

Friday, May 2, 1952

10:05 - 10:30 P.M.

BANCROFT: Senator Dirksen, should President Truman be impeached?

SHADEL: Senator, do we still need wage-price controls?

COCHRAN: Would you accept the Republican Presidential nomination?

ANNOUNCER: CAPITAL CLOAK ROOM. From the nation's capital, the CBS Radio Network again brings you transcribed another informal interview with an outstanding member of Congress. Tonight's guest is Senator Everett M. Dirksen, Republican of Illinois.

Senator Dirksen will meet with CBS Radio Washington correspondents, Griffing Bancroft, Bill Shadel and Ron Cochran. First, we hear from Griffing Bancroft.

BANCROFT: Senator Dirksen, welcome to Capital Cloak Room. An outstanding member of the House of Representatives for 16-yrs., and now 2-yrs. as a United States Senator from Illinois.

Well, over in the House, quite a few of your Republican colleagues are talking about trying to impeach the President for his seizure of the steel mills, and so let's start with that: Do you think the President should be impeached?

DIRKSEN: Well, Mr. Bancroft, I've taken account, of course, of the impeachment resolutions that have been filed by men with whom I was formerly associated in the House of Representatives. I receive lots of mail that suggest that probably the impeachment course ought to be followed. It seems to me, of course, that it's a matter you cannot accept too lightly. First of all it is a constitutional remedy that applies to misfeasance in office or to high crimes and misdemeanors, and as you well recall only one President was impeached and that was Andrew Johnson.

BANCROFT: And then he was acquitted later wasn't he?

DIRKSEN: That's correct. If there is warrant for it, and of course that's a matter that the Judiciary Committee of the House must examine into because that's where such a resolution would go, if they feel there is

warrant for it then of course they ought to do their duty. I only say that it's a long and cumbersome and tergant remedy because I've been through a number of impeachment proceedings in the days when I was in the House.

You have to impeach by a majority vote over there. The Senate has to sit as a trial court and in the case of the President the Chief Justice acts as the presiding officer.

Now it's not one of those things that you can just answer off the cuff. And the other thing is this, - let's assume that a resolution of impeachment was offered. Does a member of the Senate qualify (sic) disqualify himself to sit on the court if, for instance, he just very categorically states that he thinks the President should be impeached. I think it is a matter of course that must be seriously considered. Because if there is grounds for it then Congress certainly should not shirk its duty any more than a grand jury should shirk its duty even though it believes that that the evidence might be rather flimsy and slender and that a conviction might not be had. So it is a matter that ought to be carefully and very seriously considered.

BANCROFT: Well, I take it, Senator Dirksen, that you do not think that President Truman was right in seizing the steel mills.

DIRKSEN: Well, I have said over and over again that in my considered judgment the seizure was illegal; I think it was high-handed.

BANCROFT: Well, now you mention impeachment as a cumbersome remedy, what remedy do you suggest?

DIRKSEN: Well, frankly, I have no remedy to just suggest off the cuff for the moment in this matter, because we're dealing as you know with the steel (indistinct) and I've only this minute come from the Senate committee on banking and currency, where we've been taking testimony all day from some of those who represent the companies. Yesterday, we had representative of the steel union and the C.I.O. and so I can't lightly suggest a remedy just for the moment. But, in proportion as all this testimony finally comes to our attention. Out of it I certainly will fashion some conclusions

and it'll not be too long in the doing.

COCHRAN: Do you think, Senator, that the decision which the Supreme Court finally makes in this case would have some bearing on whether impeachment proceedings should be followed or not?

DIRKSEN: Well, obviously so. Now you have this rather (indistinct) situation; you have a District Court in the nation's capital that holds that the seizure was illegal. By a very narrow margin ~~the~~ of 5-to-4 the Circuit Court reverses that finding at least for the moment, and that might have been for expediency reasons or it might have been in order to allow for tarrying? factor in dealing with a very serious problem.

BANCROFT: Well, the Circuit Court did not actually get into the constitutional question.

DIRKSEN: Well, they couldn't as a matter of fact because I can't for the life of me understand how circuit judges within the limit of time available could explore the whole constitutional aspect of this problem.

So it is a rather fair assumption that they wanted this thing to be considered with a little more time and in order to get it into the hands of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Now if the court makes a finding that this was legal, it changes the face of the matter right now.

SH. DEL: Senator Dirksen, coming to the political angle, you mentioned impeachment being cumbersome and sometimes long delayed, isn't it the sense now that since we are so near elections that it would be better to leave it in effect up to the people in November?

