



Everett Dirksen Said That?



Compiled
by
Frank H. Mackaman

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“The deeper we get into this session,” Dirksen once confessed, “the longer the tip of my tongue gets away from my brain.”

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Foreword.....	4
Ambition.....	6
Birthday 1964.....	8
Campaigns.....	10
Change.....	14
Civility.....	17
Civil Rights.....	22
Congress.....	25
Constituents.....	31
Democrats.....	33
Family.....	39
Freedom.....	43
Gardening.....	46
Governing.....	49
Health.....	51
Lyndon Baines Johnson.....	53
Leadership.....	58
Legacy.....	65
Legislation.....	69
Media.....	76
Minority.....	78
Mistakes.....	84
Mood.....	85
Oratory.....	90
Pekin.....	98
Philosophy.....	100

Politics.....	108
Quips.....	114
Religion.....	125
Senate.....	129
Spending.....	134
Threats.....	146
Washington.....	151
Youth.....	152

Foreword

“He speaks, and the words emerge in a soft, sepulchral baritone. They undulate in measured phrases, expire in breathless wisps. He fills his lungs and blows word-rings like smoke. The words curl upward. They chase each other around the room in dreamy images of Steamboat Gothic. Now he conjures moods of mirth, now of sorrow. ... ‘Motherhood,’ he whispers and grown men weep. ‘The Flag!’ he bugles, and everybody salutes. No one who has seen and heard this performance will ever forget it.”¹

Everett McKinley Dirksen (1896-1969) was as renowned for his use of the language as for his legislative prowess in the U.S. House of Representatives (1933-1949) and the Senate (1951-1969).

Popular with reporters, animated in his own press conferences, a frequent guest on the Sunday morning talk shows, a favorite of Republican candidates on the campaign trail, and an orator from the old school on the House or Senate floor, Dirksen’s remarks gained him no small measure of fame. He understood the importance of language, of words, of reasoning and argument.

His friends in the press applied various adjectives to describe Dirksen’s oratorical flair. Among the most colorful were “Honey Tonsils,” “The Senate’s Golden Voice,” “The Capitol’s Foremost Forensic Mesmerizer,” “The Old Growler,” “The Rumped Magician of the Metaphor,” “Colorful Cornball,” “Silver Throated Senator,” “Pagliacci of American Politics,” and “Buttered Larynx.” One Congress member noted that Dirksen could recite the alphabet and make it sound like the Gettysburg Address, while anybody else could recite the Gettysburg Address and it would sound like the alphabet.²

The passages in *Everett Dirksen Said That?* are meant to be representative, not definitive, of Everett Dirksen’s views on myriad topics. He spoke in thousands of venues and uttered millions of words. Regrettably, rarely did he compose a speech in advance, preferring to speak from memory or from a very brief outline. There were no stenographers following him to create transcripts of his remarks. As a result, one

¹ *Time*, September 14, 1962, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles.

² Anne Culler Penney, *Dirksen: The Golden Voice of the Senate* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1968): 61-62.

must rely on news accounts, on the *Congressional Record*, on compilations prepared by others, and on the occasional interview transcript.

With a few exceptions, this compilation tends not to feature Dirksen's remarks on specific issues, such as civil rights or the war in Vietnam, nor does it encompass Dirksen's campaign remarks. He, of course, spoke volumes about the issues facing Congress—the *Congressional Record* is the best source for them.

Finally, missing is Dirksen's most famous saying: "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money" or some variation on that theme. After pouring over thousands of clippings, speeches, and press conference transcripts, I am not convinced he ever uttered that phrase. It appears nowhere in print.

Ambition

Writing in March 1933 as he was about to begin his first term in the U.S. House:

What can a young, inexperienced, Republican Congressman, divested of all patronage, do for his country and his district in the midst of a three to one Democratic majority? The question has often been asked. It is a stimulus to the individual ego and conceit and might easily prompt a recital of good intentions and novel resolves. While this situation has its disadvantages, there is compensation in the fact that it permits much time for study and constructive attention to legislation. The function of the minority party is, after all, in the salutary influence which it can exercise in resolutely opposing things which are fundamentally wrong and supporting those measures which are right. Under such circumstances, opportunities for service are certain to arise. In 1846 when [James K.] Polk was President, Illinois was represented in the House of Representatives by seven Democrats and one Republican. That lone Republican served only one term in Congress and yet that term produced an opportunity which elevated him to high station. He was Abraham Lincoln.

[Dirksen, "Mr. Dirksen Goes to Washington," *New Outlook*, March 1933, 26, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

"Had a light supper and went back to the office until seven and then decided to go to a movie. The title is 'Maid of Salem' [...] It's historical and deals with the witchcraft era in Mass. Bay Colony. Quite interesting. I came away with a strange feeling of freedom that I haven't known in a long time. Always there seemed to be some restriction on how one spoke or what ideas one expressed. Always things had to be measured by the spurious yardstick of politics. Somehow I'm escaping that now. The seeming need to conform to rigid party standards and do things that others liked rather than what my own mind and heart dictated is gradually being broken down. Perhaps in the past, it was the feeling that if my political career were cut short, there would be no dignified work to turn to had something to do with it. Perhaps the final admission to the bar and the right to practice a profession to my liking has dispelled some of these previous inhibitions. In any event, I feel so much more like a normal human being for which I'm deeply happy."

[Personal Letters, February 26, 1937]

“This has been an emotional week for most members because of the Townsend business. They were keyed up. They recognized the voting strength of these oldsters and like to appease them. But there comes a time when one must completely emancipate himself from all political cowardice and strike out boldly. I did that today and it was generally conceded that my speech probably turned more than a score of votes so that the number for the bill was under a 100. ... This may clear the air and find [sic] restore sanity. Let’s hope so. I feel better for it but the old folks will probably be filled with wrath. That’s one of those things.”

[Personal Letters, June 1, 1939]

When told by a reporter that “you are beginning to act very much like a candidate for the Republican nomination”: “Who, me? (Laughter) Well, all I can say is stay mo[?] with chocolates and blow me down. (Laughter) There isn’t anything further from my thoughts. (Laughter)

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, March 13, 1963, 17]

When asked if the Republican Party needed to change since it has been out of the majority for so many years: “I am a politician, I readily admit it. I want to win. I like patronage like anybody else. But there is something that goes ahead of all that and that is to articulate the expressed conviction and pledges that you have made to your country and if you can redeem them as a minority party you have served just the same.”

[ABC’s *Issues and Answers*, September 29, 1963, 18]

“When I got my first taste of Congress in 1933, and I was called Honorable, and invited to dinners without having to pay for them, and people came saluting me in my office, I thought, ‘This is for me. I do not wish ever to give up this office.’ And I fought to keep it until a malady made me resign; and later, by the grace of the voters of Illinois, I was sent to the Senate in 1950, and I thought, “The Senate is for me. There is no germaneness rule. You cannot be taken off your feet.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 4, 1965, 19349; Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Birthday 1964

On this 68th birthday in 1964, the senator from Illinois reflected on the occasion at some length using as his theme: “One thing is certain—progress is the steadfast undramatic application of human life upon what is here.”

“What is LIFE’S greatest asset?” he wondered. “It is the steadfast friendship of friends who come at an appointed time to sustain one’s faith. In every period, the right friend with the right advice [was] there.”

He continued:

What made me not only stay in school but want to stay in school when it was fashionable to drop out after the eighth grade? It was my mother.

Who urged me always to make my own decisions, such as the one which confronted me after high school—to go or not to go to West Point and become a soldier? It was my mother.

Who told me to hark to Paul’s admonition to Timothy, when the latter was wearying of his work? Paul who said to him, “Let no man despise thy youth.” It was an older brother.

Who sustained my interest in culture and in the performing arts? It was an inseparable high school classmate.

Who persuaded me that “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth?” It was a country preacher with an Oxford accent.

Who was most instrumental in finding the right road? My wife, of course, but there was still another. He was a clerk in a haberdashery.

Who sustained me to follow a bold course and let the chips fall where they would? Those same two.

Who caused me to cast my first vote as I did in the House of Representatives and reap an avalanche of mail and messages threatening my political extinction just as I was started on a Federal political career? It was an ass’t cashier in a bank who as I left for

Washington for the first time, said to me, “It [will] not be nearly so important how you vote when you go down to the Big League but rather why you voted as you did.”

Who provided the shoulder on which to weep when I was frustrated and could not see the sun? It was the building manager where I had my office, and my wife.

Who sustained me in my course when I thought I was right but contemporary opinion thought I was wrong? It was my wife.

Who could and did persuade me when I was wrong and also persuaded me to back up? It was a member of my staff.

Who sustained me in dark hours with an unrelenting fidelity? One was a customer's man in a brokerage firm; another was onetime a Greek taxi driver; still a third was one old enough to be my father for whom I had once performed a slight favor without hope or thought of recompense.

Who sustained me when confronted with a decision whether or not to have an eye removed? It was the Big, Unfailing Friend in the Sky.

Always and always and always, if one will be seen, there is an unfailing friend at just the right time to steer the bark of life out of the shadows and into the sunlight.



Campaigns

Dirksen announced his candidacy for the House of Representatives, 16th District, 1930

[Remarks and Releases, 1930]

Congress

There is a tradition in American politics that a citizen should not aspire to high office unless he is equipped with money and newspaper support. If that tradition is upheld, I cannot qualify.

Friends well intentioned have spoken to me from time to time about the foolhardiness of running for Congress because my campaign chest is a meagre one and because my newspaper support is of little consequence. I have been told that Mr. Hull has a million dollars and will control every newspaper in the district. Perhaps so. Perhaps not. I do not know.

I do know however that it is the right of every citizen over 25 yrs of age to be a candidate for Congress. The Constitution says nothing about the size of a man's fortune as a qualification; the Constitution says nothing about the number of newspapers a man must control; the Constitution says nothing about the need of a political machine.

My faith in the whole structure of politics in America and my faith in the intelligence of the American people would tonight die and be a lifeless thing from this day henceforth if I thought for a moment that these things were essential qualifications of the right to run for office.

There is also much hokum in politics. as a rule a candidate supposedly is pushed into the race by the overwhelming demand of a legion of friends. They usually insist that he run. (Story) *conceal*

again I violate tradition. I have not been pushed into this race. I have not been urged and importuned by countless friends and well wishes to agree to have my name placed on the ballot.

I don't believe in lying to the public. I don't believe in handing the voters of the 16th District a lot of hokum. I don't believe in camouflage. I don't believe in bunk.

My name will be on the ballot because I want it to be there. It will be on the ballot and I shall enter the lists for the Republican nomination because I want to. There are no strings tied to ambition. It is a Constitutional right to run and too I have two things in common with the great Abraham Lincoln - neither of us have much money and neither of us are able to buy the support of so-called powerful newspapers. Moreover like Lincoln, I have no extensive holdings of stocks and bonds, I own no vast realty holdings and in consequence I can get the viewpoint of the average citizen and if there is anything this nation needs today, it is a little more respect for the views and rights of the citizen who spends his days at the forge or the drill press or the desk blissfully hopeful that the man whose name he marked on the ballot will dutifully represent him.

I believe that it is the proper job of a candidate to let people know who he is and what he stands for. This sounds like good old fashioned policy and if we had more of it in the country, we probably would never have had to face many of the evils that exist within.

No newspaper shall refer to me as the distinguished attorney from Pekin, candidate for Congress because I am not an attorney altho I was partially trained for the law at the University of Minnesota. I shall not be referred to as the well known capitalist because a capitalist must have money and lots of it. I shall not be referred to as a national authority on engineering altho my daily contact for years with engineers and engineering has given me a broad knowledge of engineering as it applies to municipalities, to drainage and to River problems.

They will refer to me as a baker. I shall be proud of the title. There is as much distinction in being a successful baker and the owner and manager of a successful wholesale bakery as there is in being a successful lawyer broker, capitalist or business man. I know bakers who list themselves in directories as merchants. I never do. Why should I be out of a sense of false pride and perhaps shame camouflage my calling. If it is worthy to hold up to children for emulation the fact that Lincoln was a railplitter, J. Smith a newsboy, after they became celebrated, I believe it is even as worthy before such fame arrives to dignify one's calling by calling it by its right name.

Handwritten notes on left margin:
I want to be on the ballot
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I want to be on the ballot

Campaigning for Republicans in South Dakota in 1946, Dirksen listed the “sins” of the Democratic administration: “Concealment has leeches away that freedom for small nations. Communism labors earnestly to destroy it at home. Control and centralization make it a mockery at home. Confusion impairs it. Corruption degenerates it. The happy custom of putting it on the Cuff imperils it. Corrosion breeds indifference to it. But the people have an opportunity to add another “C” to the decalag [sic] of charges. In November 1946 and again in 1948, the people can “CLEANSE” the temple of freedom of these cankers and restore government to trusted hands that will give it new dignity, new meaning, new vision, and new hope.”

