



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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RELATIONS OF CONGRESS TO PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS

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Seminar XVII, Dr. Max Kampelman
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Generally, the calibre of Congressmen is quite high. They all have their limitations, but this is true for all of us. Most represent their constituents and their own point of view rather well. Congressmen get valuable information from lobbyists, even though it may be colored. This can be offset by getting information from the opposite lobbying group. Important decisions are made as a result of this information. It is difficult for the minority party to get information from the executive department. The majority party can get this. If the minority party requested such information from the executive department, it would be slanted. Thus the lobbyists are most valuable to a party that cannot rely on the executive branch. The law of survival is the key to political life. The fact that a member of Congress wants to be re-elected is good, as is his interest in serving his constituency. The old timers in Congress tell the youngsters the importance of keeping in touch with the folks back home. Two other important problems of Congressmen are the national interest vs. the local interest, and the question of party loyalty. Political parties are an important part of the legislative process. However, it is an American and not a British political party system. There is no party discipline in Congress. This does not mean the party does not play a role. There are members in Congress who would ignore discipline. It is the individual who must get elected, not the party. The national party thus has no claim on him. Party groups are organized occasionally to

elect the Speaker of the House, etc. This is about the extent of party organization in Congress. On great issues most of the party will vote together. In Lyndon Johnson, we have the most able leader the Senate has ever had. He knows how to manipulate things in Congress. He is constantly advising and talking to members of Congress. The purpose of this is to arrive at a party decision. You can get party impact through the President when you have a strong President. Other party machinery such as the National Committee does not have the impact. Pressure groups make their appeal to a special group, while political parties try to appeal on a broad scale. The single interest pressure groups have more power than multi-interest groups.

XVI. FRIENDS' COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION 3/12/57

Dr. Griffith spoke on the policies of the Friends' (Quakers) Committee on national and international affairs. Two important things stand out to me in this seminar. First, the organization favors foreign economic aid, but opposes the Eisenhower Doctrine. If the military portion of the doctrine were opposed, this would be understandable. But both the economic and military parts are opposed because Dulles did not reveal how the \$200 million would be spent. I am wondering if all previous foreign aid programs have categorized each and every item of expenditure. I feel this is a weak argument for opposing the doctrine. The important thing is to keep the Communists out of the Middle East, and it obviously is cheaper to do this with money instead of bullets and human lives. On this issue of schools, I think a very important fact brought out is that the present school program is only catching up with respect to providing facilities for new students. It does not take into consideration the hundreds and perhaps thousands of obsolete schools which must be replaced. If the states can do both, then I would not be in favor of federal aid. But nothing has convinced me so far that this is possible under present conditions.

XVII. RELATIONS OF CONGRESS TO PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS 3/12/57

The value of lobbyists for the minority party cannot be overemphasized. With the executive branch in hands of the majority party, the minority group cannot depend on it for reliable information. Most lobbyists are honest and supply valuable information to Congressmen. The number of dishonest lobbyists is relatively small. The importance of Lyndon Johnson's power in the Senate indicates that it is possible to get cooper-

ation from both parties. Johnson is a unique individual who has great prestige to a very large number of Senators. It is largely through his effort that the Senate passed the Eisenhower Doctrine. Unfortunately, prestige in the Senate does not necessarily indicate prestige before the American people. Johnson probably would not have a very good chance of being elected President of the United States. On the other hand, Senator Kefauver has prestige to many Americans, but very little in the Senate.

XVIII. NEWS COVERAGE IN WASHINGTON 3/13/57

Mr. Deakin brought out that there is a tendency of having more and more news restricted to the public. A notable example of this is the details of the cancelled Dixon-Yates contract. While military information must of necessity be greatly restricted, I feel that it is unfair and undemocratic to hold back important news to the public. There is certainly no reason why so much information of the Dixon-Yates contract could not have been released. Perhaps if more was known of it, there might not have been as much protest. It may be perhaps unfortunate that the Executive Department is the chief source of news because it is usually easier to get information from Congressmen than from department heads. Newspapers give the people exactly what they want. If they are interested in reading details of foreign policy, they will buy the New York Times. If they are interested in the comic strips and what President Eisenhower's golf score is, they will read a paper like the Chicago Tribune. I wonder if it is practical for a newspaper reporter to analyze the news on the front page. It would seem to me that the proper place to do this is on the editorial page.