DIRKSEN: Well, not so long I would say that there is some virtue in that of course. Not so long ago, I think I did a broadcast on this very matter when we speak of the cumbersome process because the political note is injected of course. Obviously you have here a party leader. His party has a majority in both branches of Congress, and the political factor necessarily intrudes itself. Now I don't offer it for a moment as a ground for being reticent about impeachment if the circumstances and the facts warrant that

that course be taken.

SHADEL: There's also a twilight zone which is evident in the different court decisions, is there not, and therefore impeachment usually calls for the very high misdemeanor?

DIRKSEN: That's quite true. I think it would be informative for the public at the same time to advise them that years ago when we had a number of impeachments over in the House of Representatives the Judiciary Committee was seriously considering a modification of the Constitution. They thought that perhaps the Supreme Court or some extra-judicial body might assume the impeachment function. Because as you so well know if you're familiar with it it has to be passed in the House, the Senate sits as a trial court and then all of the legislative business comes to a full halt while the thing is going on. Both sides have counsel. House sets up a board of managers as you know and the thing will drag on for a long, long time, and that's another factor of course in a rather feverish and tumultuous season like 1952.

SHADEL: Well, would you then say, Senator Dirksen, that the cries for impeachment in the House are politically motivated?

DIRKSEN: Oh, indeed I wouldn't. Indeed I wouldn't. I know some of the members who have offered impeachment resolutions like Bob Hale. They're seriously minded people. I think they're of impeccable integrity. I wouldn't say that they were motivated by politics at all.

BANCROFT: Well, Senator, do you think they have the votes to pass an impeachment (inter.)

DIRKSEN: That's quite another question, and you see when you're over on this ^{end} side of the capital you become something of a stranger to the viewpoint ~~at~~ that is expressed on the floor of the House, and, obviously, I'd have to go over and visit with a good deal of members before I could speak on that subject with any authority.

BANCROFT: Well, I'd like to ask one more question about this steel situation, - do you think the country can stand a prolonged steel strike.

DIRKSEN: Well, it's hard to tell. But I think the best answer I can give is this. We had Admiral Morrell on the stand last night and also this morning and well into the afternoon as I recall. He used to be in charge of the Bureau of Yards and Docks in the Navy Dept., and he's now with Jones & Laughlin Steel Co. I asked him point blank this morning what the steel supply was and whether or not it was so critical and so short that it would impair the defense effort, and the answer I got, I think was that it wasn't quite that short by any means and that it was extreme language to say that we were putting the whole defense effort in jeopardy at this time by virtue of what's happening.

SHADEL: Senator Dirksen, is your committee sitting in the study of the particular steel situation or is this leading up to the overall consideration of price-wage and rent controls?

DIRKSEN: Well, Mr. Shadel, we've had before the committee, virtually for months, the so called Defense Production Act. You remember when we passed it last year, we put in an early termination date and the termination date on a good many of those control features is June 30. Now we've had hearings and testimony enough I would say to fill this room. And in the Defense Production Act is a title known as Title 5, that deals with labor disputes, and it's under that title that the President derived his authority to set up the so called Wage Stabilization Board. That's the board under the chairmanship of Nathan Feinsinger that finally made the findings, which eventuated in the present controversy. Consequently in considering a continuation of those powers the steel controversy comes very much to the fore and we must deal with it because you'll have to pass upon this question of extending Title 5 or any modification of it, or whether you want to change the motives that we're following at the present time. And I should add - I have an amendment pending over there to give the Wage Stabilization Board statutory ~~the~~ authority; you see, it's appointed by executive order now; and then to require that its services and its jurisdiction be limited to the stabilization function. Secondly, that the public members exceed the aggregate of industry and labor

members to emphasize the public aspect of it, and, finally, to require that the Senate confirm all the public members of the board. And that matter will come up for consideration on next Monday because it is a week from Monday because it is hoped that at long last we can come to some kind of resolution on this bill that has been pending in the committee so long.

BANCROFT: Well, Senator Dirksen, in other words you would not allow the Wage Stabilization Board to recommend the union shop as it did in this case ... (inter.)

DIRKSEN: Indeed I wouldn't because it puts the whole force of government behind that recommendation and I think it's thoroughly unfair if government is to be an umpire about it if it's to stand in a neutral corner, this isn't certainly neutral when a board comes in with that kind of a recommendation, because even though it's a recommendation and I understand that full well yet it will be interpreted as the force in government behind something that has been a controversial issue for a long, long time, and that's not fair.