[Excerpts from Dirksen’s remarks to the Republican Round-Up, Mitchell, South Dakota, September 24, 1946, Remarks and Releases]

From his statement announcing his candidacy for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate, 1950: “There should be a banner to which people can repair, who believe that government should conform to the spirit of the Constitution as well as to the letter; that social balance can be achieved without wasteful bureaucracy; that centralized government threatens not only freedom but the very existence of our Federal system; that the way to develop buying power is not to vote it but to produce it; that a taxpayer gets more for his dollar when he spends it himself than he does when it makes a wasteful journey to Washington and back; that you cannot outspend, outlure and out promise a party which places victory before country; that you cannot stem a Red tide with a chronically red budget; that Communism within our own land is more than a fish or a fever and should be uprooted; that party vitality based on clear-cut issues is indispensable to our national destiny; that planned economy is a fancy name for economic enslavement; that a political party should not be the mouthpiece for any group but for the whole country; that freedom for the man in the street is the great issue before this generation; and that the promises by which men live are those which can be kept.”

[Release, September 18, 1949, Remarks and Releases]

A statement on the stakes in the 1952 elections and the Republican Party’s task: “Our job then is to assess the effect of moral deviation, squandermania, paternalism, the concentration of executive power and loose foreign commitments upon a free America and uncompromisingly assert those conclusions with a zeal that would be worthy of those robust souls [who] laid the keel of the party just 97 years ago this month.”

[Illinois Republican Veterans League, July 31, 1951, Remarks and Releases]

Regarding the 1952 elections: “Already the pattern is clear as to the course which the 1952 campaign will take. Knowing how hard it will be to dispel their own confusion, meet the challenge of mink coat morals, discuss the biggest peacetime budget and the heaviest tax burden in our history, and disengage themselves from the pink tinge of the fellow travelers, an effort will be made to befog the issues.”

[Republican Day, Illinois State Fair, August 15, 1951, Remarks and Releases]

Introducing Robert A. Taft:

After twenty years of trial and error, of mistakes and failures, I believe the inherently conservative and tranquil nature of our people has grown a little tired and weary of the showmanship, the theatricality, of the almost insane extremes to which these administrations have gone, of the big promises and the big failures, of the transparent effort to sacrifice a great country on the altar of expediency, of the cynical and casual way in which rights and guarantees have been trampled, and of the arrogance of power which has been all too evident.

There is frustration and disillusionment today. To be sure, there are jobs but they cannot be separated from corpses. There is much talk of security which becomes increasingly insecure. There is a blood-stained prosperity built on the things which are made to kill. Beneath the forced gaiety one detects a deep note of concern for the future of the nation. Behind the rather loose lip service to freedom, there is a note of defeatism. People are sick with a kind of spiritual unrest. They are searching for a rock on which to stand. They are searching for a durable faith not only for the present but for the future. . . .

Bob Taft would be wholesome for our people in a time of fever and manufactured crises. He would be as balm in Gilead for a country that is tired and sick of unfulfilled promises, political rainbows, cynicism and dubious policies. He is the answer to the present feverish quest for tranquility and sound moral values.

[Introduction of Robert Taft to the District of Columbia Republican Convention, April 23, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

Remarks during the 1952 campaign:

I can subscribe to the thesis of security and the preservation of a free country.

Probably one of the best ways to destroy it is to let there be a continuance of the moral stain that has developed under this administration, that destroys the spiritual and moral fabric.

Secondly, to let those of dubious and pale loyalties infiltrate the citadel and try to destroy it from within.

And third, you can bleed your country by the kind of conflict that is going on in Korea at the present time and destroy the real defense and security of America, which lies in its second punch at home in the form of a real strong, honest-to-goodness free system. And that is at issue in the campaign of 1952; and I'm confident that the people of the country will rise to that issue.

[American Forum of the Air, October 19, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

In describing the challenges facing the new Republican administration in 1953: “The country shall not forget that the new President was the beneficiary of a debt-ridden, tax-ridden, bureau-ridden, semi-bankrupt government which maintained the illusion of prosperity by sending surplus labor into war plants to make things to kill, sent millions of young Americans into uniform, cheapened the dollar, made red ink a fixed habit, and kept the nation in a state of crisis and nervous tension.”

[Remarks to Republican Women’s Mid-Western and Southern States Conference, September 19, 1953, Remarks and Releases]

Campaigning for reelection, Dirksen returned home one evening to find there was no platform from which to speak. At the last minute his supporters found a manure spreader behind a store, dragged it into the town square, placed some planks over the fragrant wagon bed of manure, and helped him aboard. In the flickering torchlight, Dirksen looked out over the crowd and said, “This is the first time that a Republican candidate has spoken from a Democratic Platform.”

[Art Prine, “Remembering Ev,” p. 5. Dirksen Information File, 2011]

Change

In debate on the Universal Military Training bill: “I wish to say to my friend from Texas [Mr. Johnson] that I see nothing inconsistent with having opposed the Johnson-Bricker amendment, while at the same time insisting upon a time limit. I remember when Secretary Acheson coined the word ‘reexaminist.’ I took some pride in it. I think I am a reexaminist, with a capital ‘R.’ It is rather tragic, as I look back upon legislative history for the past 20 years, that there has not been more appraisal, that there has not been more careful assessment of the things which we have set in motion in the legislative branch.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 9, 1951, 2188-89]

“Now I think there is time to mention one other thing to fortify my estimate of Lincoln’s greatness and as a courageous hero and it is his capacity for change.”

[TV address, February 5, 1957, Remarks and Releases]

“I long ago learned that formula of vegetate or decay, grow or die. And government is not unlike that. I think its [sic] just like individuals; you simply have to grow; you have to feed on new things; re-orient your thinking; keep abreast of what goes on; because the world is certainly not a static place where things suddenly stand still. It’s a dynamic thing and is constantly moving forward and so you’ve got to be abreast of change, new blood coming into government from back home with new ideas about business, about industry, about agriculture, about numerous problems, everything in the whole gamut of human activity and human interest.”

[Radio Broadcast, May 12, 1958, 3, Remarks and Releases]

“Mr. President, the process of civilization has been rather slow in its chastening effect and in vitiating the vestigial animal that has been in mankind all these thousands and thousands of years. The progress has been all too slow. But only in proportion as character works its will upon the animal nature, do men make greater progress.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 14, 1958, 8675]

Dirksen explaining why he introduced two civil rights measures for the Eisenhower administration when he had suggested they be tabled a year earlier: “No one will ever embarrass the minority leader by charging him with having changed his mind or reversed his position on other occasions. One cannot have been in this man’s town for 28 years in the House and Senate without recognizing the verities of political life.”

[August 1960, Clippings, f. 195]

Dirksen in a colloquy with Senator Richard Russell (D-GA) on a pending civil rights bill:

No one will ever embarrass the Minority Leader by charging him with having changed his mind or reversed his position on occasions. One cannot have been in this man's town for 28 years, in the House and Senate, without developing a pretty tough skin and recognizing the verities of political life. I remember the old ditty:

The King of France with 20,000 men
Went up the hill and then came down again

I have marched up the hill many times; I have marched down. God willing, if I am alive long enough, I suppose I will march up the hill again and march back down again. But when I reach the bottom of the hill, I will still be looking at the summit to see where I rightfully belong.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 9, 1960, 16012; Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

Explaining his approach to new circumstances:

Life is not a static thing. The only people who do not change their minds are incompetents in asylums, who can't, and those in cemeteries. I try to be a realist and appreciative of what you have to do in the world in light of changing conditions.

...It's one thing to sit in Washington and digest the testimony and data and the evidence that comes to you, and it's another thing to just offhand utter an opinion that doesn't square with the facts that are adduced in these hearings.

You cannot be anchored to a post and let civilization go by you. Frankly, you have to keep abreast of it, and when that brings an occasion for changing your mind from a position that maybe you took 10 years ago, why obviously it would be amazing if you didn't.”

[Interview with E.W. Kenworthy, *New York Times*, January 2, 1965, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

After quoting Abraham Lincoln on the “quiet dogmas” of the past: “New circumstances, new changes of view and, as I've said so often, the only people who do not change their minds are either in the involuntary institutions by an order of the court or they are occupying a spot in the cemetery. I hope that will never happen, meaning that I can't change my mind when the occasion arise.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 21, 1965, 8205]

“After I had been here for a while, almost 32 years ago, I made my first speech back home. It was a few years later. I said I had one suitcase full of ideas when I came here, and 4 suitcases of clothing. I said that the clothes had long since gone, but the ideas were pretty much intact.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 4, 1965, 19350]

“Gentlemen, you forgot that I am a man of principle. And one of my basic principles is flexibility.”

[Quoted in “Senate’s Old Lion in Mellowed Days,” April 27, 1966, Clippings, f. 414]

Pointing with pride to his inconsistency: “Let me be the first to say that Everett McKinley Dirksen marched up the hill many a time, only to march back down again.”

[Quoted in “Everett Dirksen of Illinois,” May 5, 1966, Clippings, f. 418]

During one “Ev and Jerry Show,” newsmen watched in fascination as Dirksen kept modifying his Republican Party’s positions: “Jerry Ford kept crossing the street, trying to get on the same sidewalk with Ev, but all he did was nearly get killed in the traffic,” one Republican lawmaker said later.

[Quoted in “Everett Dirksen of Illinois,” May 5, 1966, Clippings, f. 418]

At a news conference: “Haven’t I told you? The only people who don’t change their minds are in the insane asylum of in the cemetery.”

[August 9, 1967, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

On changing one’s mind: “You sort of walk in the middle of the road. You try to be a rational being. I’ve learned that nothing is white or black—there are too many shadings in life. In a society such as ours you can’t plow just that one furrow. You have to re-examine your premises in the light of changing conditions.”

[*Washington Daily News*, May 7, 1969, Clippings, f. 644]

Civility

“The oil can is mightier than the sword.”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Dirksen would not scold a colleague. Instead he might say: “I shall invoke upon him every condign imprecation.”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

After describing the challenges of preparing the nation for war: “As events, decisions, and the nation will contribute to the shaping of national policy there is one prized virtue which we must defend and retain at all hazards. It is the virtue of tolerance. Already, as disagreement over policy becomes manifest, men in high places are resorting to name-calling as a substitute for argument. Never in the history of this Republic has there been such need for that entreaty which the patriarch wrote upon the parchment thousands of years ago when he said, “Come, let us reason together.” Congress can vote money and authority but it cannot provide the morale and gentleness of spirit out of which shall come triumph and salvation.”

[“The Congressional Front,” April 26, 1941, Remarks and Releases]

Remarks during a congressional memorial: “Suppose that for a single month we made a diligent effort to make certain that in our disagreement we would never be captious; that in our differences on principle we would never show petulance; that in resolutely following our own abiding convictions on matters of fundamental policy they would never be tainted by acrimony. Suppose we made a diligent effort to exemplify the humility and meekness and forbearance which marked their service [referring to recently deceased members], what a great moral force it would become in softening the dissidences of life and clarifying fundamental viewpoints. All this would redound so richly to the welfare of the world and of our own country.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 17, 1948, Remarks and Releases]

In giving tribute to Senator William Knowland’s (R-CA) leadership: “Oh, what a horrible business this would be, and how quickly the spirit of good fellowship would go out the door, if tempers were asserted too frequently here. It is written in the sacred parchments, ‘Let not the sun set upon your wrath.’ If wrath or anger ever takes over, the efficacy of this deliberative body will be destroyed. ... So here we have an opportunity to demonstrate whether there are the restraints on temper that maintain a tranquil and an even atmosphere in this body and make it finally—notwithstanding all

the things that are said about us—a great deliberative body that resides in the good temper and in the tranquility that are here.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 15483]

Responding to Senator Wayne Morse’s (D-OR) pointed criticism of the Eisenhower administration; “I hope we can be a little more circumspect in the way in which we talk about one another. We can speak and still maintain the intensity of our political disagreements. But to do so does not call for personal castigation or reflection upon character. I can only hope, out of a sense of pain and distress, rather than anger, that we can watch our tongues and make certain that false impressions are not created abroad, impressions which can do no good to the esteem of this country, its people or its noble and beloved leader.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 22, 1957, 7358; Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 83]

In a television appearance during which he talked about the new Congress (the Democrats had increased their majority in the Senate from 2 to 30 as a result of the 1958 mid-term elections), Dirksen noted the challenges of organizing to do business in the Senate: “I think the thing that has impressed me most, and obviously I came out of the contest [referring to the November elections] with the leadership of my own party, but the thing that impressed me here, there and elsewhere is the fact that everything was done in such good temper. There was such a sweet forbearance about it and with that kind of spirit I am confident that this, the 86th Congress, the present Congress in a long and unbroken line, will according to its lights not fail the people and will not fail the world in doing its full duty.”

