

COMMUNICATIONS

December 13, 1946

Mr. Charles L. Miller, Jr.
208 South Jamestown
Tulsa 4, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Miller:

Your letter of December 9, 1946, relative to the Merchant Seaman's legislation proposed during the 79th Congress, has been received in Congressman Schwabe's Washington office.

Congressman Schwabe is in Oklahoma at this time, but will return to Washington shortly before the 80th Congress convenes early in January. Upon his return I shall take pleasure in bringing your letter to his attention, and I can assure you of his interest in having your views on this subject.

As you may be aware, all bills not acted upon during the 79th Congress, automatically die at the close of this session. Hence, any legislation along the line you suggest, will have to be reintroduced in the next Congress. Because of the fact the bills previously introduced are dead, I am sure you will not be interested in having copies of them, but after Congress convenes if you will write us again, when bills affecting your branch of the service are introduced, we shall be happy to send you copies and keep you informed as to their status.

Assuring you of Congressman Schwabe's interest and pleasure in hearing from you, and his desire to render every possible service to the people of his District, I am

Sincerely yours,

V. W. Dryden, Secretary

Dec 9, 1946

Dear Congressman:

I would like to know what stand you are going to take or have taken in the past on the Seaman's Bill of Rights + the bill to create a Merchant Marine Reserve. I suppose that it seems natural that the peoples representatives from this section of the country pay very little, if any, attention to the merchant Marine. I don't know how many men from Okla served in the Merchant Marine in World War II, but I have certainly met a lot of "Okies" on the ships that I've sailed. The merchant marine, as you know, is a vital supply arm in time of war. It contributes greatly to our world commerce in peace time. Regardless of what section of the country you're from the status of our merchant service requires your serious attention, especially if you are a lawmaker.

I would appreciate it if you would send me a copy of these proposed bills + any others pertaining to the merchant Marine, along with your reply to this letter. I read the Seaman's Bill of Rights as it was drawn up in 1944. I thought it was O.K. I also tried to call on the congressmen + senators from Okla, but I got the same answer everywhere - no dice.

Maybe it was because I was just a seaman however it's possible that all of you were really tied up in big conferences.

Despite my past efforts I'm going to try again in the hopes that something will be done for the seamen who served their country during the war + to set up a sound plan for maintaining a trained Merchant Marine Reserve, also to keep our Merchant Service #1 on the high seas. The phoney stories in the Hearst newspapers about seamen's wages, plus a lot of other slanderous remarks have not helped the seaman's cause in the eyes of the public. The Hearst phoney about the seaman refusing to unload supplies on Guadalcanal + letting wounded soldiers do it was "far fetched" enough to make any sensible person discount it 99%. National Maritime Union's law suit which forced a show-down resulted in a retraction of the lie being printed - but the propaganda harm was done. The rumor was traced to the U. S. Navy in Washington. You know how loud their clamor was to take over the Merchant Marine whose history of valor + courageousness is older than any other branch of service.

You may or may not be aware of these facts but I'm calling them to your attention in case you're among the misinformed. I'll compare my wages in the merchant marine during the war to any service man's of equal rank & there won't be much difference. The Maritime Commission survey made during the war proved this. The argument could go on & on but regardless here are a few reasons why I think the young fellows (old too) should have hospitalization for the rest of their lives. & a chance to get an education.

The recruiting program of the Maritime Service got lots of young boys 16 & 17 to enlist. Possibly their recruiting propaganda was no more truthful than a lot of it put out by Army, Navy, etc. It didn't always turn out in actual participation the way the recruiting boys explained it. These boys education was interrupted by service to their country the same as guys in the armed forces.

As for hospitalization, many fellows contracted types of fever, diarrhea, & dysentery that will reoccur. The government should give them treatment the same as the men in the armed forces receive.

24.

Last but not least if you want to continue to get good men into the Merchant Service there must be an incentive now that there is no longer a war going on.

After you've had time to give these measures your careful consideration I would like to know your opinion on them.

Yours truly,
Charles L. Miller Jr.

P.S. For your information I started as an apprentice seaman, U. S. Maritime Service, March, 1943, + just quit in Sept, 1946, with a Third Mate's License in the Merchant Marine + an Ensign's Commission in the Maritime Service.

Charles L. Miller Jr.
208 South Jamestown
Tulsa 4, Okla
U.S.A.