SHADEL: Well, aside from the union ~~and~~ shop, under your amendment would the Wage Stabilization Board still have the authority to make a recommendation on wages?

DIRKSEN: No, because its functions would ... yes, its functions would be limited to stabilization and that would include wages. But questions of representation and questions of bargaining and questions of union shop, for instance, would go back to where Congress intended they should go when it re-enacted the Taft-Hartley Act; in other words, that is a function of the National Labor Relations Board and in fact Paul Herzog, the chairman, when he testified last year at length before the House labor committee, testified that he thought he was still a trustee of those powers and I inferred from his testimony that he feels that that is within his domain.

SHADEL: Well, is there a feeling in your committee that the board has been partial to labor?

DIRKSEN: Well, there has been a good deal of talk about bias and I've endeavored by cross-examination and otherwise to ascertain whether there has

been some bias here.

Now I'm coming to the view that perhaps there has been some bias. As notably the public members finally gave in on the union shop issue you see, and it's just hard to understand why they did, unless there was a little favoritism on their part.

Now I don't want to charge the individual members of the board. I'm just looking at the picture as a whole.

BANCROFT: Well, on the overall problem, Senator Dirksen, of price and wage controls how do you feel now. Do you think they should be continued after June 30th?

DIRKSEN: Oh, Griff, I haven't changed my mind one bit. You may remember that last year when the thing came down to a showdown in the banking committee, of the 13 members who were present I was the only one on the record who voted 'against' a continuation of those controls.

We had the matter up. I offered the motion to let them terminate I was defeated. I think there were 3 members of the committee, maybe 4, who voted for termination. But I think there's a growing feeling in that direction. And as I listened the other day to the testimony of Charlie Wilson, he said, "Well, in view of what we got right now the question is whether or not controls are working at all or whether they're only dislocative of the whole American economy. And having sat there week after week and listened to that testimony, I'm coming to a conclusion that maybe we ought to let 'em go by the board.

COCHRAN: Well, now in this situation, Senator Dirksen, if there were not price and wage controls it seems quite clear that the price of steel would most certainly go up, is that untrue?

DIRKSEN: It might go up for a while before it levels off. And there was some testimony to that effect only this afternoon as a matter of fact from one who I thought could speak with authority on the subject.

BANCROFT: Well, do you think that would settle the steel strike then if they got (inter.)

DIRKSEN: Well, I asked this point blank question - I said if we go back to the Taft-Hartley Act and you have a chance to get a compensatory price increase can we get this thing settled then? The answer was an unequivocal 'no,' ..(sic) an unequivocal 'yes.'

BANCROFT: Answer from whom?

DIRKSEN: From Dan Morrell.

BANCROFT: Morrell of Jones & Laughlin.

DIRKSEN: Admiral Morrell ... yes, now with Jones & Laughlin. But for a long, long time before his retirement, a servant in the government, and a good one.

SHADEL: Well, Senator Dirksen, on the overall question of price and wagecontrols is your ~~mix~~ criticism of controls the administration of those controls or do you think we've arrived at the point when we simply don't need them.

DIRKSEN: It's both. If you'd heard the testimony for instance on turkeys, on potatoes, on chickens, on eggs, many, many commodities that have never been up to the price ceiling but they're got to make out the reports.

The other day I dropped into a grocery store and I heard a lady say, "What, no potatoes?" Now imagine no potatoes in a store that is part of one of the largest chains in the country and does probably a billion or two billion dollars worth of business.

Over on my desk is letter after letter from the ~~and~~ producer saying that it's going to continue that way unless you get these controls off. And so it begins to ~~mix~~ dislocate.

and you couldn't hear that testimony without feeling that we'd be infinitely better off if we took them off.

SHADEL: Well, is that a matter of the defense production act or is it a matter of Agriculture Department's policy.

DIRKSEN: Oh, no, controls you know are administered by O.P.S. and the economic stabilization agency and title for the defense production act is the authority under which the controls are imposed and administered.

BANCROFT: Well, Senator Dirksen, you say if you think steel prices go up at least for a time if controls come off and that presumably would mean that other prices would go up - do you think there's a danger of a serious inflation if you take these controls off.

DIRKSEN: Well, is there any greater danger than there is now. And then, Griff, let me ask you this question.

BANCROFT: Well, I'm supposed to be asking the questions (laughter) ...