[*Your Senator Reports*, January 12, 1959, Remarks and Releases]

After criticizing a Democratic National Committee publication (Dirksen characterized the brochure with these words: “There may be more glorified tripe flowing from some typewriter at the Democratic National Committee, but I doubt it”) that attacks the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy during the Berlin crisis: “We are a people whose leaders, regardless of party or Government branch, work together constructively, with strength, wisdom and unity, to advance policies dedicated to solving the problems which confront us—toward a peaceful, secure world. I want to commend the Democratic leadership of Congress—with whom, to be sure, I do not always agree—for its non-partisan, responsible, and constructive support advanced on this grave issue of Berlin. This is the type of thing which makes America great: statesmanship standing above party politics.”

[“Remarks by Senator Dirksen on Democratic Advisory Council Pamphlet on Foreign Policy,” April 8, 1959, Remarks and Releases]

Harry Truman referring to Dirksen’s April 13, 1959, speech on the Senate floor:

...I more than appreciate what you had to say then.

I remember meeting at the time you left the House, and I felt exactly as you said. I may have thrown a couple of political bricks at you sine you came to

the Senate, but, fortunately, we can disagree on policy and still always be personal friends.

You were very kind to me, and I am grateful.

Sincerely yours,

[Truman to Dirksen, April 17, 1959, in Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Speaking about the role of disagreement in the legislative process: “It is the fact that we have the right to disagree without fear, without anxiety, that makes us the country that it is and give[s] vitality to government. It is a great tribute to the fact that we can do it. We can fight and feud and fuss, sometimes become frustrated and provoked, sometimes show a little temper or [a] little passion about this but always and always it subsides because the right to disagree is one of the great rights we enjoy in this country. ... And so it goes back to this one thing, I have often said government is like an old waterlogged scow, don’t move very fast, it doesn’t move very far at one time but it never sinks.”

[“The Right to Disagree,” radio and TV broadcast, March 14, 1960, Remarks and Releases]

This exchange took place after eight weeks of debate and many hours of continuous session resulting in the passage in the Senate of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 wherein Dirksen and Senator Richard Russell (D-GA) took opposition positions:

Mr. Dirksen. Mr. President, before the distinguished senior Senator from Georgia [Mr. Russell] leaves the Chamber, I just wish to salute a great parliamentarian, a great captain, a worthy antagonist, and a man of deep conviction whom I have learned to admire and to revere in 25 years of legislative service. My respect and my admiration for him are greater today than they ever were before.

Mr. Russell: Mr. President, I deeply appreciate the very kind comments of the distinguished Senator from Illinois. I have met him as an adversary time and again over a period of 25 years. He is a tough but a fair fighter. He keeps all his blows above the belt.

I am very grateful to him for the generous sentiments he has expressed, even though he wears the garlands of victory because of the passage of this bill, which I opposed as vigorously as I know how.

[*Congressional Record*, April 8, 1960, 7813-14]

Following an exchange with Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson on the Senate floor regarding the upcoming 1960 election: “I conclude with this thought: We never attack the majority leader. He misconstrues a love tap for an attack. These are not attacks. We publicize them [differences of opinion] because the whole country knows he is here constantly going about the people’s business.

I try to publicize them, because that is one way of showing my affection for him, and my high regard for his patriotism and devotion to country. So I hope he will never feel that we are attacking him.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 4, 1960, 9349]

In a greeting to Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson on his birthday: “Mr. President, people often wonder why it is that two lawyers on opposite sides of a case in court, day in and day out, belabor each other, beset each other, as if there were something venal in their hearts and they were ready to dispatch each other, if they could, and yet at the end of the day they walk out of the courtroom arm in arm, smiling and friendly; and it becomes difficult for the average layman to understand. Some of that same sentiment—in fact, much of it—one finds on the American political scene. It is one of the great characteristics of the American political system. Friends can be ranged on opposite sides of an issue, can be put in positions where they belabor each other, sometimes clobber each other, and yet the friendship is one of those enduring things that go on and on.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 27, 1960, 17957]

“Other people think we are so beset with selfishness and venality and political aggression that we would be ready to tear each other to shreds. But we live together. We disagree together. But somehow or other the Republic goes forward. When the issue has been resolved and the water smoothed over, then we make a new effort, take another hitch in the belt, and once more this Republic goes on to high ground.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 1, 1960, 19109; Dirksen Information File, f. Civility]

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield’s (D-MT) tribute to Dirksen:

Mr. President, on this occasion, I wish that I possessed the eloquence of the distinguished Senator from Illinois (Mr. Dirksen). I wish for his wit and wisdom. I wish for his humor and poetry. I wish for his scholarly erudition and his homespun simplicity. I wish for that immense range of language and voice, from the softest serenity to the most turbulent thunder.

Had I these gifts, I would unleash them in orchestrated expression of the great affection, respect, admiration, and esteem in which I hold the distinguished minority leader. I would weave, with word, a magic spell over the Senate as he has done so many times. With words, I would lift the eyes of Senators to the mountain peaks and the stars beyond or I would lead them gently down a rustic road in Illinois. With words, I would lay bare the heart of a flower or pry open the fiery core of the atom that the Senate might appreciate the depth and breadth of the Senator from Illinois.

That is what I would do, Mr. President, had I the eloquent gifts of the minority leader. But there is only one Demosthenes in the Senate, one DIRKSEN.

So, Mr. President, I shall, in my limited fashion, say to him of this occasion: EVERETT, I am honored and grateful that you sit across the aisle from me. You are a tower of strength as a collaborator in the leadership of this body. For 30 years you have served your party faithfully and brilliantly. But for 30 years you have served our country more.

[*Congressional Record*, August 22, 1962, Remarks and Releases]

As part of a description of a White House lunch to which President Kennedy invited every member of the leadership (and Dirksen noted that Kennedy had served with every one of them): "... while we have our differences as to legislation and while we may fight and fight with vigor and energy on opposing sides of some propositions, the fact remains, of course, that there is something in doing about the old friendships that are made in the legislative branch"

["A Luncheon with the President," March 6, 1961, Remarks and Releases]

In responding to questions about continuing differences in conference committee over an agricultural supplemental appropriation: "Well, it should be noted, of course, that at this stage in the Session only a little time is required to heal the asperities of spirit and bring about understanding. ... The balm of Gilead is everywhere."

[Republican Leaders' Press Conference, October 5, 1962, 4]

Urging senators to be more amicable: "Resume your congenial and felicitous relationships."

["Golden Voice of the Senate," 1960, Clippings, f. 177; *Saturday Evening Post*, October 6, 1962, Clippings, f. 285]

Civil Rights

On the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1957:

There has to be a force behind all these developments. What is the force? There has to be a pervading conscience. If I did not believe history was the unfolding of a divine history, I would resign at once from the Senate; and that remark is no pleasantry. But I have a deep conviction that the whole unfolding is according to the great design and plan of the Great Architect. That is the way I interpret the history of our times. If that is a firm conviction and conclusion—and it is—then there has to be a great force behind that development. William James, the philosopher, once used the term, “The stubborn and irreducible acts.” One can never escape them.

So, regardless of the speeches, what we are dealing with here today, will continue to roll into law, because a moral and ethical consideration is involved; and all the speeches, all the obstruction, all the effort to stop it, will not prevail, because we are dealing with human beings. Though their color may be black, I cannot imagine for a moment that they were not endowed with a spirit and a soul, just as is every other human being under the canopy of God’s blue heaven. So you see we are dealing with something that is probably a divine force. It is not going to be stopped. It may be stopped now, but it will roll because we are dealing with people, all the people of this country.
[*Congressional Record*, July 10, 1957; Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 79]

On civil rights conference committee deliberations in March 1960: “All of us are standing up well under this ordeal thus far but eventually the flesh must ride herd on the spirit.”

[“Fails to Reach Rights Accord in Conference,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 3, 1960, Clippings, f. 182]

Responding to protestors during debate on the 1964 civil rights bill: “When the day comes that picketing, distress, duress, and coercion can push me from the rock of conviction, that is the day that I shall gather up my togs and walk out of here and say that my usefulness in the Senate has come to an end.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 17, 1964, 2884]

When asked about his objections to the House version of the civil rights bill in 1964: “Well, I think I have an objection, of course, to Title II. I have an objection to the FEPC provision as the thing now stands. But at the same time do me the justice of putting in whatever you write down that I’ve had an open mind and I always feel free to come along with alternatives and substitutes that are infinitely more to my liking because I still take my freedom straight . . . I’m like little Johnny when the teacher said to him, ‘Johnny, how do you spell “straight”?’ He said, ‘S-t-r-a-i-g-h-t.’ She said, “And what does it mean?’ He said, ‘Without ginger ale.’ And that’s the way I take my freedom.”

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, February 20, 1964, 6]

Civil Rights Act of 1964:

There are many reasons why cloture should be invoked and a good civil rights measure enacted.

First. It is said that on the night he died, Victor Hugo wrote in his diary, substantially this sentiment: “Stronger than all armies is an idea whose time has come.”

The time has come for equality of opportunity in sharing in government, in education, and in employment. It will not be stayed or denied. It is here. ...

I appeal to all Senators. We are confronted with a moral issue. Today let us not be found wanting in whatever it takes by way of moral and spiritual substance to face up to the issue and vote cloture.

[*Congressional Record*, June 10, 1964, 13319, Remarks and Releases]

Explaining to reporters why he had taken up the civil rights bill fight:

I said, “My friend as an answer, there occurs to me a line from an English poet, whose name was John Donne. He left what I believe was a precious legacy on the parchments of history. He said, ‘Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.’”

I am involved in mankind, and whatever the skin, we are all involved in mankind. Equality of opportunity must prevail if we are to complete the covenant that we have made with the people, and if we are to honor the pledges we made when we held up our hands to take an oath to defend the laws and to carry out the Constitution of the United States.

[*Congressional Record*, June 19, 1964, Remarks and Releases]

In describing the course of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: “Then came the grinding of the legislative mill. That mill grinds slowly but it grinds exceedingly fine. What has

happened in ‘the year that was’ is a tribute to the patience and understanding of the country, to the Senate, and generally the people of this Republic. It was marked, of course, by demonstrations and marches, and on occasion by some outbursts of violence. But the mills have ground before, Mr. President, where a moral issue was involved, and it is not too far from fact and reason to assert that they will continue to grind in the history of this blessed and continuing Republic.”

[*Congressional Record*, June 19, 1964, 145-49, Remarks and Releases]

A reporter asked Dirksen why he changed his mind and supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and recalled that Dirksen replied: “A colored man and his family sets out from Blytheville, Arkansas, for Jackson, Mississippi, and he says to himself ‘Here is a highway I helped pay for through federal and state taxes. They tax my gas, they tax my tires, they tax my car. This is really my highway. But if I go any distance and take the kids into a comfort station, I do so at my own peril.’ It has altered my thinking.”

[NBC’s Meet the Press, August 7, 1966, Remarks and Releases]

Congress

As a House member: “Tonight, at 7:30 we had a conference with the Senate on agricultural appropriations. Senators are such fun. They don’t know much, they’re homely, they’re stubborn and sort of stupid. But I guess we have to have Senators just like we must have mosquitoes and frogs. We finished with the Senators at 11:00 p.m. Or I hope we will. It was like a gory battle in which neither side won. ‘Gory’ is really not a good word. There ain’t enough plasma in a Senator to make a good pot of gore.”
[Personal Letters, June 23, 1943]

“In recent days, this Congress has also been assailed. I suppose it’s part of the American tradition and becomes a favorite indoor sport. In recent days it has been described as hectic and hysterical. It has been charged with spite and partisanship. It has been charged with intent to destroy unity and spite with the President. It has been charged with madness and hate. That’s all very interesting but it happens to be a parcel of nonsense and balderdash. To be exact, it is a lot of piddling twaddle and scarcely deserves an answer.”
[“A Congressman Looks at Congress,” *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, July 8, 1943, A 3676, Remarks and Releases]

“This power of investigation is one of the most salutary and effective powers in the hands of Congress. If it were placed upon a truly scientific basis and given the dignity and importance which should attach to an inquiry where billions of dollars of public funds are involved, it could become the greatest force in the land for genuine economy, the elimination of waste and extravagance, the elimination of unnecessary personnel from Federal rolls, the discontinuance of Federal functions which are more ornamental than useful or necessary, the adoption of sound and approved business practices throughout the governmental structure, the consolidation of duplicating activities, the coordination of related functions, the abolition of bureaus which have no bona fide existence, the revitalization of the morale throughout the Federal structure, and generate in the public mind a new and better respect for government. To obtain that information in a form that would be useful to Congress requires expert investigators. The use of the investigatory power must be made constant, expert, and scientific if real results are to be obtained. It is a responsibility of Congress.”
[Remarks to the National Convention of the League of Women Voters, April 26, 1944, in *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, May 4, 1944, A2264, Dirksen Papers, Remarks and Releases]

