

For Tape: September 4, 1957 (Wednesday)

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RADIO BOUNDUP

The opening half of the 85th Congress is now a part of history, the halfway mark in a Congressional session that has already made historic progress in some fields and gives every indication of making even more before reaching its final conclusion next year.

~~If there was no other achievement,~~ the enactment of meaningful civil rights legislation, for the first time since the reconstruction days after the Civil War, ~~would mark~~ this session as an outstanding one in our history. It took patience and persistence, but the fact that such legislation was enacted is a testimonial to the effectiveness of our legislative process when reason prevails.

Of course, we accomplished much more.

We approved the International Atomic Energy Treaty, the only step that has been taken toward international control of the

atom since atomic power was unleashed. Perhaps little attention was given this action publicly, yet it was one of the most important steps in foreign policy in many years -- promising to convert the atom from an instrument of war to an implement of peace.

We passed an extended and expanded Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act -- another far-reaching step which benefits both our domestic economy and our foreign policy.

We increased the borrowing authority of the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation, and passed the Niagara River power bill. We authorized a TVA expansion program, and an Atomic Energy Commission construction program including our long-sought Elk River REA Coop reactor in Minnesota. — Housing, Veterans benefits

We passed an immigration bill -- not one that went as far as I think we should go, and must eventually go, but one that still provides genuine relief in many instances.

And we answered the public's cry for economy, but cutting

Economy

the President's budget request by five billion dollars -- setting the stage for tax reductions at the next half of the session.

Congress really worked to achieve its economies, searching *thoroughly* the budget, dollar by dollar, comma by comma, line by line. Some parts of it could not be touched. We must pay the interest on the national debt; and if it costs as much to refinance the ^{remaining} ~~last~~ part ~~of it~~ as it did to refinance the first ^{portion of the debt} ~~part of it~~ under this administration, the cost will ultimately be \$11 billion in interest, instead of \$7 billion in interest. We had to meet the solemn obligations of our Government to our veterans; we could not repudiate contracts made in good faith.

up 2 Billion already

But from the part of the budget which was subject to the control of reasonable men, we reduced ^{it} by 9.1 percent.

We kept faith with the taxpayers, and we kept it without cutting down on such vital services as health research and water conservation.

The list of constructive measures approved by this Congress can be continued indefinitely. They may not all be as dramatic as some which I have cited, but they were solid, substantial achievements.

Perhaps the public fails to understand the care and scrutiny that goes into the legislative process on even the simplest of bills. Actually, it is remarkable that as much work could be completed in such a comparatively short period of time. Our Senate was in session for 860 hours on 133 days. *from Jan to Aug 29 - long, hard -*

Altogether 1,210 measures were passed by either the Senate, the House, or both.

The press has been inclined to judge the Congress solely ^{by} ~~upon~~ its action on the President's recommendations, comparing just the percentage of measures passed out of the ^{to the} total number of such recommendations. That hardly tells the full story, particularly when recommendations have been made

publicly for which no legislation has been introduced, or recommendations were made upon which Administration spokesmen later opposed action.

But even from the total list of 155 recommendations submitted by the President, action was completed on 67; 11 more have passed the Senate and 4 have passed the House, and are now awaiting final action in the other body; 13 have cleared committees and are on the calendar for the next half of the session; hearings are s till in progress on 21. Actually, only 5 were rejected. One was withdrawn, one was tabled by committee, and no legislation was ever introduced to implement 17 of the recommendations. So out of that total of 155 recommendations, only 15 remain upon which no action has been taken.

The opening half of any session of Congress is entirely occupied with more the committee hearings and inquiries, preparing for final action on legislation in the second half of the session,

As a result, the full Record of the 85th Congress can not be written until it ends next year. All legislation now in committee or on the calendar remains pending until Congress reconvenes and again takes up its work.

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