DIRKSEN: Oh, well, it will be rhetorical in nature (laughter) I'll answer it anyway.

But as I listen to some of that testimony today and saw what this package deal, recommended by the Wage Stabilization Board, would do it seems to me you'd get more inflation and a more unstabilized effect out of that than you would if there was a modest price increase for steel and the boys then went back to work after by processes of collective bargaining they got this difficulty ironed out.

COCHRAN: Well, now when the O.P.A. was finally put out of existence prices did go ~~down~~ up rather sharply after ... (inter.)

DIRKSEN: For a little while and then they began to come down.

BANCROFT: Well, Senator, we inevitably must get around to politics and we did start this off with a question: Are you a candidate for ... or would you accept the Republican Presidential nomination? Let's put it that way.

DIRKSEN: Oh, well, Griff, let's put it on the basis of your first question: am I a candidate and the answer is no.

BANCROFT: Well, then what about the second question?

DIRKSEN: Well, let's not get to that ... (laughter) for a moment. Let me just observe that as you so well know I have been very consistent there and vigorously supporting the candidacy of Bob Taft. I like Bob Taft. I think he's able. In every section of the country I hear people say that ...

... (M O R E) ...

I have been very consistently and vigorously supporting the candidacy of Bob Taft. I like Bob Taft. I think he's able. In every section of the country I hear people say that they think he is the ablest man we can put forward. He's a man of unimpeachable integrity. I call him Mr. Integrity, and, certainly, as you know from a long familiarity with the processes here that he didn't come by this term of Mr. Republican without merit because he is a worker of ability. I've often said he's a horse for work and so ... I didn't mean to use the facilities here to plug him. I simply say that I'm very much for him and so I'm going right down the line. Now, if we put the question in the second form - would I accept? - well, let's not get around to that. That's one of those difficult things and it hasn't been offered to me and I'm not a candidate and perhaps I should simply say at this stage of the proceeding that I'm for Bob Taft.

BANCROFT: Don't you feel sort of lonely down there in the Senate, Senator Dirksen, not being a candidate?

DIRKSEN: You mean with all the potential candidates on both sides of the aisle? Well, that ought to make one just slightly lonely, I suppose, and yet I've given a good deal of time to the matter and I hope neither your listening audience nor you will object to this statement. I felt that one of the things I could do in the interest of the well-being of the country would be to advance the candidacy of somebody in whom I have the utmost of good faith and to help bring about the liquidation of the present Administration in the interest of and for the well-being of this Republic (inter.) very honorably.

SHADEL: Let's ask the question then, Senator Dirksen. Have you answered the criticism that Bob Taft can't win?

DIRKSEN: Well, my friend Shadel, let me answer it this way. Bob Taft was a candidate in the State of Illinois and I was designated as his pre-convention manager. When we got through they rolled up a little over nine hundred thousand votes for Bob Taft.

SHADEL: Eisenhower's name wasn't on the ballot?

DIRKSEN: There was a write-in campaign for him and Stassen's name was on the ballot. Now, I don't demand any candidate in our Party. Far be

it from me to do so. But I simply say here was a pretty clear-cut issue and the best answer, then, I can make to your question is that Bob Taft did win and he has been a consistent winner ever since I can remember.

SHADEL: Well, perhaps it's a compliment to you, Senator Dirksen, that he carried Illinois with such a majority, but how about, when you are not in Massachusetts or New Hampshire or Minnesota?

DIRKSEN: Well, this is a good spirited horse race that we're in and I still have great confidence in him and he's still doing all right, I would think.

SHADEL: You think he's going to get the nomination?

DIRKSEN: Well, I am hopeful that he'll get the nomination.

BANCROFT: On the first ballot?

DIRKSEN: Well, Griff, I wouldn't know whether he would come on the first ballot or not. I've been to a number of conventions and I know all those little imponderables that enter into it and it's very seldom, indeed, of course, that a convention nominates on the first ballot, but, if I had it to do, I would endeavor to contrive it for him on the first ballot.

COCHRAN: How about that second spot on the Republican ticket? Would you be interested in running with Bob Taft?

DIRKSEN: Well, I

COCHRAN: If he were nominated.