During debate over the nomination of Charles E. Bohlen to be Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Dirksen, who was opposed: “I may say to my good friend the Senator

from Idaho [Mr. Welker], ‘be not weary in well doing,’ because in my opinion we have a good function to perform. Besides, what kind of Senate would this be, what kind of country would this be, if there were no dissonance of spirit? There is one place where there is no dissonance, and that is Russia. God forbid that the Senate of the United States should reach the stage where we would all think through the same medium, through the same funnel, as it were, and all come up with the same conclusion. That would not be worthy of America. Let conscience and conviction have free play. Let heart and mind speak.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 27, 1953, 2387]

“Mr. President, the United States Senate is truly a great deliberative body. There are, of course, occasions when it is not so deliberative. Discussions may not be as deep as the sea on occasion, but they are, at least, as wide as the 48 States. I have been entranced this afternoon by what started out as a protestation of the order or policy announced by the Secretary of Agriculture. It was not very long before that discussion encompassed the Federal Reserve System, the Economic Report, the Soviet Union, high price supports, utilities, and everything else under the sun. So now I propose to disturb the equanimity of the Senate for a moment with a fact or two. Facts as we know, are stubborn things, but now and then it is necessary to advance or present them.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1954, 1772]

“I am always delighted to think of the Senate as a club, because it seems to me the Senate functions effectively and functions earnestly if we never quite lose the ‘clubby’ spirit. We can become very angry, and at times, I suppose, so intolerant of one another; but I remember the almost iridescent line written by the great sales manager of Christianity, the Apostle Paul, who said: ‘Let your forbearance be known in the sight of men.’ Nothing can quite equal that line, because this is an arena in which tolerance and forbearance are so urgently necessary.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 15482]

During debate over the censure resolution regarding Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI), Dirksen entered into the record the following examples of “robust language” uttered on the Senate floor over the course of history:

- Falsification
- A doctored report
- Cowardice
- Liar
- A dirty dog
- A willfully malicious, wicked liar
- Trickery and sharp practice
- Making the Senate a sewer for the vaporings of a Senator
- Contemptible speech
- Conspiracy to steal an election
- Jackasses

Two-bit committees
A tissue of falsehoods
Political trickery and subterfuge
Blasphemy
A Senator in company with Stalin and the Daily Worker
Trained seals
Rotten filth
Cards that are red with the blood of treachery
Defiling his seat
Subordinating integrity for a few slimy votes
Like a rotten mackerel that shines and stinks in the moonlight
Most contemptible and degraded of beings
A scavenger bird hunting offal and putrefying matter
A great liar and a dirty dog
[*Congressional Record*, December 2, 1954, 16373-4]

In justifying a pay increase and an increase in the Senate's office allowance: "Why are we so niggardly about our own affairs, I should like to know? Do we not want to do a good job, Mr. President? Can my colleagues not explain their need to their constituents? If I thought for one moment that enough of my constituents had some doubt about my integrity in public office and the expenditure of this fund, I would quit the Senate. It is just that simple. When are we going to get over our timidity? When are we going to vote for ourselves the instrumentalities which are necessary in order that we may serve the public? ... Running a senatorial office has become almost an industry."

[*Congressional Record*, February 25, 1955, 2152-2153]

In a discussion of whether or not the Senate should await House action on a civil rights bill before proceeding, Dirksen had this to say: "I shall not make confession of the fact that it is wise to wait on another branch of Congress to take action before we can act. In the days when I was a member of the House of Representatives I always thought all the brains, all the power, and all the wisdom were over on that side of the Capitol; and when I moved over here I thought all the profound and residual wisdom in the world was over on this side. It depends on where one sits."

[*Congressional Record*, February 25, 1960, 3409]

After Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson noted Dirksen's move from the House to the Senate and that some do not consider that a promotion, Dirksen replied: "I have heard that said, too, but I point out, of course, that in this great deliberative body—and I am glad of it—we constantly preserve its deliberative character, and its sometimes lightly unpredictable character. We have no rule of germaneness. We have no limitation on debate. After all those years of difficulty trying to compress world-shaking remarks into 5 minutes, under the House rule, what a sheer delight it was, what abandon of

spirit I experienced, when I came to the Senate and discovered when I got the floor I could keep it endlessly, so long as there was any breath in this poor and feeble body.”
[Laughter]

[*Congressional Record*, June 29, 1960, 14879]

Comments on the close of the Senate session in 1961 after paying homage to Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and other colleagues: “I ought to say a word about the program that has been consummated thus far. I think the Congress finally has succumbed to the very infectious virus of bigness that began at the beginning of the century, when we first heard about big business. After a while we heard about big government. Then we began to hear about big labor. This whole bigness idea has intruded itself on the thinking of the country. . . . Big debt is one aspect. We have the biggest debt we have ever had.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 26, 1961, 21381]

On the groups and individuals meeting with him on the proposed civil rights bill in May 1964: “Groups come, preachers, priests and tell me it’s a moral issue, that I must help them. I am not opposed to the bill, but I am a legislator, not a moralist and my job is to make sure any bill we pass does not do more harm than good.”

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 83]

Commenting on Rep. Charles Halleck’s (R-IN) observation about delay in the Senate on the civil rights bill: “I’m sure he didn’t imply for a moment that the Senate was not diligent . . . probably what he meant to indicate was that the Senate was diligent in one place for a hundred days.”

[Joint Senate-House Leadership Press Conference, June 26, 1964, 10]

As the 88th Congress drew to a close, Senate Minority Leader Everett M. Dirksen had this to say about the federal legislature:

This 88th Congress comes to an end as we observe the 187th anniversary of the formulation of the Federal Constitution. That document created Congress. It made it article I, ahead of the other branches. From time to time, we should refresh ourselves on the first section under that article. It is clear and all inclusive. It recites that—“The legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.” That is the whole of it.

. . . But today, it is beset with reformers who believe it is too slow, too clumsy, and too inefficient. It is beset with reorganizers who would like to change its structure, its rules, its committees. It is beset by pressure groups without number who know full well that only through the Congress can they secure the laws and the authority which are to their liking and which serve their own particular economic and social purposes.

As an institution, the Congress has been castigated from within and from without. It has been lampooned and cartooned. It has been reviled and calumniated.

In other days this attitude toward Congress was not to be taken too seriously because it was sporadic and diffused. But today, it is quite another thing. The effort to demean and denigrate the Congress appears to be organized. It embraces Congressmen, Senators, professors, some of the press, pressure groups, some columnists, and a few commentators. Not the least of the forces at work to downgrade this Congress resides in the executive branch of Government itself. This is not a new phenomenon. It takes the form of flouting the will of Congress, of withholding information, of ignoring the intent of the legislative branch. ... Whenever the Congress and the people become both complacent and reconciled to such a state of affairs, then indeed will the most important branch of the Government become demeaned and downgraded in its own eyes and in the eyes of the people.

[“The Republican Report of U.S. Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois,” October 2, 1964, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen thought the word “filibuster” was “odious” and preferred “extended discussion.” He explained why: “Moreover, it’s more readily translatable into giving information to the country. You see, Thomas Jefferson once said, ‘To inform the minds of the people is the duty of a public servant.’ So I am just trying to inform the people.”

[CBS’s *Face the Nation*, September 19, 1965, 9, Remarks and Releases]

“I am opposed to a modification of the Rule 22, and it is simply a case of trying to save and keep intact the kind of a parliamentary system we have today, and that has endured beyond any other constitutional government on the face of the earth. This government, representative government, in all its glory, is the oldest without any significant change under God’s sun, and the reason we have it is because we haven’t made it too easy to rush through a lot of panaceas, and the things on which they pant so hotly in order to shove through as their brain children, and probably not for the benefit of the country. I think Rule 22 has served a very useful purpose, and I say that if you have got a proposition that has merit you can get cloture if you have to have it.”

[ABC’s *Issues and Answers*, January 15, 1967, 11, Remarks and Releases]

After stating the need for more women in Congress: “How have women fared as legislators? While it may seem that national political service is a man’s world, women have brought to Congress their practical minds, their great capacity for the hard work that a good congressman must perform to keep up with events, their high sense of patriotism and their wonderful ability to see thru some of the dark camouflage that sometimes complacent men permit to be pulled into cover over important affairs.”

[“We Need More Women” *A Senator’s Notebook*, February 13, 1968, Remarks and Releases]

Responding to criticism of the 90th Congress that it took so long: “You know haste is one of the hallmarks, one of the attributes of a dictatorial government. ... So I’ve said so often about all the processes and procedures: ‘Our government is like an old waterlogged scow. It don’t travel very far at one time and it don’t travel very fast, but it doesn’t sink.’ You see, that is one of the great attributes of a free society and of a

free country. To be sure, we take lots of time and we fuss and we argue and we scold. But when we get all through, it is still a free society. The results are freely obtained by free people who are insistent on maintaining the freedom of the country also, and so it takes a little time.

[*Your Senator Reports*, November 13, 1967, Remarks and Releases; Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 109]

Constituents

“Wrote a letter this morning that I didn’t like to write but sort of felt that I had too [sic]. It was in reply to a letter I received from a Miss Hazel Goodale of Princeton in which she criticized my vote on a bill recently and then [threw] in a few slurring remarks such as ‘perhaps you can’t read’ and ‘we shall see about it later’ etc. Usually I ignore such letters but this time, I wrote her a very sweet note with a bunch of stingers asking how she would like it if I wrote her an impolite and impertinent note suggesting that she ‘couldn’t read’ etc. I’ve gotten to the point where I don’t have to take that kind of stuff off of anybody and they better expect to be put in their places if they do. I refuse to be a chopping block for somebody just because they have ideas with which I don’t agree. And that’s that.”

[Personal Letters, April 3, 1937]

“Today is the big day. The Townsend Bill is on for discussion. Letters and telegrams from these deluded old folks are coming in right brisk. It’s truly pathetic. The Townsend leaders are hoodwinking them and somehow they don’t seem to tumble. The bill has been changed three times at this session and is such an abomination that I feel reasonably sure I cannot vote for it. Such are the tribulations of public officials when folks seek to get their feet in the public trough and get something for nothing. Truly, these desperate forces may yet be the undoing of the country before we get thro [sic].”

[Personal Letters, May 31, 1939]

“In that package of mail which you sent was a letter from Rockford. It was from a Townsendite giving me the devil. I wrote and said, ‘It’s the hit dog that yelps.’ Guess that’s why they shot at me in their paper. I hit them with a package of the truth and it hurt. After all, there is no weapon so potent as truth.

[Personal Letters, June 24, 1939]

“I noticed Mac’s column [F.F. MacNaughton, Publisher, *Pekin Times*] on Congress. Extremely stupid, if you ask me but I’ve learned long ago not to fuss with folks about their on half-baked ideas. Had he thought the matter thro [sic], he would have dumped it in the wastebasket.”

[Personal Letters, March 1942]

“I overslept. Some fool called me about 1:30 this morning while I was sound asleep. Someday I shall commit polite murder if that sort of business continues.”

[Personal Letters, March 3, 1942]

Occasionally, Dirksen offered terse replies to his pen pals. On this occasion, he responded to someone who thought he had too much time on his hands:

If and when I find a little leisure time I will try to tell you how I deal with leisure time.

In any event, I appreciate your letter if for no other reason than it shows how quickly thoughtless people can rush to their trusty typewriters and type off a carping note—uninhibited by the facts.

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 45-46]

Democrats

“In 1932 the voters of this Nation elected Franklin D. Roosevelt by an overwhelming majority. It was not a case of placing a new party in power. It was not a case of adopting a platform. It was a case of electing a sparkling, dynamic personality. It was a case of making a change. It was a case of weariness resulting from the failure of the party in power to initiate needed reforms. It was desire for a new emotional pattern. It was a desire for swift action. It was a case of a nation, suffering from the repeated shocks of the depression, groping for a spark that would set it right and restore recovery. It was a desire for virile and comfortable leadership in an hour of acute distress.”

[Address, *American Forum of the Air*, July 7, 1940, reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, August 1, 1940, 4727, Remarks and Releases]

“In estimating the forces of conflict which are at work I see on one side those who believe that the future of this country lies in the direction of collectivism and centralized power. It is attended by a constant expansion of the power of the Federal government and the gradual diminution of the rights and powers of the states. It is the idea that a planned centralized government shall make all of the social and economic decisions by which we shall live. It is the idea that the individual must be controlled by the state or by the group and that he must be subjugated for the benefit of the mass. It is the philosophy which approves of the encouragement of group pressures and demands, the shifting of group and personal responsibilities upon government, and the development of what Doctor [Rexford] Tugwell in 1935 called a ‘Disciplined Democracy.’ In brief it is the idea that we have reached that state of affairs in our national life where this must become a government of the people but not by the people.”

[Remarks, Dirksen Testimonial Dinner, June 6, 1944, 5, Remarks and Releases]

In commenting on Democrats’ penchant for expanding government, Dirksen compared President Truman to a little boy at a party. The hostess says, “If you eat any more cake you’ll bust.” The little boy pauses and then says, “Pass the cake and get out of the way!”

