

Address delivered by Congressman John E. Fogarty, Second Congressional District, Rhode Island, over Station WPRO, Providence, Monday, October 25, 1948 at 6:30 PM.

Thomas Jefferson is quoted as having said - "That government is best - which governs least". I have heard that quotation described as a clear exposition of fundamental Americanism.

I subscribe wholeheartedly to that expression of the immortal Jefferson. And my point in mentioning it tonight is just this - I sincerely hope I can impress upon you good people the very great need for your consideration of the kind of government you want - that you need - that you intend to have.

Very soon you will be going to the polls - as every genuine American will do - to select the men and women who will constitute your elected officials for the next two or four years.

When you cast your vote - you are not merely expressing a preference for one man over another - you are not favoring one party at the expense of another. No - you are exercising a great right and you are carrying out your part of the great democratic scheme. You are making your voice heard in the determination of how much - and what kind - of government this great nation of ours is to have.

You can have a government committed to old shiboleths such as "Rugged individualism" - "Normalcy" and - the most famous of all "Root hog or die".

Or - you can have a government which believes that the success and happiness of all Americans is vital to the prosperity of the Nation.

Personally, I believe in the least possible amount of intervention by the Federal Government in the economic life of the Nation. But I have to insist - that "least possible amount" must be determined by conditions which actually exist - and not by what I would like, or what others would like - to think exist.

All of us recall the regulations which accompanied the greatest war-time effort in the history of the world. This nation of peace-loving people shattered every known record of production. We armed and fed and clothed the defenders of

freedom everywhere. This nation became in truth the arsenal of democracy. We were forced then by the very nature of the conditions under which we lived to submit to many regulations. At that time we had a lot of government - but it was the least possible amount of government under those circumstances.

I looked forward - as I am sure most of you did - to the day when government could be shouldered out of the business of regulating production, prices, transportation and the myriad other items under control.

As I think of those days, I am reminded of another old Yankee expression - "Haste makes waste". And I am convinced that our present distressing and wasteful economic situation is due in large part to the wild haste with which the GOP in Congress scuttled the controls which were left as the war drew to a close.

As I have said, I was one of those who wanted to see controls brought to an end. But it was my argument that we should have a selected easing of controls.

I feel certain you can bring to mind the beautiful promises which were made by big business and GOP politicians a few years back. They promised a sweeping prosperity - with plenty for all at prices within reach - if only prices would be relieved of all control.

I confess I couldn't see the logic in their argument then - and I can't see it now.

They said then - our only problem was one of production. I was one of those who argued we should hold onto controls - of prices and the allocation of scarce materials and equipment - until production in a particular line began to catch up with demand. Then prices could be eased off. I think if we had done that, it is possible we might still have a few controls remaining - but we would be a great deal better off because a week's pay would mean something. Instead - today we have no controls on anything - and a week's pay means just more worry - because it won't reach the top of the bills we have been piling up.

Senator Wherry and Senator Taft - who were the king-pins in the fight to

remove all the war-time controls, promised solemnly that prices would be actually lower if business were given its head.

They now blame labor and the working men and women of the country for the present high prices.

These men with their GOP cohorts in the Congress are responsible for starting the inflationary spiral which has all of us harried and distressed - yet they continue to blame wage raises for the conditions which resulted naturally from the machinery which they set in motion.

I am sure most of you have heard wage increases blamed for present day high prices. But I am just as certain that you will have noticed that industry has never been content - in a single instance - to limit its announced price-increase to the amount it gave to its workers.

There have been many instances reported in the daily press - where industry has agreed to a wage increase of several cents an hour - but has raised prices better than a hundred per cent over what the wage-raise added to production costs.

I submit to you - in all sincerity - the blame for our present economic situation is the traditional attitude of the Republican Party's old guard.

I have served in the Congress as your representative long enough to know that all Republicans cannot be included in the group I refer to as the Old Guard. But, by the same token, I know you are sufficiently familiar with the situation to realize that the group I refer to as the old guard is the group in command of the destiny of the Republican party and is the group which will determine the policies it must adopt.

That GOP old guard has been interested primarily in profit protection. The GOP old guard cared not a jot or tittle about prices for the average family and the first move it made, as the war drew to a close, was to enact contract re-negotiation legislation providing that profits would not halt as industry converted from war production to peace-time activities. It provided for tax refunds

and other benefits to "cushion the blow" as they termed it, for industry. But what concern did they show for the American family?

You may be a genuine Republican. I respect your opinion whether it agrees with mine or not. But, in all sincerity, I ask you to seek out one thing the Old Guard did for the average American in the days when we were concerned with planning for the changeover from war to peace.

The industrialist was protected. The farmer was protected through subsidies. But the small businessman, the white collar worker, the wage-earner - they were completely ignored. They were condemned to the old philosophy of "Root hog or die".

Being a candidate for re-election - you naturally think I am biased.

But consider, if you will, for just a moment, one of the greatest plans yet devised for the purpose of promoting a stable economy in our country. And after all, if we don't have a stable economy, then all our attempts at promoting peace and security abroad are just a complete waste of time and effort and money.

Many of you will recall the efforts to enact a so-called "Full Employment Bill".

Briefly, that idea contemplated a constant check on the economic condition of the country. The promotion of the greatest possible amount of employment - so that the goods produced by industry could be consumed by the wage-earning public.

Those of us who sponsored and fought hard for that legislation were held up to ridicule and called socialists. It was even argued that we took our cue from Communist Russia.

There were some forward-looking Republicans who thought the idea was a good one. Some advanced suggestions of their own which would make the plan work. But the Old Guard dominated the Republican party just as it does today, and they emasculated that program. They passed a weak-kneed version of the Full Employment Bill and then proceeded to laugh the entire program to death.

Even as finally enacted, the legislation might have done some good, if it had won the good will of those in the saddle in the Republican party. It provided for a group of economic advisors to the President. That group has functioned. You may not agree with all their conclusions, but I am certain you remember reading of their warnings of an approaching boom and bust cycle. The President made their reports public and recommended action by the Congress.

The legislation was intended to provide Congressional action by establishing a Joint Economic Committee made up of Members of the Senate and the House. The plan contemplated action in time to ward off inflation or deflation - to promote stability; to assure a standard of prosperity and prevent a recurrence of the last terrible depression.

Can you, honestly, recall any action - or any recommendation of action - by the Joint Economic Committee? Remember, please, the 80th Congress was under the complete control of the GOP's Old Guard. The only thing I can recall was a so-called investigation of high prices. A report was filed last fall on that investigation and its principle recommendation urged housewives to be more intelligent in their shopping. To my way of thinking, that report was an insult to the harrassed housewife who goes without many things herself in order to feed and clothe her children.

It may be that my ideas of the realm of government in our daily lives does not coincide with yours. However, I have been your Representative for a long while. I believe that government cannot sit on the side line as an umpire - and move in only when one group is prostrate and bleeding because of the onslaught of powerful economic factors. I believe government has a responsibility to check those factors before they become dangerous.

I may be naive - but I believe this is your government. Your government should function to give you the security you have a right to enjoy.

To Jefferson's oft-quoted declaration "That government is best, which governs least" - I would like to add "and which worries a little bit about the welfare of its people".