DIRKSEN: Well, Ron, the second spot has not been offered to me and, of course, I couldn't decline it unless it was offered, but I know this also. You may recall that I was a candidate once for the Vice Presidency in 1944. It was not a matter of my own volition. There were some forty-one members of the House that signed a petition, thinking that a member of the legislative branch, in the interest of a balanced ticket, ought to be on the national Republican ticket and so in pursuance of that mark of esteem and expression of confidence I went out and campaigned all over the country, but I discovered that when you pick your No. 1 man ... after all, he is the one who must determine who would be a congenial and able and diligent running mate and so he will make that

determination, I'm sure, finally. It has always been that way and perhaps it should be that way because they've got to operate as a team and victory comes from a well-packaged effort.

SHADEL: Senator, you, as a good Republican, are you at all disturbed about the intense rivalry and some bitterness that's creeping into this campaign between Eisenhower and Taft forces?

DIRKSEN: Well, Shadel, I wouldn't call it bitterness. I would just call it good-spirited political feeling.

SHADEL: Some of those comments don't sound like just good rivalry.

DIRSEN: And as you well know it is certainly energizing the Republican Party as nothing else could do. I noticed it by the size of the meetings over the country. I noticed it by the mail. I noticed it by that surging force that you see from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the dominion to the gulf and, frankly, we are on the way to resounding victory in 1952.

SHADEL: You don't think that it will develop some rift in the party that can't be corrected after the July convention?

DIRKSEN: Well, now, Bill, let me say that you've been looking down on this Senate from the press gallery for a long time. You know they almost come to blows and how spirited things are here and then, finally, they close ranks, all is sweetness and light, and you move on in a unified effort in the interest of the big day in November.

SHADEL: Well, we have heard of some Republicans who will probably go overseas. In fact, we had a guest on this program not so long ago, in case a certain man is nominated, and I thought maybe that might happen in the Taft camp if Eisenhower was nominated and vice-versa.

BANCROFT: I think that might be a quorum call for you, Senator Dirksen. We're recording this thing in the Senate Radio Gallery, but we'll be through, I'm sure, in time for you to answer a roll call.

DIRKSEN: Well, let me respond to Bill's question for a moment because I think it's important and I see it show up every once in a while, but

it runs in my mind that Bob Taft said unequivocally that he would support whoever was nominated by the convention and that means he's a good citizen. He's a good American. He's a good party man.

BANCROFT: Well, Senator Dirksen, I would like to ask one question or two about this problem you've got on the aid to Europe, the Mutual Security Administration. Are you going to support the full eight-billion-dollars-aid-to-Europe program?

DIRKSEN: Very frankly, Griff, I'm not! Now, I've been watching what the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been doing. As you know, they took out a billion before the bill got to the floor. Some of them reserved their vote on the grounds that they thought another nine hundred million could be taken out. There will probably be a spirited effort on the Republican side in order to take out that nine hundred million and, speaking only for myself, and I certainly do not commit the Party, I'm going to look at it with a very careful eye because it's entirely possible that even additional savings can be affected in that program. I'm not too happy about it and, certainly, I'm not happy in making up deficits in the budgets of other countries when our own country is so out of gear, fiscally speaking, and we're looking a fourteen-and-a-half-billion-dollar deficit in the face in fiscal 1953.

BANCROFT: But you are committed to the general idea of the program?

DIRKSEN: Well, I went along with it up to a point the last time, but it seems to me that a great deal of money could be saved in that field and it must be saved because a balanced budget, economies, the elimination of waste and extravagance, is a "must" in this country today. It's no longer a question of whether we want to or not. We have got to because you can cut off enough fat even off of a wealthy country like America to jeopardize its fiscal soundness and then the deal for its collapse on the homefront might be easy, indeed.

BANCROFT: Well, how far down do you think that could be cut? Without endangering our defenses.

DIRKSEN: You mean the mutual aid program?

BANCROFT: Uh-huh.

DIRKSEN: Well, I could tell you better after I look. You remember I offered an amendment last year to cut a billion. It didn't succeed. I offered an amendment to cut five hundred million. It failed. And, finally, I offered a third amendment to take out a quarter-of-a-billion and the Senate finally approved it and so I'll examine it carefully.

BANCROFT: I'm afraid that's all the time we have and thank you very, very much, Senator Dirksen.

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ANNOUNCER: From Washington, the CBS Radio Network has again brought you transcribed a meeting in "Capitol Cloak Room," presenting an outstanding member of Congress through informal interview. Tonight's guest was Senator Everett M. Dirksen, Republican, of Illinois. He was interviewed by three CBS Radio Washington correspondents: Griffing, Bancroft, Bill Shadel, and Ron Cochran.

P. Olszewski

Ed.trans.-A.A.Cardiff

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