[Notebooks, no date, f. 116, 246]

Dirksen responded to Democrats’ charges that the Republicans were the war party: “So the Democratic Party is the party of peace. ... Yes; they have kept peace on a war footing for so long that one would think that the American people and the American economy must have a great deal of robustness and resiliency to stand up to it. Their

kind of peace is a period of toil to pay heavy taxes for the last war and to get ready—God forbid—for whatever else may come along. ... But there are other things besides critical materials which are in short supply. One of them is peace. What kind of peace? Peace with bankruptcy. Peace with death. Peace with confusion. Peace with socialism. Peace with a garrison state. Peace with tension. ... Peace with humiliation and with the bankruptcy of every fine illusion that good Americans by the millions had in their hearts as they began to repeat all the fine expressions in the Atlantic Charter.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 25, 1951, 4356]

“It has been said that the New Deal is the party of the common man. That is true only in a sense that its whole design is to keep the common man common. From the time of emancipation and homesteads, the Republican Party has ever fought to preserve the chance of the common man to become uncommon and go forward if he wanted to.”

[*The Illinois Republican Reporter*, October 1951, Clippings, f. 37]

Dirksen on what the Eisenhower administration inherited from the Truman administration: “If the New Dealers and the Fair Dealers want to defend such a grisly program [that has led to high prices], I’m ready. When they make this issue they must answer how they separated the high prices from the young corpses. The farmers whose sons come back in wooden boxes may ask some questions on that score.” Summing it up, Dirksen said the Eisenhower administration had been “the beneficiary of a debt-ridden, tax-ridden, semi-bankrupt government which ... cheapened the dollar, made red ink a fixed habit and kept the nation in a state of crisis and nervous tension.”

[*Chicago American*, September 19, 1953, Clippings, f. 64]

“What my friend, the Senator from Delaware, seeks to emphasize is that the previous administration had all the fun of doing the shopping and buying all the merchandise; and then, when that administration went out of office, it laid on the desk of President Eisenhower all the bills, to the tune of approximately \$83 billion, and those bills confronted us when we came in. ... So they had the fun, and we have had to pay.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 10, 1955, 2614]

Dirksen on Democrats’ legislative ambitions in 1959: They are based on “a generous batter of spender’s delight, well moistened with the heady liquid of further expansion of the Federal Government, a liberal helping of welfare borrowed from their taxpaying neighbors.” He added that there was included “a dash of depression blues, a pinch (not more) of labor reform and civil rights, all raised to program proportions with the yeast and warmth of the 1958 elections.”

[*Washington Post*, September 22, 1959, Clippings, f. 171]

“Now the Kennedy program is just what everyone expected—deficit spending, increased government controls, increases in the government payroll, more welfare statism—that inevitable price which we must pay the piper—eventually more taxes. It

may be called the New Frontier but the Kennedy program is the Old New Deal taken out of an old warming oven. It was hot stuff 25 years ago but time has passed it by.”
[Republican Leaders’ Press Statement, May 1, 1961, Remarks and Releases]

Referring to the 1960 Democratic Platform: “It then pledged and promised everything for everybody everywhere all of the time. Prestige would be restored; peace would be retrieved; the missile, space and other assorted gaps would be closed; from Indians to investigations; from Cuba to China; from balanced budgets to Berlin; from agriculture to atomic test bans, everything would be made sweet again. It was pie in the sky and two and one-half cars in every garage. ... Why is it that where the Old Frontier had such sturdy, courageous pioneers, the New Frontier provides us only with doubts and fears. The Old Frontier had a chief and many Indians; the New Frontier seems to have all chiefs and no Indians.”
[Remarks, \$100 Republican Fund Dinner, McCormick Place, Chicago IL, Remarks and Releases]

“Truly, President Kennedy is heading us toward the Leviathan state. It does not seem to occur to the Administration that the Federal government is already big enough—a colossus that touches the lives, the rights and the privileges of every American man, woman, and child. It is to be remembered that we, as Republicans, gave the President a year in which to unveil the New Frontier. It has turned out to be nothing more than a bright ribbon wrapped around the oldest and most discredited political package on earth—the centralization of power.”
[Republican Leaders’ Press Conference, January 18, 1962, 2]

Dirksen’s definition of the Kennedy administration’s New Frontier: “Out where the wild waste begins.”
[Speech to Republican Country Town Committeewomen, Chicago, September 14, 1962, Clippings, f. 225]

Dirksen on the Kennedy administration’s Medicare proposal: “If you are but 21 years old, you will pay a tax 44 years before you get even the skimpy benefits they offer. Shame on me if I should feel that a working man with a family ought to pay the medical bills of Sen. Dirksen or Nelson Rockefeller or J.P. Morgan.”
[October 18, 1962, Clippings, f. 290]

After listing examples of how the Kennedy administration had misled the American people by manipulating the news: “These are only some of the acorns of deception from which the mighty oak of doubt has sprung.”
[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, March 28, 1963, 2]

On Lyndon Johnson’s State of the Union Address in 1965:

It was a glowing blueprint for paradise.

It was, in a sense, a restatement of an American dream that has been uttered over and over for many decades. There was about it a Messianic touch and perhaps its essential weakness was that it undertakes to redress every need, both foreign and domestic.

It is doubtful that one nation out of one-hundred fifteen in this whole world could undertake such a burden and survive. Certain it is that it would require an overall and complete centralization of federal power and the virtual destruction of local and state authority. Any person can share this dream and these goals but it constitutes a perfect dream in a very imperfect world and we can never be unmindful of that fact. Our approaches must still be very practical and within the means of the country and its people.

[Comments on the State of the Union Address, January 4, 1965, Remarks and Releases]

“The President’s view of the Great Society is full of overblown hopes and promises that can’t be attained. The speech was a glowing blueprint for paradise—a messianic touch whose weakness was that it undertook to redress every grievance and need both foreign and domestic. It is doubtful that one nation out of 115 in this whole world could undertake such a burden and survive. Certain it is that it would require an overhaul and complete centralization of federal power and the virtual destruction of local and state authority.”

[Interview with the press, January 4, 1965, regarding President Lyndon Johnson’s State of the Union Address, Remarks and Releases]

On the Johnson administration’s domestic program: “Now when it comes to the domestic scene, all seems to be beer and skittles, apple pie and honey, and yet it is not quite that sweet.”

[“A New Congress Comes Into Being,” January 11, 1965, Remarks and Releases]

When asked to characterize the Great Society: “A blueprint for paradise.”

[Paul O’Neil, “Grand Old King of the Senate,” March 1965, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

On the “culture of poverty”:

I read from a news dispatch: ‘Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz has announced today the start of a special program for hiring 2,152 college graduates to study the culture of poverty.’ Mr. President, I ask my friend the junior Senator from Louisiana [Russell Long], what does he mean by ‘the culture of poverty.’ We have agriculture. We have horticulture. We have silvi-culture. We have social culture. Now we have the culture of poverty, according to the Secretary of Labor. I continue to read: ‘The culture training will help qualify them to counsel disadvantaged youths.’ Is that not wonderful? Some 2,152 fine young college graduates, looking like an Arrow collar ad, coming down here to get the culture of poverty. And then they will go abroad in the land, in the hinterland, and in the metropolitan centers. They will talk with people, and they will say, ‘Don’t you know the culture of poverty?’

The people will say, 'All we know is that we don't have jobs. All we know is that we owe the grocer. All we know is that we owe the meat market. All we know is that we owe an installment on a secondhand automobile.' So what is this business about the culture of poverty?

It would be like that expert from the Department of Agriculture who went out on a farm in Kansas, and looked at a little creature out there and said, 'How do you expect to get any wool off that animal?' The man said, 'I don't, because it is not a sheep. It is a goat.' That is all the expert knew about it. He did not know the difference between a sheep and a goat.

The culture of poverty is a fine sounding phrase, but it will not fool the American people."

[*Congressional Record*, August 19, 1965, p. 21142]

Describing the 'credibility gap' in 1966: "Whether this administration is misinformed, misguided, or simply mystified, it is—in any case—always mistaken."
[*Chicago Daily News*, March 31, 1966, Clippings, f. 393]

In criticizing the Johnson administration for a lack of control over spending and the over-zealous pursuit of Great Society goals, Dirksen said the administration had political salesmen "who pursue domestic social programs with the pop-eyed ardor of a Harpo Marx chasing blonds."
["Johnson Preaches Fear, Dirksen Says," *United Press International*, August 20, 1966, Clippings, f. 439]

In scoring the Johnson administration's spending habits, Dirksen said rising prices marked the Great Society and its "hummingbird economists who can reverse themselves without first stopping ... the price of cornflakes soars again. One housewife is planning to buy two packages as soon as she can find a cosigner."
[*Illinois State Journal*, October 20, 1966, Clippings, f. 451]

In his year-end report on the 89th Congress, Dirksen reviewed the general state of the country and then said: "Such, in broad outline, are the maladies and tumults surrounding us. Meanwhile, the administration goes its higgledy-piggledy way, its high priests no longer the flower of American culture but skilled political salesmen who pursue domestic social programs with the pop-eyed ardor of a Harpo Marx chasing blondes."
["Where Our Nation Stands at Home and Abroad," *The Republican Report*, October 14, 1966, Senate Document No. 116, 2, Remarks and Releases; "Sen. Dirksen Looks a 89th Congress," October 28, 1966, Clippings, f. 453]

Characterizing the Johnson administration's budget: "This budget tries to provide for both guns and butter. It actually contains a great deal of lard."
[Clippings, February 1967, f. 480]

Dirksen likened the New Frontier to the clatter of dishes and fewness of victuals. He said it was born at the Los Angeles Democratic National Convention in July 1960

where the chairman broke 24 gavels, "... and that made a clatter in itself. There was a lot of applesauce with a dash of Hollywood, and plenty of confusion, and that's where the New Frontier was born."

[Anne Culler Penney, "The Golden Voice of the Senate," *GRIT* Family Section, June 1, 1969, Clippings, f. 648]

Family

“As your birthday approaches, I cannot help but think what an adorable, devoted, and loving person you are and have been. I think it’s the constancy of your devotion and the uninterrupted happiness and understanding we’ve enjoyed that brings the serenity that I enjoy today and on all days. I count it and I count you and the Punkin [referring to their daughter, Danice Joy] my priceless treasures. It shall always be that way. And now, I shall seal this will [sic] countless kisses and hugs and address myself to a briefcase full of work that seems to be crying for attention. By-bee sweethearts.”

[Personal Letters, March 14, 1937]

“Read everything you had to say about the Punkin’s fighty exploits Tell he[r], I said, that anytime any boy mistreats her, the proper thing to do is to poke him on the nose. Read that to her and both youse kids enjoy a laugh. Tell her that’s the way her father used to do it. He used to come home, covered with dirt, and skinned knees, and torn clothes and all that sort of thing, and what was OK for him, is OK for the Punk.”

[Personal Letters, March 16, 1937]

Writing to Louella on Memorial Day 1937: “Bought the carnation for mother [referring to Louella’s mother, Lillie Carver]. Guess you’ve never heard me say much about her. ‘Tisn’t necessary. I find in you those virtues of devotion and frugality and temperateness and absorption in home life that occupied and marked her existence and so it is like always having her here. And for that I love you so much more.”

[Personal Letters, May 30, 1937]

“I was deeply thrilled by your letter describing the wedding and how it transported you back many years ago and what happy and adventurous years they have been. I too fall into retrospection at odd moments and go back to retrace the winding road we’ve walked together. Sometimes it’s been a bit steep and tortuous but every inch of it has been bordered with flowers and sunshine that you’ve planted and scattered along the roadside and I’m sure the road that lies ahead is equally beautiful and drenched with happiness. What more could we ask.”

[Personal Letters, June 8, 1937]

Writing to Louella while Joy is away for two weeks at camp: “It’s so important that she be put on her own. It teaches independence and self reliance as nothing else can do. And when she gets back, she must be suitably complimented for being such an

independent little lady. I shall be proud as punch of her. Why, I'd never think of having gone away from home at age 9. It's amazing."

[Personal Letters, July 14, 1937]

The movie, "The Good Earth," left Dirksen with two impressions:

First a renewed appreciation of your own unselfish devotion thro [sic] all these beautiful years. I think of it often but on occasions when it is made dramatic in the lives of others, it makes it so very real in our case and now it seeks expression. It brings such ease and certainty, and in my inarticulate way, I speak my complete reverence and love for you. It is a perfect gift in you and how could I help but adore you for it.

The other was a reawakening of a dormant & almost passionate devotion to the soil. It goes back to younger days when I had my acre and somehow felt the very strength of the soil as I came so intimate with it. The Good Earth! Funny how that expression had poised itself in my thoughts long before this book was even written. The soil spells quiet, retreat, strength and beauty. That devotion will not do__[?] and some day it must be satisfied with a renewal of communion with the soil."

[Personal Letters, August 8, 1937]

"I know what a chore your Ma can be at times when she gets those pesky notions but it's a case of using the utmost of tolerance. There are folks like that and all the reproach in the world will not make them otherwise. So the first and best thing to do is not to try to unmake or change them but to sharpen our own powers of adaptability and toleration. And you do it so well and so sweetly."

