

REMARKS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, 2nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OPPOSING SENATE AMENDMENT TO DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR "GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSAL" OF INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

MR. FOGARTY.

Mr. Speaker, in its present form, I am forced into opposition to the Defense Production Act presently before us. I cannot vote for this bill as long as it contains the Senate amendment providing for "geographical dispersal."

I understand that the amendment as approved by the Senate reads as follows:

"In order to insure productive capacity in the event of such an attack on the United States, it is the policy of the Congress to promote the geographical dispersal of the industrial facilities of the United States in the interest of national defense, and to discourage the concentration of such productive facilities within limited geographical areas which are vulnerable to attack by an enemy of the United States."

I am particularly concerned with the interpretation which might be placed upon the phrase "geographical dispersal" by some of the executive agencies should this section become law. My own State of Rhode Island because of its relatively small size in comparison to its industrial capacity could be disastrously hit should the executive branch adopt a loose interpretation of this provision.

Heretofore, the matter of plant dispersal has been considered exclusively on the basis of satisfactory location within a certain section or area and the idea of scattering industrial plants throughout the land has been repudiated. A broad interpretation of this amendment

as read today could possibly rule out the entire State of Rhode Island as a suitable location for industrial facilities simply because of the fact that the City of Providence, with its concentration of defense production plants, virtually dominates the entire State.

The amendment further states that this principle of "geographical dispersal" shall be considered by the Government in matters of financial assistance for construction, expansion or improvement of defense production facilities and also in the procurement of goods and services. A loose interpretation of this phrase could deal a death blow to the hopes and aspirations of many of our Rhode Island communities which are so desperately striving to pull themselves up virtually by their own bootstraps to a secure plane of economic stability. A perfect example of the damage which could be caused is the City of Woonsocket which already qualifies as a distressed area in other matters relating to federal assistance and which has been doing an excellent job in industrial redevelopment. Passage of the Defense Production Act with this section intact could conceivably reverse all the work the City of Woonsocket has done and plunge that community into the abyss of economic chaos.

We, in Rhode Island, have long been suffering from the problems which necessarily attach to a one or two industry state. We know intimately the burdens inflicted by the flight of the textile industry to mills in the South and the movement of the center of the machinery manufacturing industry to the Middle West. We further know, however, that we still have the exceptional skills of our people - skills which can be used by other types of industry.

Both public and private sources have been constantly working with diligent effort to bring to Rhode Island diversified industries. All this effort will be wiped out, I'm convinced, should the bill before us today be approved with the "geographical dispersal" still included in it.

That amendment will certainly be considered as virtually a warning to any interested industry to stay away from Rhode Island. It implies that the federal government may step in to wreck their operations.

In this amendment, Mr. Speaker, I see all the efforts of our Rhode Island communities being jeopardized, and I cannot in good conscience register my vote in favor of the bill so long as the "geographical dispersal" amendment attaches to it.

I intend therefore to vote against it.