I beseech every one of you to go to the polls on November second and cast your ballot for those candidates whom you believe will best reflect your ideas, your wishes, your hopes - in the Government of your state and country.

As your representative, I am tonight in the position of one rendering an account of his stewardship. It is my belief that such an accounting is the obligation of everyone who holds public office. Only on such a report can you determine whether or not I have faithfully discharged the trust which you have placed in me.

You first chose me as your representative in 1940 and have favored me with your confidence ever since.

Upon taking up the duties of a Member of the House of Representatives in the Nation's Capitol - I was determined that I should give a good account of myself whenever the interests of my people were involved. I felt - and I continue to feel - that the duties of a Member of Congress encompass far more than a mere attendance at sessions of the House - answering quorum calls - making speeches - and listening to debates. True, these things have to be done. But a Member of Congress who confines his activities to these things - eventually learns that he has neglected vital concerns of his people - and has failed to meet the full requirements of his office.

I soon learned that the Federal Government is a huge and complex structure. I confess there were times when I knew discouragement as I sought the answers to problems which some of you had given to me to solve. I can truthfully say that it was only because of continued persistence and determination that I finally came to understand thoroughly the intricacies of our Federal Government. As a result I

have been able in recent years to render to you the type of service to which I feel you are entitled.

From my studies I know there was a time when the Federal Government was a fairly simple establishment. Members of Congress were expected to consider legislation and little else. Sessions of Congress lasted but a short time and a Member was able to spend a great deal of time back home.

All this has changed now. As the great railroads and highways spanned the continent, great newspapers broadened their coverage of the news and their comments thereon, as radio and television developed and the means of communication became so elaborate - more and more people have taken a keen interest in the operations of their government. More and more people have come to look to their government for assistance and advice on the working out of their many problems. They have come to look to their government for the suppression of wrongful practices and harmful developments - and the promotion of the general welfare. This they seek today - through positive action - rather than in letting economic and political forces run their course.

Our production facilities and our methods of distribution have developed so; our means of transportation and communication have grown to such great importance, that it is no longer possible to let them function on a hit or miss proposition. In general, our domestic economy has become so intricate that our original concepts of freedom - have had to be trimmed somewhat so that we can preserve order and prevent chaos.

Add to this the tremendously important position our country occupies in the affairs of the world and it is readily apparent that our Federal Government can never again become the simple operation of years gone by.

Developments at home and abroad have convinced the average American that no one of can exist, as it were, in a vacuum. We are all dependent on one another. Hence, we look to our Federal Government, in many instances, for advice and direction.

These things have contributed to making the job of a Congressman more important - and at the same time more difficult.

As your Congressman I have gained a great deal of experience in the operations of our Government, during the past eight years. I have contributed in some measure to the development of that government. I respectfully submit to you that you should place a value on that experience which you have enabled me to obtain. At the present time it is being put to use in order that I may render better service to you. I believe it is valuable to you. If I have been faithful to the trust you imposed in me eight years ago - then I suggest that you retain the experience and ability which has been gained. To that end I ask your vote of confidence when you go to the polls on November second.

On what do I base this claim that I have been faithful to your trust?

In brief, it is based on my constant endeavor to carry out your wishes to the best of my ability. I have endeavored - on all issues before the Congress - to ascertain the will of the people of the Second District. I have then striven to put that will into effect in writing the laws - and making the plans - for these United States.

It can safely be said that I haven't always been right. It is a fact that I could not possibly - no matter how hard I tried - comply with the wishes of everyone in my district. But - I ask you to consider the fact that my record demonstrates that I have always done what I believed would be in the interests of promoting the greatest good for the greatest number.

Even though you disagree with some of my conclusions - I know you will accord me the honor of believing in my sincerity. No man can say I ever acted from anything but completely honest motives.

All of us are anxious I know to promote the general welfare - to make our country strong and secure - to promote prosperity; happy homes and happy people, with plenty of food and clothing and homes and schools for all. We are anxious, too, to do whatever we can to promote the stability of the world - happy and free peoples abroad, secure in the knowledge that they need never again fear the visitation of the horrors of war.

However we may differ on the best methods of achieving these goals, we strive mightily to achieve them.

These have been my purposes, as your representative. They continue to be my purposes.

It is my belief they can never be achieved by indifference - or by blind submission to party. I believe they can be achieved only through aggressive action on the part of the Members of Congress.

I think I have been aggressive as your representative. I can honestly say I have never avoided an issue because it was controversial. Nor have I ever compromised my principles because to do so would bring me some word of praise.

As your representative I have served on the House Committee on Naval Affairs. On that Committee, membership gave me the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with our Navy. I am convinced it has been and it is our first line of defense.

Prior to the war that Navy was regarded as a one-ocean Navy - in danger of

entrapment - should sabotage put the Panama Canal out of action for even a short space of time.

I joined with those men who insisted on the expansion of our Navy. I am proud of the part I could play, as your representative, in the building program which made our Navy one which could roam all the seas of the world - putting down those who were in truth - enemies of the world.

Because of the experience I had gained as your representative in Congress, I was elected - after the close of the war - to the House Appropriations Committee. On that Committee I was named a member of the sub-committee handling appropriations for the Department of Labor and the Federal Security Agency.

During my service on this important Committee, I have been diligent in my attendance at sessions where appropriations were to be considered. As your representative I fought against what I believed was a penny-wise and pound foolish policy of some committee members. At the same time, as I know you would want me to do, I strove to avoid any waste of public funds.

It is my sincere regret that I was forced to witness the emasculation of the Department of Labor. This very important function of our National Government came into being under a Republican Administration. It has been maintained at Cabinet level in recognition of the vital part the workers of the country play in our domestic economy. The 80th Congress, however, saw fit to strip the Labor Department of many of its most important functions - and I fear it may be their plan to relegate it to some lower level in the governmental scheme.

The appropriations for the Federal Security Agency saw many examples of what I term penny-wise and pound foolish operations.

This important branch of your government handles, among other things, Social Security, Public Health, The Food and Drug administration, The Office of Education and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

I am afraid I would bore you if I were to recite a long list of figures to prove my point that the 80th Congress was not serving the public interest when it reduced appropriations to the danger point for these functions.

As an example, let me cite the vocational rehabilitation program. The officials who operate this program are interested in handicapped persons. They endeavor to train them so that they can become wage-earning people. They have succeeded in an almost unbelievable number of cases. These new wage-earners help manufacture goods we need, provide the services we want. They have purchasing power and help support our economy. In addition, out of their incomes and from the property they purchase the Federal Treasury receives substantial sums in taxes.

Both from the standpoint of improving the lot of these unfortunates - and from the standpoint of cold-blooded business - I argued that this program should be expanded. I am confident that in doing so I am working to promote the general welfare.

There were some members of the Congress who were more interested in slashing appropriations - than they were in developing better citizens. My arguments failed. There were many such instances and I am convinced the over-all record demonstrates that there was a waste of public funds in such cases - rather than a saving.

I wish time permitted my exploring this subject further with you. Perhaps I shall be able to do so at a later date.

In addition to my work on these committees - and the work of the Congress in general,

there were a great many instances when people of my district called on me for help in working out particular problems. I was glad I could help.

My record - covering eight years as your representative - is an open book. Most of you are familiar with it. I hope you will examine it and on the basis of that examination determine whether or not I am entitled to your confidence during the next two years.

The experience and ability I have gained - I have because you have retained me in Congress.

I am grateful for the many opportunities I have had to help you. It is always a pleasure to be of service.

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