[Personal Letters, ca. 1938]

"Like you, I too get lonesome and then I drive myself into all manner of activities but there is an end to all these things I know. Yet, I am certain that even though lonesomeness might be one of the forces that compels you to take on so many activities of all kinds, you would be active even though I were daily at your side. Those activities are but the fruit of a vast desire to do things, create things, and to achieve. It's a magnificent thing and you could'nt [sic] be quite happy unless you were doing them for how else would the creative urge be satisfied.

[Personal Letters, June 5, 1939]

Writing to Louella after Joy had won a prize in an American Legion essay contest: "I'm so proud of Toots for getting a prize. I'm glad she did not get first prize. That's a funny thing to say. But it has two aspects. The first is that by not getting first prize, she'll work harder. It makes me re-live my own experiences. Somehow in debate and oratorical contests I never could get first prize. It made me work that much harder to perfect myself. The second factor is that if she did get first prize, there would be the usual intimations that you or I helped or that she was favored because of position. So

it worked out quite well and I shall add a note for her.” And the note to Joy: “I’m so proud of you for winning a prize in the essay contest. I knew you would. I know also that you have the ability to do much better. I want this contest and prize to sharpen your determination to enter other contests and win other prizes. A big kiss for you.”

[Personal Letters, ca. April 21, 1941]

“At Sholl’s I had a table near the door and could watch folks come and go. To me one of the amazing things is the ungainly legs that most women have and how slovenly they are in their carriage and walk. Somehow I always hoped that Toot’s Poots would have nice legs and know how to walk with them. That’s another one of your jobs.”

[Personal Letters, May 17, 1941]

“Wish I could have been with you during the concert in the bowl. Yes, Mother, it brings back such sweet memories of lovely days, of a shy little girl, of a prince and princess and of romance and love. Life has been so good and so generous to us. Each day I am so grateful for you and to you. Without your faith, your love, your constancy, your help, your advice, it would not have been. Only last night I told Mr. Creigh that when I find my thought stalemated by some blind mental alley, that I can always get myself oriented when I take counsel with you. You are my most cherished adviser, my best counsellor, my ever present help in time of stress and controversy. I love you Mother more than ever before and I’m so inexpressibly grateful for you.”

[Personal Letters, ca. August 1941]

“I should have called last night to say happy birthday to Toots-Putz. I may do it yet tonight. Each birthday is such a great event in her life and a great event for us as we watch her move upward and onward to the great objectives which we have for her. She has such a sweet and precious mother and I know that if care and solicitude have anything to do with achieving a high goal, there will be no doubt of the outcome.”

[Personal Letters, February 11, 1942]

“It was such an enriching experience to be home with you. Like an interlude of melody in a hectic existence. And how sweetly satisfying to know that you love me as I love you and that life is so rich and full and blessed. I do love you so much.”

[Personal Letters, April 17, 1942]

“So Toots is reconciled to camp. I’m glad. It does not especially prove my point. It merely testifies to the fact that she is a child under your direction and that firmness in the interest of her best welfare is the proper course to pursue. A mother should at all times carefully determine a course and then never undertake to argue about it. Selection of the thing for her to do must be done with care for in every case where it proves both wise and congenial for her, it establishes greater and greater confidence by her in your capacity to select things which are right and beneficial. And confidence is the basis of all child training.

[Personal Letters, June 19, 1942]

“Peasie weasie, can’t we quit incurring bills. Can’t we pay as we go and do without things which we buy on credit. It’s wartime. Our living bill is too high. We can stint and sacrifice. I’m not complaining because I know what a grand job you do. But let’s try to cut down, peasie-weasie. The child who knows that the parents have sound credit finds it so easy to buy on credit and finds it so hard to break the habit when necessity might some day require it. I’ve spoken so often about this and I must apologize for doing so again. But it frightens me. Can’t you do something about it—about the credit business. Excuse this note in my letter. I try not to be that way.”

[Personal Letters, June 19, 1942]

“For a little while, I have some free time and can set down my first memo to you after such a sweet and lovely visit with you and Toots and Pooch and Grandma. It was one of those exhilarating things which brings renewed faith and changed perspective and I can now address myself with greater vigor to the business at hand. You’re such a grand person Mumsie and in these brief visits I get a greater and greater appreciation for your talents, an enhanced admiration for your capacity to handle every chore and responsibility which comes along and a deeper love and affection for you because of your true worth and recognition of things which are durable and vital and sound. You are as constant as the Northern Star and what more could one ask. You’ve preserved such a sweet disposition, such a grace in the face of difficulties. You are indeed the pilot on our ship and you shall always be the pilot and the inspiration for whatever horizon we may achieve. I love you.”

[Personal Letters, May 10, 1943]

In reporting to Louella about a constituent whose husband had asked for a divorce: “Thus does one become a sort of father confessor, to share the sorrows and joys of people. I don’t understand that sort of business though Toots. When after ten or more years of marriage, folks have not learned to make adjustments, the only conclusion is that they don’t want to adjust themselves and let human caprice and personal selfishness and uninhibited impulse dwarf every other consideration. That is inexcusable. I experience a greater sense of comfort and security today that I have you and Toots than at any time since we began our happy and lovely partnership.”

[Personal Letters, May 22, 1943]



Freedom

“Looking back down the corridor of 162 years to the point where this Republic began, we see men, young and old, rich and poor, famed and obscure laboring in heat and discomfort to fashion a government that would avoid the weaknesses of pure democracy on the one hand and the evils of kingship on the other. Quickly did they put aside arrogance and displays of learning, impatience and stubbornness, as they recognized the responsibility which was theirs. In the space of 60 days, they had fashioned the essentials of a government which became the greatest instrument that mankind has known. But they did more. They followed through by voice and pen, they met every attack upon their work, created the psychology of victory and saw it ratified and made effective. Without bloodshed or violence they enthroned a new concept of government which recognized the spiritual character of the individual, made him the fountainhead of all power, and protected him, his liberty, his life, his property, his emotions, his thoughts, and his talents. It was a coat of mail to protect against intrusion from the state.

“But the most menacing force to the intent and purpose of the Constitution today springs from what Nicolai Lenin would call the confusion of vocabulary. It is the studied effort to make liberty a negative instead of a positive thing, The men who labored in Philadelphia 162 years ago thought of freedom as freedom for something—freedom for opportunity, for risk, for reward, for individual progress and advancement, for competition, for the unfoldment of skill and talent. Today the accent is on freedom from the demands of life. The spirit of the quest has been taken away. The search is for freedom from risk, freedom from sacrifice, from competition, from discipline, from care, from instability. The new look of freedom is to freeze our civilization in a mould.”

[Remarks, Abraham Lincoln Republican Club of Chicago, September 16, 1949, Remarks and Releases]

After recounting in great detail the threat of financial insolvency to the future of the country:

I suggest in all sincerity that over and above every other consideration you keep a constant and undimmed eye on the fundamental issue of freedom because it is the mainspring of progress and the hope of a greater destiny for this Republic.

As the importance of this great issue comes to mind, I think of the employer who was preparing to hire a youngster. A dozen or more had made application for the job and when they were all assembled the employer said very simply, “Boys, let me tell you about a farmer who seized his shotgun and went out to the barn to shoot an owl. The blast from the gun ignited the hay. The hay burned and the barn burned to the ground. The farmer’s wife who rushed out to extinguish the fire lost her life and the farmer also nearly lost his life.” That was all he said, and let the boys speculate about this incident. Some wondered whether there was insurance on the barn. Others puzzled about how a shotgun blast could ignite the hay. Others were very sympathetic about the farmer’s plight, but only one boy came up with the right response. With wonderment in his eyes, he said to the employer, “What happened to the owl?”

That is the important thing in the present welter of issues and problems. What happens to the owl of freedom—for in the answer to that question rests the dimensions of growth and progress in the days ahead.

[“The State of the Union,” December 11, 1951, 19-20, Remarks and Releases]

“I believe that the strength of America is the hope of the world. I believe also, my friends, that our strength and our security isn’t [sic] measured alone by planes and tanks and bazookas and howitzers and all the rest. It is measured by a free America consisting of free men without undue restrictions upon production and the distribution of goods in the country, for that lets the spirit flow and it becomes the one great deterrent to the man who would impress evil ideology upon America, and that is Joseph Stalin.”

[Remarks, National Automobile Dealers Association, January 30, 1952, 11, Remarks and Releases]

“But liberty even here is an unfulfilled dream. I remember the emotional and highly energized session of the United States Senate last summer when we were dealing with the issue of civil rights. Whenever color, religion, creed and all those other things are restricted, there you have the evidence that liberty has not yet been fully achieved and that the grand American dream still remains unfulfilled.”

[St. Patrick’s Day remarks, March 17, 1958, Remarks and Releases]

When asked if federal intervention posed a threat to freedom and if intervention should be stopped: “Well, I wouldn’t go so far as to say that it should be stopped. I saw a term recently that had appeal to me. It’s called ‘balanced freedom.’ There are certain things Government must do, but always you try to keep the major economic segments of the country in balance and there, Government through regulation, not control, and that distinction we must carefully make, can do something of a job.”

[CBS Television, “Washington Conversation,” March 5, 1961, 10-11]

“I prepared a speech one time under the title ‘Frogs and Freedom.’ Somebody said what does a frog know about freedom? Well, I said, I’ll tell you how much he knows. You could put that frog in a kettle of cold water and let him sit on the bottom and turn on the gas, and you’ll have him cooked. But if you heat the water first, and drop the frog in, his reflexes are so fast, he pops right out of the kettle. Now you know, that is the way freedom is lost. Put freedom in the bottom of the kettle and boil it away, a little at a time, and bring the temperature up, and when you’re ready to retrieve it, you can’t, because freedom is dead.”

[Address to the 13th Annual Republican Women’s Conference, April 2, 1965, Remarks and Releases; *Congressional Record*, April 13, 1965, 7836]

“The brain to function needs a climate. It needs a moral climate, and that moral climate I call freedom. It’s a climate in which the brain isn’t hurried. It’s a climate in which that brain can address itself to the will and to the soul and to every talent in the individual and bring it all together and make it produce something for the enrichment of the individual and the enrichment of mankind. And that’s the practical aspect of this thing we academically talk about when we speak of freedom.”

[Address, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, May 2, 1966, 10, Remarks and Releases]

A Dirksen story urging people to speak up for their freedom: “One day a fellow came into a pet store and asked the proprietor, ‘Have you a parrot?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ the proprietor said, ‘I have a fine parrot here.’ ‘How much?’ ‘Thirty-five dollars.’ ‘How much is the cage?’ ‘Fifteen dollars.’ ‘Here is fifty dollars. Send it to my house.’ The owner of the store said, ‘And besides, mister, this is a smart parrot. He speaks seven languages.’ When our buyer arrived home that night, he threw open the door, and there was his beloved wife. ‘Mary, did the bird come?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Where is he?’ ‘I have him in the oven.’ After he regained his composure, he said, ‘In Heaven’s name, woman, that bird could speak seven languages!’ And she said, ‘Why didn’t he speak up?’”

[Address to 14th Annual Republican Women’s Conference, May 6, 1966, 15, Remarks and Releases]

“No, you can’t eat freedom or buy anything with it. You can’t hock it downtown for the things you need. When a baby curls a chubby arm around your neck, you can’t eat that feeling either, or buy anything with it. But what in this life means more to you than that feeling, or your freedom?”

[“Tribute to an Earthy Plainsman,” January 16, 1967, Clippings, f. 471]

“We must glue our eyes on the cause of freedom. It’s the one thing that counts. The quiet, insidious erosion of freedom is taking place constantly. ... They’re trying to remake us from stem to stern, trying to subvert our principles. ... It is time for those citizens who believe in durable values to stand up and be counted.”

[“Tribute to an Earthy Plainsman,” January 16, 1967, Clippings, f. 471]

Gardening

“There is the feel of spring everywhere ... we must make haste to get ourselves that farm even if it’s only 80 acres because we want that feeling of security that comes from having a spot of earth where one can dig and scratch and develop a livelihood. I don’t like this war business that is going on and don’t like the thought of the regimentation and dictatorship that goes with it. I shall feel infinitely better when we get a bit of land with a snugly little house on it and be able to say—Come what may, here we shall till the Good Earth and raise food and provender.”

[Personal Letters, March 1938]

Dirksen gave the following advice to Louella after learning that birds were raiding Louella’s Victory Garden: “I suggest getting the balance of the garden spaded and plant the rest of it to beans, half wax and half green. Plant in rows one foot apart. Make a rill and drop the beans in clusters of three and four about four inches apart. Think how good a mess of fresh wax beans would taste—or green beans. They’re vermin proof, grow easy and you’re certain of a good crop even on light soil.”

