

Old age inst

SCHWABE

COLL

May 4, 1946

Mr. R. M. Hamilton
1160 North Main
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dear Friend Hamilton:

I have your letter of April 23rd, which came to my office during my absence in Oklahoma during the Easter Recess of the House of Representatives. I have read it with much interest and circumspection.

However, I must tell you frankly that I don't know just what you are complaining about. I have not done anything in connection with the old age pension plan, nor have I neglected to do anything on this subject, for which I make any apologies. There are only twenty-four hours in a day, and I don't believe that you or any of your friends or associates put in as many hours out of each twenty-four as I do. I work almost incessantly, with only from five to seven hours sleep each night. The work is especially heavy here and the subjects so pressing that I do not attempt to single out any one topic or group of topics, but just take care of each of them as best I can in the order in which they are forced upon us by the New Deal Administration in charge of programming these subjects. I don't have any more to do with programming this work than you do. That is controlled absolutely by the New Deal majority party in power; and it takes all the time to keep up with their program. I serve on committees and handle correspondence when the House is not in session. It is just as reasonable to imagine that I can tell the House Committee on Ways and Means what to do and expect them to do it, as it would be to beat my head against a brick wall and expect to dent that wall.

I know you are reasonable and fairminded; but for some reason, you have the impression that the old age pension plans (and there are many of them) should receive first consideration. The only way to get this done is to have this New Deal crowd program them in that order. My humble opinion is that they will not program them at all. Hence, I have signed the discharge petition to discharge the Committee and bring to the floor of the House Representative Paul Stewart's bill; but I doubt if this New

Deal crowd will permit it to be considered, and they are in the majority and perhaps not a sufficient number will sign the petition to discharge the committee. If a sufficient number does sign, it will likely not be programmed.

I don't know what you refer to about Mr. Fox. He has been in the office two or three times; a lot of your old people write me as if when they die they pray they may go to him instead of to the Almighty. They seem to be donating to him and praising him to the skies. I don't follow him nor anyone else on such matters. I want to do what is right, and shall endeavor to do so as long as I am here. I do not purpose to get into any entanglements with Fox or any representative, self-styled or duly appointed, of any group; but I want any measure presented to stand on its own merit in Congress.

You have always known my position on this subject. It is not changed; and my conviction is that it is fundamentally sound. I believe in universal old age pensions payable to those who possess the qualifications of citizenship in the United States and who have attained the required age fixed by law. I can't see why any other provision should be inserted in an old age pension act. That is simple. It will do away with the snoopers and give their salaries to the aged.

You hear a lot about pressure groups these days. Everybody hollars about the pressure groups that influence the members of Congress. I am one of those who has not been influenced by pressure groups. I shall vote and act while here, as my conscience dictates, for the welfare of the people of this country, regardless of any organization or pressure group. The Townsend Clubs are referred to by some as pressure groups. The manufacturers associations, the automobile dealers associations and others are referred to as pressure groups. I do not blame anyone for organizing and putting forth the best arguments they can for the welfare of their members and those similarly situated; but in every instance these are, when taken separately, only minority elements of our population. Others must be considered. The majority, the general public and its welfare, should never be lost sight of.

Hence, it does not worry me in the least for one group or one organization to say that if I vote for a measure they are sponsoring or favoring, they will vote for my reelection; but if I do not, they will vote against me for reelection. That is pressure group and mob influence, and will not in any way sway me in my position. I was a candidate for Congressman because I thought I was in a position to serve. I cannot agree with you on every subject in detail, nor with any other human being in every detail. I don't expect any sane person to agree with me in every detail on every subject. We should tolerate the views of others and remember that perhaps they are not only entitled to their views as much as we, but in many instances they may be more nearly right than we. Tolerance

is one of the foundation stones of representative government or republican democracy. Hence, the veiled threats in your letter that you may not support me because I do not make the useless gesture of going over and attending hearings of the Ways and Means Committee when I am busy in committees to which I was assigned, and because I might not vote as you want me to on this or any other measure, will not cause me to swerve the least in my thinking and attempts to serve fairly the best interests of the people of this country - young, middleaged and old alike. If I were inclined to be easily pressured, or would sell my influence for your vote or that of your group, you would not have any respect for me. Neither would the honest, patriotic and Christian members of your organization. Hence, I shall perform my duty as best I can, regardless of consequences; and I know that you will respect me the more for doing so. I know that is your principle, and that you respect me for carrying out that ideal.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

George B. Schwabe, M. C.

GS:DW

From Townsend Club No. 2, Tulsa, Okla

Tulsa, Okla., April 23, 1946.

Rep. Geo. Schwabe, First Dist. Okla.,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Friend, George:-

Thank you for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. It came and we have used it. Quite informing in several ways.

