

Presentation of Citation

John E. Fogarty

Ground Breaking Ceremony

D.C. Village
Washington, D. C.

May 9, 1962

*B. H. Fitch
Supplied
Remarks*

Commissioner Tobriner, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

This citation has special significance for me. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all of those responsible for the honor and accept it on behalf of the senior adults who are being recognized today.

I would like to commend the Department of Buildings and Grounds for providing such a fitting occasion to highlight our interest and concern in better housing for the elderly, to observe Senior Citizens Month, and to emphasize the role of the Nation's Capital as a showcase in the field of aging.

D. C. Village has continued to incorporate the best of research and program planning in its activities and we are all keenly aware of the urgent need that is being met in replacing the dormitories.

Nationally, the month of May is coming to be accepted as Senior Citizens Month. This does not imply a thirty day moratorium on "problems of aging" - but a special time to call attention and to evaluate our progress in meeting what has been called "the most compelling social issue of our time."

It was exactly one year and four months ago today that the first White House Conference on Aging convened in Washington. In many ways this should have been a personally satisfying event, because it was my Bill that resulted in the meeting. I believe there are many positive factors we can identify in connection with the Conference. Perhaps the most significant action took place at the state and local levels in preparing for the national forum. The \$15,000 allocations to the States and Territories did provide a stimulus and in many areas "primed the pump" that has grown into active commissions, councils or committees supported by state or local funds. I am disturbed that more of the States did not authorize appropriations to continue the programs that were recommended or to provide staff to implement the action that was so clearly identified. I was quite honestly disturbed when the District of Columbia did not include in its budget an amount necessary to carry out the plans that were so well begun by its Council on Aging. In many ways the District is at both an advantage and disadvantage in the field of aging. As the capital of the nation, its programs should reflect the latest and best in social programs, not only for its residents but for the nation and even international visitors.

Admittedly, budget problems must be solved and funds allocated as the Commissioners and planners decide best for the community. I would not be honest if I did not add that economy, and sacrifice at the expense of our senior citizens is downgrading the heritage of our nation and the contribution our elderly citizens have made to its prestige. They deserve and seek only their rightful share and place in a society and community that will recognize their worth as individuals and cease to treat them as delinquents or second rate persons.

Because I recognized the value of the modest allocations of \$15,000 in preparing for the White House Conference, and the need to have a more dynamic national program in aging, I introduced a Bill on January 9, 1960, for a Federal Commission on Aging. Events since then have further convinced me that such a commission holds the greatest promise for success in meeting the national goals we have set for our senior citizens.

I was most pleased and proud when Senator McNamara, with his knowledge and wisdom in the field of aging decided an independent commission on aging was also the proper approach to positive action. As you know, the Senator and I have introduced identical bills in

the Senate and House to establish a U. S. Commission on the Aging.

The Commission would be responsible to the President and Congress and not lost in the maize of other programs within any department or agency. It would receive the priority of national interest and concern, rather than agency consideration, after all of its major activities have received attention.

Through its grant program, funds would again be available to conduct the necessary planning, research, training and demonstrations necessary to a vital action program in aging.

Hearings on the Commission have been held in the House with an unusual record of outstanding persons expressing enthusiastic support. We are hopeful that action can be taken during this session of Congress.

The interest that you have reflected in your planning for this occasion and my personal knowledge of your sincere belief in the importance of aging as a major program may soon have a structure for implementation - in the U. S. Commission on Aging.

I have shared this information with you as another way of expressing my appreciation for this fine citation, and to pledge my continued support in helping to add quality as well as quantity to the lengthening life span of our senior citizens.