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"CONGRESSMAN'S REPORT"

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Some Early Impressions and Experiences

The life of a freshman congressman is hard enough when he reports in January with the other incoming neophytes. All his early difficulties are compounded when he takes his seat, as I did, in the late stages of a session. Washington is in many ways a strange and confusing place to the newcomer (except for a brief troop-train stopover in 1944, I had never visited this city until my wife and I arrived on May 16). My first three weeks have been hectic but most interesting.

Little important legislation is enacted during the first two or three months and this time is spent by my colleagues in committee work, study of bills, and in attending to the problems and demands of their district and its constituents. In contrast the second day I was here the House voted appropriations totaling \$13.3 billion for our national defense and space programs. Other important matters are scheduled during early June including the aid-to education measure passed last week by the Senate.

To make matters worse my office is piled high with a vast mountain of correspondence; and the Colorado River "squatter" problem and other important Arizona matters need immediate attention.

1961 Arizonans are apparently prolific letter writers. In the last week one of my four staffers has required nearly half her time simply to open and sort the flood of mail. To my surprise two-thirds of our communications originate in Maricopa County. The current crop of letters deals with Castro's "prisoners for tractors" exchange (about 10 to 1 against), the proposal of Arizona Public Service Company that it be allowed to build a part of the Glen Canyon transmission lines (about 3 to 2 for APSCO), the administration's farm bill (almost 20 to 1 against), and the legislation which would restrict railroads in hauling "piggyback" freight (5 to 1 for the railroads). Even with an extra staffer I have decided to give priority to letters from Second District residents.

The House of Representative works largely through committees, and few members attend the routine daily sessions. However, I have tried to be on the floor every day during these early weeks in order to brush up on parliamentary procedure, absorb some of the traditions and customs and get acquainted with the leaders.

The older members of both parties have gone out of their way to make me welcome, answer my questions and give me counsel. I have been most favorably impressed by the attitude of the Arizona delegation. Senator Hayden has been extremely helpful and kind, and his influence on Capitol Hill and the respect in which he is held are something very special. Congressman Rhodes and his staff have taken their time to brief me on mutual problems and Senator Goldwater made a special trip to my office to greet me.

My peculiar facial characteristics, height and haircut make me readily identifiable to the other Congressmen, but I am having a difficult time learning the names, faces and states of my 436 colleagues.

Two personal experiences have highlighted my early days. Speaker Rayburn is a kind and intelligent man who runs the House with decorum and rigid impartiality --- he will halt a committee chairman whose time has expired just as readily as any other member. My second day on the floor he apparently noticed my "lost" appearance, and invited me to preside over the House for a brief moment of glory during a routine quorum call. And, during my first week I was invited to the White House with 35 other congressmen of both parties for one of Mr. Kennedy's late afternoon "get acquainted" sessions. The President is an extremely alert, engaging and well-informed person. In our two or three minute chat he wanted to know all about my special election, asking especially about the Yuma "squatter" situation, and the vote in Pima County.

The 75 days before Congress adjourns will be busy and important ones for me. No doubt I will make some mistakes, but I am going to try very hard to do a good job for my district, my state, and the country.