[Personal Letters, April 20, 1942]

On gardening as a hobby: “A garden is not only an inspiring hobby. It’s therapeutic for mind and body. The air, the sun, the use of muscles hitherto unused, the perspiration, the increased intake of refreshing cold water, all add up to new vigor.”

[“Slimmed Down Dirksen,” *Peoria Journal Star*, January 4, 1958, Clippings, f. 126]

Introducing the bill to name the marigold the national floral emblem:

Mr. President, unless some supernal force disturbs the procession of the seasons, there will be spring; and when spring comes, there will be flowers. We shall be delighted with the earlier flowers—the tulips, the daffodils, the redbud, and the dogwood blossoms.

A little later will come all the delightful annual flowers, which nature compels us to cultivate every year, but leaves a residue of seed which makes them almost perpetual. They will include the humble but beautiful petunia, the zinnia and the calendula, and also the marigold.

... But I still find myself wedded to the marigold—robust, rugged, bright, stately, single colored and multicolored, somehow able to resist the onslaught of insects; it takes in its stride extreme changes in

temperature, and fights back against the scorching sun in summer and the chill of early spring mornings. What a flower the marigold is. I am looking forward to the time when these gay flowers will salute and intrigue our sense of beauty.

[*Congressional Record*, March 7, 1963, 3621, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen used the imagery of a garden to introduce remarks on his favored “prayer amendment”:

Mr. President, on Independence Day I looked out the window to see the flag flying in a mild breeze and the lawn drenched in sunshine. Against the rail fence where dogwood, japonica, spirea, hydrangea, crepe myrtle and filbert bushes furnished the backdrop, golden marigolds were dancing in the mild breeze. In a center garden incredibly beautiful canna heads were finding glory under a cloudless sky. In still another garden, double white petunias were the edging for the deep colored zinnias that stood like sentinels in the sun. In a tree row made up of black locust, white cherry, redbud, [and] dogwood was a mass of wild fern and peeking out from under the cover was blooming mountain laurel.

Along the deep green privet hedge, cannas, red, white and salmon geraniums were shielded by still other white petunias. Along the west lotline, those stately snap dragons—deep red, white and pink were ready to share their color and beauty with every visitor and passerby until frost. There were the fantastic dahlias in all colors, flaunting their beauty to the wide world.

Near the carport were hardy asters, ready and willing to share the last splash of beauty before Jack Frost came to paint the leaves. In the gardens closest to the river, pansies were keeping a last minute vigil before the blooms would fail, asters were ready to take over the job of beauty, hybrid geraniums were making their second or third salute to color, impatiens were basking twinkling like stars, dwarf marigolds were quietly carrying on, domestic ferns were performing like peacocks.

Close by were the tea roses—deep red, pink, white, yellow, silver and gold—with their lingering fragrance.

Making ready to dazzle the eye and the senses were the shasta daisies, gladiolas, day lilies, lemon lilies, white lilies apsending [sic] themselves, with tall zinnias standing like alert guards to shield them.

At the top of the ridge was the vegetable garden—yielding beets and carrots, radish and lettuce, spinach and wax beans, green and pole beans, strawberries building new life and vigor for next spring fruiting. Tomatoes on stately vines were soon ready to provide pink delicacies and pepper plants were pushing for the day when dark green peppers could be picked. Handle gourds were sending their tendrils along the wire fence to provide bird houses for the purple martins in the next season.

Crows, grackles, sparrows, jays and others were enjoying the feeders. Wrens, sparrows, barn swallows were feeding their brood of youngsters. The purple martins were scolding and warring on the intrusive sparrows. The mournful catbird, the lilting meadow larks, bob white, red breast robins were supplying the music for the leafy cathedral on the lower level. Those patient fishermen, the white herons, were back earlier than usual. Above it all was the throaty music of the warblers and the twittering of the wrens.

Presiding over the cavalcade of beauty were the gentle birch trees, the pin oaks, the pines and hemlock, the aged cottonwoods and sycamores, the beech and elm, walnut and maple, hickory and willow, Japanese yew and Greek juniper, Virginia spruce and pyracantha, Chinese tulip and flowering crab, flowering peach and flowering cherry, domestic holly and Norway maple.

Mr. President, who can live with this beauty, this diversity, this color, this salute to the mind, the heart, the soul of man and not believe in God—in a Creator behind it all?

[“Prayer Amendment” typescript, July 9, 1968, Remarks and Releases]

After describing in exquisite detail his plans for a garden: “Let kings and emperors, presidents and senators suffer highly important matters to furrow their brows. There must be a little time to draw back and think about the noblest creations from the hand of a generous Creator—the endless variety of flowers.”

[“I Begin to Think About My Garden . . .,” *A Senator’s Notebook*, March 19, 1969, and the *Congressional Record*, March 26, 1969, S 3249, Remarks and Releases]

Governing

On supporting initial New Deal legislation: “I have taken rather fine pride in the fact that I voted for the N.R.A. and voted for the Social Security Act, for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and a great many other measures that were proposed by the President in the hope of lifting this country from the slough of depression to the high road of sunshine and prosperity. Those days of 1932 and 1933 were troublous and beset with difficulty. Insofar as conviction permitted, one was expected to adjourn all partisanship and participate in the common enterprise of lifting the Nation from its despondency.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1937, Remarks and Releases]

“A government in which the making, the enforcing and the interpreting of the law and the rights of people is finely balanced is not merely a mechanical organism. It is a vital faith. It is the thing by which we have lived and grown great. It is capable of infinite enlargement without a destruction of the basic pattern. We must preserve that pattern. We must return to a government of independence, respect and collaboration. Each branch must be independent, each branch must have respect for the other branches, each must collaborate for the common good. The preamble to our organic law is still the objective of society—union, justice, tranquility, defense, the general welfare, the blessings of liberty.”

[“Dirksen for President” press release, January 25, 1944, Remarks and Releases]

On conflict between the president and Congress: “Whenever the President and his Administrators quit trying to dictate to Congress and to make this government a one-man show; whenever the administrators stop trying to make law by order, regulation and directive; whenever the Executive branch ceases its efforts to circumvent Congress and by-pass the courts; whenever the constant effort to propagandize the public in order to pressure and influence the Congress comes to an end; whenever the Executive branch ceases thinking of Congress as a convenient appendage of government from which to extract money and authority, we shall retrieve the basis for a sound and workable co-operation between the two.”

[“How Can Congress and the President Work Together?” March 9, 1944, Remarks and Releases]

In arguing that Senate testimony given by General Douglas MacArthur should be given in public, which the Truman administration opposed because of national security: “Think of all the nice expressions about the democratic process the Vice President of the United States, this afternoon, as he addressed himself to the distinguished foreign journalists who graced this body with their presence, used the

phrase, ‘democratic process.’ Is it the democratic process to conceal? Is it the democratic process to withhold? Is it the democratic process to do those clandestine things in connection with which the people of the United States have an interest because this is their country? Is it their sons who have to be offered upon the alter? Is it their dollars which must be used to fight the wars of the Republic? Their dollars are good enough; their sons are good enough; but the people are not expected to know what is going on. We can call that the democratic process if we like, but I have another name for it, Mr. President.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 3, 1951, 4788]

Speaking on the importance of local government despite the focus on national government: “And when once such reliance and dependence on the national government has developed, we are then well on the way to a socialized state. So I think the conclusion will stand up that in proportion as the citizenry in any locality participates vigorously and wholeheartedly in local affairs and devote[s] time to the improvement of the municipality where they live, they not only make a great contribution to better community living and community pride but to return to the principle of self-government and home rule which has been the very essence of the American concept and which is in truth and in fact the rock of freedom.”

[Remarks, Award Ceremony of the National Municipal League and *Look Magazine*, February 5, 1954, 3, Remarks and Releases]

On the purpose of governing: “We’ve got to keep the people on the beam with respect to what, I think, is the basic concept of government: that it be constitutional, that it be sound, that it be solvent, that it be secure, that it be efficient—not wasteful—and that it be not too deeply intrusive.”

[*U.S. News and World Report*, May 3, 1965, Clippings, f. 363]

“Is there a greater purpose for government than to promote, to insure and to safeguard the contentment, the happiness, the tranquility of mind and soul of the people? It is the quality which makes life worth living and if government fails in this objective all the material prosperity which it can cultivate and promote will be a rather cold, lifeless and uninspiring thing.”

[Dirksen to Francis Spence, May 3, 1965, Remarks and Releases. Model Statements. Constitution]

Asked when the new Nixon administration was going to give Congress something to do, Dirksen replied: “The country ought to be grateful. We haven’t done anything to it yet.”

[*Washington Star*, March 9, 1969, Clippings, f. 635]

Dirksen likened free government to “an old waterlogged scow. It doesn’t move very fast, it doesn’t move very far at one time, but it never sinks.”

[Anne Culler Penney, “The Golden Voice of the Senate,” *GRIT* Family Section, June 1, 1969, Clippings, f. 648]

Health

In his personal letters, 1937-42, Dirksen often commented on his stomach troubles. The following is illustrative: “It is hot today. It is frightfully hot but I feel pretty swell. You know all about my bowels being irregular from time to time so I got some of the psyllium seed which is recommended by the Battle Creek experts for constipation. I have used it for a couple of days and it seems to have chased all sorts of poisons out of me. I can truthfully say that my head was clearer and brighter when I arose this morning than for a year or more. Moreover, the energy quotient has been rather high all day. All of which proves that most of our troubles result from sluggish elimination.”

[Personal Letters, August 5, 1937]

“Had a headache or two the last few days and wondered whether it was a hangover from the Lexican [?] trip. Could’nt have been anything else that I know of because I’ve been really busy in cultivating health and vigor by long walks, gym work, early retirement, temperate eating and drinking etc. In any event, it will wear off I’m sure.”

[Personal Letters, December 1938]

“Still have that head congestion. Acting on a tip from Rep. O’Malley ... I kept the window tight shut last night. A very good local doctor informed him that nose drops, argerol, and all that tommyrot will bring no relief from head colds and mucuous-y sinuses down here. Best and most efficacious thing according to him is to get one’s fresh air in the daytime and keep the damp night air out. So I shall follow that advice. Have turned off the radiator and will sleep in a cool room with closed windows. That’s an awful come down for me.”

[Personal Letters, December 17, 1938]

“With the many visitors who are coming, this will be a busy week. I shall feel equal to it because my condition is improving. The vitamins have done a world of good and I’ve already developed a certain regularity of habit in taking them. You must also. For one thing, there [sic] have done wonders in developing a regularity of bowel action. That’s always been one of my difficulties.”

[Personal Letters, May 10, 1942]

On his diet [he lost 40 pounds]: “There’s another ingredient in this program. It’s called compensation. Was there ever a diet that could completely resist the tempting things which are served at dinners, luncheons, and parties? Contemplate a tasty olive, a mouth-watering chunk of chocolate cake, a succulent chop or an inviting mountain

of banana pie. Well, that's where compensation comes in. Go right ahead. Founder on chocolate pie. But compensate by kicking an equivalent number of calories off the list."

["Slimmed Down Dirksen," *Peoria Journal Star*, January 4, 1958, Clippings, f. 126]

In 1966, after suffering bouts of ill health: "I guess I've got everything any 70-year-old-man has, except floating kidney and housemaid's knee, but y'know, it was Teddy Roosevelt who said most of the world's work is done by men who don't feel well."

[Quoted in "Everett McKinley Dirksen: A Mighty Minority of One," *Look*, July 26, 1966, Clippings, f. 432]

Comment on reaching 72 1968: "What do you do about the advancing years? You keep in shape and prepare to take on these young ones and throw them to the mat. I'm in good shape and I'm ready."

[*Chicago Daily News*, January 5, 1968, Clippings, f. 555]

Lyndon Baines Johnson

On August 27, 1959, Dirksen saluted the majority leader on his birthday. After praising Johnson's skills, Dirksen said: "I hope my remarks will at no time, nowhere, be interpreted as meaning there is an undue restraint on the minority leader in those moments when he takes exception to the viewpoint of the majority leader on matters of policy. I want to keep that great, big, unembroidered club handy at all times, so when occasion demands I can use it to assail the majority leader with fine restraints but with vigor, in the interest of the country."

[*Congressional Record*, August 27, 1959, 17122]

"My relations with the Majority Leader have always been pleasant and very felicitous. It is sometimes forgotten that we have known each other rather intimately for 27 years or more and we realize that the leadership of the Senate sort of recognizes that it is a two-way street, for otherwise the Senate would be in a state of deadlock and stalemate most of the time. And so we get along, even though we disagree."

[ABC's "Open Hearing," August 14, 1960, 21, Remarks and Releases]

Replying to the question, "Did you work in harmony with Johnson?": "With the greatest of harmony, and out of a recognition, I think, that the Senate is a two-way street, and if the leaders do not get along, then very easily, through dilatory motions and otherwise, it could be rendered into a shambles and you wouldn't get anything done. I could take a half a dozen or a dozen people on our side, if we set ourselves to it, and conduct a filibuster and just withhold action on legislation week after week, but every Senator is a patriot, he is devoted to the well-being of his country, and in consequence the Senate program has to move along. You can't afford to have it stalemated at some place. And so the leaders have got to understand each other, even though we did disagree sharply on many things, but in the best of grace."