The wonder about what discharge petition you signed is cleared up. We are surprised and astonished at the action of the Oklahoma delegation. I know nothing for certain about the Box plan for pensions for the aged. I know that there is such a person. Have heard his name and much criticism of him and his ideas. Whether they are good it is not possible for me to say, as you ~~did~~ did not take us into your confidence prior to your action. If his ideas have been brought before the Ways and Means Committee we have not been so informed..

It seems a marvel that the Oklahoma delegation would decide on this line of action with the least hope of enlisting the co-operation of other states with them, when Oklahoma has but 8 Congressmen. In the face of the knowledge that Oklahoma has not been very strong at any time for a national Old age pension of proper size. Had it been an ardent advocate of decent treatment of the aged its course might be justified. As it is, we can only guess at the real reason. It may be any of the following or it may not: The delegation might have thought that it could get what it wants just for its state, or each Congressman for his district. So many Representatives forget if they ever realized, that they are representing every person in the United States, and any law that they help to pass covers the territory of the whole country and its insular possessions. I feel quite sure, therefore, that I have not named the right reason.

The second reason may be the one that they are cooking up some pabulum for the "folks back home" to give them the wrong impression that they are strong for ^{their} welfare as expressed in a real old age retirement. This will be thin diet to us who are well informed..

The third reason may be that the Oklahoma delegation may lack the qualities of statesmanship which would lead them to ~~support~~ support a measure which has more support from the people of the ~~the~~ United States, a measure which receives the commendation of more sober-minded people than all other ideas in the field put together.

The fourth guess is that the all important question to most congressmen is "what course will be most certain to get me re-elected.?" There is or are reasons. I do not say which of them, which have caused the delegation from Oklahoma to act as they did.

But the case is not hopeless. The hearings before the Ways and Means Committee began last Monday. They have been heard. I refer to the Townsend Plan. If the Oklahoma REpresentatives wanted to inform themselves they could listen to the hearings. Besides, everything possible has been done to put all of the evidence favorable to the T/P. before every member of Congress. If no prejudice on your part and on the part of all representatives from Oklahoma has kept you from informing yourselves on the measure which has been so long before Congress you should know all about it.

It would seem as if you could have been fair enough to wait until the Townsend Plan Bill had its day before the Ways and Means Committee before committing yourselves to this idea or bill of which you speak. If your commitment is irrevocable, then I pity you, and regret your biased action. But I hope that when the test comes all of you will rise above trifles and do what you should.

No Congressman can find an excuse to refrain from support of the Bill HR 2229 HR 2230 because his party is not behind it. The Bill is wholly non-partisan. Its supporters are from both major parties. If it is passed it will settle the problem which has been bandied around by designing politicians long enough and fought at every turn by the moneyed people who will get the greatest immediate benefit from it. Our own Chamber of Commerce is urging you to work against it, if I am rightly informed.

We feel that you have slapped ^{us} in the face. We have asked for bread and you have given ^{us} a stone;" we have asked for a fish and have received a serpent".

The issue is squarely joined, George. You are for us or you are against us. That goes for the delegation from Oklahoma. We ask you point blank to do all that you can to have the bill numbered above to be enacted into the law of the land. The abatement of unemployment, the forestalling of a depression that is ready to engulf us, and the right of the aged people to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as much as any other group of people that our fundamental laws protect are sufficient evidences that all of you should act in full support of this wonderful piece of legislation..

We are not a pressure group, or a mob of propagandists. We are the people who helped to send you to Congress with the right to register our will for the common good..

There is too much dilly dallying by Congress. You expressed ^{and} your impatience with this. We give you credit for sincerity. But

voting vacations and finding a whole lot of other things to talk about and to keep you from what should have been done long before this time ^{is over}. There can be no just excuse for longer delay. The bill should be enacted into law before the Congress adjourns to take care of its election.

If your ~~fox~~ idea gets general support and it approximates our bill, "well and good." If it is a reasonable improvement on the mockery that we have in the Social Security we shall be glad. The Townsend forces are not quibbling on names.

But we are very positive about what we want. Why prolong the fight? If you are going to be for us we shall be for you. If you are against us, then it would be folly for us to stay with you just to be kicked in the face.

There is no personal feeling on my part. Whatever course I take it will not diminish the regard for you or the esteem in which I hold you, as a friend and brother. But if you do not ~~represent~~ represent my ideas I shall fight fairly and openly against you.

The situation in Oklahoma looks as promising for a Republican victory as I have ever seen it. But if the Republican Party turns its back on the segment of the people who are advanced in age and does not do all in its power to liberate them from want as our Great Leader liberated the colored people from their chains of slavery, then I hold it unworthy of the confidence of any part of the American people.

We shall watch your re-action to this great issue of a just a sufficient law for right of our elder people with very close and intense interest.

The Club No. 2, send you greetings and best wishes for your success and ours.

1160 No. Main Sincerely your friend . R.M. Hamilton.