

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE JOINT REPUBLICAN
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS CALLED FOR MARCH 16, 1961, AT
8:30 A.M. IN THE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE MINORITY LEADER,
CONGRESSMAN CHARLES A. HALLECK

Members Present:

Representatives Halleck, Arends, Byrnes, Brown, Hoeven
Senators Morton, Dirksen, Saltonstall, Kuchel

Also Present:

Bryce Harlow, Robert Humphreys, Mark Trice, Harry Brookshire

Members Absent:

Bridges

The Presiding Officer, Senator Thruston B. Morton, Called the
meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The agenda for the meeting, as previously agreed to by Senator
Dirksen and Congressman Halleck, is as follows:

1. Economic Recovery
2. Peace Corps
3. Legislation
 - A. Minimum Wage
 - B. Unemployment Compensation
4. Meeting during Easter Recess

Economic Recovery

A prepared statement on the Economic Recovery for Congressman Halleck
to use at this morning's Press Conference was read by Senator Morton for
consideration and discussion by the group. A copy of the statement, which was
approved, is included at the end of these minutes.

In the course of the discussion of the Economic Recovery, Senators
Morton and Saltonstall and Congressman Byrnes stressed that the encouraging
signs of recovery and up-turn should be presented in a manner that would be

to the Republican Party's advantage. Senator Morton said it is important now that Republicans let the country know that recovery is occurring through operation of natural economic factors and not by the President's efforts or emergency legislation proposals. If this point is stressed, Morton said, it will create a climate that will help Congress in the future to resist similar emergency legislative proposals of the President's. Congressman Byrnes concurred and suggested it be pointed out that recovery is underway or has occurred without the "President signing a single piece of legislation".

Peace Corps

Senator Dirksen reported on his meeting with Sargent Shriver, the President's designee to head the Peace Corps. The Senator met with Mr. Shriver in Suite P-48 yesterday afternoon at 4 p.m. There was some earlier thought among the Leadership that probably ~~that probably~~ Mr. Shriver should be invited to the Leadership meeting this morning but after discussion of this by some of the Senate Leadership it was decided that Senator Dirksen should have the discussion with him since Shriver is from Illinois and the Senator is acquainted with him.

Senator Dirksen reported that Mr. Shriver indicated Congress will be asked for some enabling legislation in connection with the Peace Corps - that it will not all be by Executive Order. Mr. Shriver said 18 will be the minimum age for recruits and there will not be a maximum age. Mr. Shriver said there will not be any conflict or overlapping between the Peace Corps and the Central Intelligence Agency. On the matter of screening applicants and employees, Mr. Shriver informed Senator Dirksen the F.B.I. will screen all employees. This does not mean screening applicants. Rather, after an applicant has been selected for training and while he is undergoing training, the F.B.I. will make their investigation and check. It is proposed to train

recruits at various U. S. Universities. Mr. Shriver told Senator Dirksen the ultimate size of the Peace Corps has not been fixed - it would depend upon the scope of the operation and this also would determine the ultimate cost of the program. Mr. Shriver said they plan to start the Corps in many countries.

Senator Dirksen asked about Selective Service deferment of Corps employees and Shriver said the matter would be up to the decision of Local Boards and deferment would be determined upon the specific Peace Corps duties of each draftee.

Senator Dirksen inquired regarding the pay of Corps employees and was told it will be kept at subsistence level of the country in which the employee is assigned.

Senator Saltonstall asked about the relationship between Corps employees and the United States Consul in the country where the employee is stationed. Senator Dirksen advised Mr. Shriver said the employees would necessarily cooperate and work with the Ambassador and other United States Consulate officials.

There was general discussion as to how the personnel of the Peace Corps would adjust to living conditions in the various countries.

Mr. Harlow referred to a United States News and World Report table in this week's issue which points out there are 33,000 American missionaries in 146 countries doing the same work as proposed by the Peace Corps.

After this general discussion of the Peace Corps Senator Dirksen read a statement he had prepared for today's Press Conference relating to the Leadership's position on the Peace Corps program and containing Republican Leadership approved suggestions. A copy of this statement is also included at the end of these minutes.

Considerable further discussion developed after Senator Dirksen read this statement, particularly relating to the last paragraph wherein suggestion is made that the Peace Corps program should be tested by a pilot operation in one or a few countries instead of launching it wide-scale.

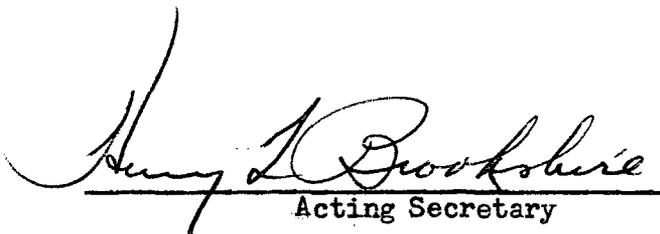
Congressman Hoeven said he is "very apprehensive" of the whole Peace Corps set up and added that practically all the Republicans he had discussed it with are opposed. Mr. Hoeven added, we shouldn't suggest even a pilot project -- that this is a Kennedy program and suggesting a pilot project indicates Republican approval of the program.

Senator Dirksen said Republicans cannot and should not take a negative approach to this program. He said it does have appeal to young people, as well as the churches.

Also, there was considerable discussion regarding the possibility of adverse reaction or repurcussion from the Republican Members of Congress if the Leadership said anything in today's Press Conference that could be construed as Republican endorsement or approval of the Peace Corps.

It was finally agreed that Senator Dirksen and Congressman Halleck should make a general statement to the press without saying anything that could be considered as Republican endorsement of the Peace Corps project. It was agreed, however, that Senator Dirksen should discuss, but not in detail, his meeting of yesterday with Mr. Shriver.

The remainder of the agenda was not reached due to the 9:45 a.m. Press Conference. Consequently after disposal of the Peace Corps item the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.


Acting Secretary