[CBS Television, "Washington Conversation," March 5, 1961, 15, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen to Neil MacNeil, *Time Magazine's* congressional correspondent: "Lyndon proceeded on the sound theory that the Senate is a two-way street and that if the Senate did not get along, the Senate would be quickly reduced to a shambles."

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil. Reports. September 4, 1962]

Excerpts from a letter to Mr. Richard Okamoto on Dirksen's relationship with Johnson, April 3, 1964:

[After recounting his early days with LBJ]

We were both agreed that the Senate could not be a functioning body unless the ladies got along and understood each other and each other's problems. In consequence we did visit many times a day with respect to Senate schedules plus legislation and the usual grist that is a part of the Senate operation.

I believe out of our long and close association we came to understand each other quite intimately and it must be said that on major issues where controversy was involved he was fully up to every responsibility as a Majority Leader in carrying the flag for his party.

I believe it can be said that he constantly kept in mind his responsibility as a senator of the United States as well as a senator from Texas, and in that spirit he sought always to cooperate with a Republican president whenever he could consonant, of course, with his convictions and the principles of his party as they might affect matters of broad policy involving the well-being of the country.

I might add one other thought. There were times when we differed very sharply on legislation or policy and we expressed ourselves on the Floor of the Senate with vigor and conviction. This, however, in no wise [sic] diminished our long standing friendship nor has it until this good hour. I know of no reason why regardless of our differences of opinion and of the fact that we belong to opposite parties that we shall not continue always as the very best of friends.

[Dirksen (dictated to Glee Gomien) to Okamoto, April 3, 1964, Alpha 1964, Johnson]

“The Senate is a two-way street, that is one thing we are always agreed on. A Minority Leader with some backing could just truss up the Senate any old time with a filibuster or anything else and stop it in its tracks and the Majority Leader could do likewise. And so we agreed that we had to work together because the overriding interest was the well being and the welfare of the Republic, the United States of America. It was on that ground we used to battle it out and believe me we have had some hot and tempestuous times in his office and in mine but never at any time did either of us lose sight of the fact that the objective was the country and its people.”
[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 10, Remarks and Releases]

Excerpts from an interview with four *Chicago Daily News* reporters:

When I was privileged to occupy the minority leader's chair, that made it necessary for us to cooperate, in the interest of the country, so that the Senate could turn in a useful and productive piece of work. Now we always went on the theory that the leaders had to cooperate unless you wanted to convert the Senate into a shambles. All, of course, of no

benefit to the country. We could always fight, hard and clean, but always make the Senate operate.

Now that developed a rather interesting intimacy with the President because you can't pick a man's mind day after day without knowing what makes him tick. He knows my weaknesses and shortcomings and certainly I know his. Out of it there ripened a very durable friendship that has continued from that day to this. Even though I sometimes say things that hurt him, maybe he winces a little bit, but when I say it, it will be in the interests of the country. . . .

Those are no love taps he dishes out to me either on occasion, as you well know. But that's the great art of legislating and not letting the sun set on your anger and always keeping yourself in a poised position for the benefit of the country.

[*Congressional Record*, April 21, 1965, 8205, Remarks and Releases]

Speaking of the Johnson treatment, what Dirksen called "the Texas twist":

Well, I'm afraid the press jumps on an expression, gives it currency, and magnifies it out of all proportion. I think I first invented that phrase, "the Texas twist." Well, there's no treatment about it, goodness knows. Because it's administered without ether. . . .

I have had on occasion for Members on his side to change their votes when actually they were voting in my corner and then come over very apologetically to tell me what happened. I know what happened. So that's really not a treatment; that's just a little verbal twist to say, "You'd better get right with the gods that be or difficult things can happen to you."

That's the rougher side of political life. There are several ways of going about it. You can threaten, cajole, or you can use the oil can. From the standpoint of the abrasive effect of either of these approaches, I prefer the oil can.

[*Congressional Record*, April 21, 1965, 8205, Remarks and Releases]

"I am never unequivocally in anybody's corner. When I think the President is right, then I am in his corner. When I think he is wrong, I tell him so and I tell him in language I am sure he understands. . . . Because we learned a sort of common language when we were leaders together in the Senate and we could talk to each other freely at his office or in mine, and you could throw in a few expletives, you could throw the punctuation series out of the window and use an emphasis that doesn't always sound good in public. But when we got through we knew where we stood."

[CBS's *Face the Nation*, September 19, 1965, 14, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen on his relationship with Johnson: “We understood each other perfectly. He understood me when I was testy, and I understood him when he threw it back at me. We agreed that in the Senate we had one responsibility—we had to make the Senate a working body. We could lay it on the line to each other, but we never lost sight of our larger goal.”

[“Dirksen at 70 . . .,” January 4, 1966, Clippings, f. 377]

Dirksen successfully quashing an investigation into Johnson’s appointment of the husband of one of the president’s secretaries to the Subversive Activities Control Board: “Love is one of those great all-consuming powers that knows no rules, no evidence; nothing. Love goes in where angels would not even be found . . . I believe in quiet weddings. I do not believe in probing into them.”

[*Wall Street Journal*, October 9, 1967, Clippings, f 534]

On returning to the Senate after a brief illness in 1967 during which Republicans lost three key votes: “Perhaps you can imagine my bedridden amazement, my pajama-ruffled consternation, yes, my pill-laden astonishment this week to learn that three Republican-sponsored proposals had been defeated by very narrow margins, victims of that new White House telephonic half-Nelson known as the Texas twist. To those of you on the Democratic side of the aisle who are still rubbing your bruised arms, I can only extend my sympathy and hope that you who must face the electorate this fall won’t need them.”

[“Words of the Wizard,” September 1969, Clippings, f. 656]

NOTE: According to the *Congressional Record*, Dirksen expressed these remarks in a letter read to the Senate while Dirksen was hospitalized on February 7, 1964

[*Congressional Record*, February 7, 1964, 2378]

On the pitfalls of his relationship with Johnson:

Question: “Senator, there may be some Republicans who believe because of your friendship with President Johnson you might not be terribly anxious to see him defeated next year.”

Dirksen: “I want a Republican victory from the top to the bottom. But frankly, I am glad you raised that question, for a very simple reason. I have been here for a third of a century. I have known the President man and boy, so to speak. Do you drop a friendship? The fact he is a Democrat, I am a Republican, does that mean I have got to take a knife and suddenly cut that friendship, that acquaintanceship in two? I think I should feel honored, I think my party should feel honored, I think my people in particular out home should be honored, that the President seeks my advice. Is there any other answer that you can give? You would be surprised how vehemently and testily I disagree with him from time to time.”

[*ABC’s Issues and Answers*, February 4, 1968, 16-17, Remarks and Releases]

William White interview with Dirksen, May 8, 1968, transcript at Johnson Library:

Now, when two leaders sit opposite each other and each has responsibilities for legislation and the conduct of the operation of the Senate, there has to be some kind of code, a working formula. I used to sit in my office and he used to come over here and sit in my office.

We started from this general premise: the Senate is a public institution; it must work; it's a two-way street; and that requires the efforts of both parties. One party cannot do it on its own because if the opposition, or minority party, wanted to be completely obstructionist you could tie up the Senate in a minute, even with a handful of people. So we fully understood each other, that that's the way it had to be. And that's the reason I got along exceptionally well with Senator Johnson.

[Collection 5, Dirksen Oral History Interview Transcripts]

Leadership

“All I know,” Dirksen said about his talent in rounding up votes, “Is that arithmetic is the greatest of the sciences. Here you add and subtract. I try to count and count hard.”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

“Votes don’t flutter down like handbills from an airplane. They don’t shake off a tree. Effort still counts around here.”

“It is not length but the worth of one’s days which matters. It is the impress of character and leadership on one’s own generation which matters. It is the legacy which one leaves to the future which matters. It is what a leader together with his associates does with the vast hoard which comes down from the past and in what form it is transmitted to the next generation which matters.”

[“The Worth of One’s Days,” National Federation of Republican Women, September 6, 1956, Remarks and Releases]

During debate on a bill that would limit the president’s foreign policy authority: “The distinguished Senator from Minnesota [Mr. Humphrey] has observed that there is no leadership today. That reminds me of the father who filled out a questionnaire and the necessary blanks to send his daughter to Wellesley. At one place in the blank was the question: ‘Is she a leader?’ The father puzzled over the question for quite a while. Finally he wrote: ‘She is not particularly a leader, but she is a good follower.’ When the class to which the daughter had been admitted was about to be graduated, an official of the college wrote to the father, ‘We are delighted with her. In a class of 200, we have 199 leaders and 1 follower. We are very happy.’ I think what is needed today is a little followship rather than captious criticism about leadership...”

[*Congressional Record*, June 17, 1958, 11455; another variation at *Congressional Record*, August 30, 1957, 16648]

When asked if Republicans who voted against the party’s position would be punished: “I do not quarrel with the motivation of any Senator because they share prerogatives and privileges and rights that are equal to my own and in proportion, as they never question my motivation, I don’t believe I should question theirs. Now I should add one thing to round that out, and that is this: You hear about resolutions, you know, of censure or criticism for departing from what they thought was the Party stance. Well I have encountered that before too but I have mentioned so often, even on some of these programs, that the Republican umbrella is a pretty large umbrella

for all shades of opinion and I have had no occasion to retreat from that position and therefore I do not quarrel when they depart from a majority position.

[CBS *Face the Nation*, June 21, 1959, 18, Remarks and Releases]

After describing the lengthy deliberations of the conference committee on a labor-management reform bill in 1959, Dirksen said this of his contribution to the process: “If I have to say anything about myself, I must say that I am afraid my principal duty in the conference was to try, when it seemed that frictions might explode into flame, to make judicious use of an oilcan whenever I could. I find that, on occasion, that serves a useful purpose, too.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 2, 1959, 17728]

“I wish to assure the President of the United States ... that I shall always cooperate, because the interest of the country comes first. But if, in my considered judgment, and as a matter of conviction, the President of the United States goes down the wrong road, I will reach out, with what force and vigor I have, and will seek to clutch him and pull him back to the crossroad and put him on the right road; and if he persists in error, I have no responsibility to go down the wrong road. I shall certainly fulfill my every responsibility by trying to warn him, by trying to help him, and by saying, ‘Mr. President, you are on the wrong road in the interest of this Republic. Come back before despair and destruction overtake you, and do not ask us to go down that road toward destruction with you,’ if we have a conviction on that point.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 31, 1961, 1556]

When asked, “Senator, do you actually try to influence your Republican Senators on roll calls?”: “Well, let me first say I do not carry it to an offensive degree. There are times when a roll is close, and when the issue involved is not so sharp but what a Member could very well vote one way or the other. I do not get conscience stricken then if I ask whether it would be possible for him to change his vote. But I try to be quite circumspect about it and never offensive.” Later when asked if he would remind a senator of a favor Dirksen performed in order to get his vote: “I wouldn’t trade on the fact that perhaps at some time I had gone into a Senator’s state to make a meeting in his behalf, or had campaigned for him; because that would be a pretty selfish ground on which to place it.”

[CBS Television, “Washington Conversation,” March 5, 1961, 13]

When asked to contrast his leadership with Johnson’s:

I must not comment on his technique, but with respect to my own, I try to be courteous and pleasant about it, because, after all, if it is a matter of conviction with a Senator, then you have no right, I think, to press him, even for your partisan advantage that may be involved. And if I were to do it, I am pretty sure that they might tell me off.

Mr. Niven: You mean you wouldn't remind a Senator of a favor you did him in his home district two years ago, if you needed his support in a tight roll call?

Dirksen: Paul, that is the last thing that I would do, because I'm afraid that might be taking advantage.

Mr. Niven: You mean it's the last thing you would do in order of things you would do, or that you wouldn't do it?

Dirksen: I just wouldn't do it.

Mr. Niven: Wouldn't do it.

Dirksen: I wouldn't trade on the fact that perhaps at some time I had gone into a Senator's state to make a meeting in his behalf, or had campaigned for him; because that would be a pretty selfish ground on which to place it.

[CBS Television, "Washington Conversation," March 5, 1961, 14-15, Remarks and Releases]

"I consider myself a conservative, probably not as conservative as some, not as moderately liberal or liberally moderate as others. You see after all a Party leader has a job. There are viewpoints over here and viewpoints over there, but I think your first responsibility is to develop a degree of unity and cohesion in your party as best you can to make a good militant phalanx, and that I tried to do in the first two years of my leadership, and I am trying to do it again, insofar as I can. So you have to find areas of agreement. Now, not all will agree on everything that goes into a package that you can call a Republican program. You are apt to maximize it if you can."

[CBS Television, "Washington Conversation," March 5, 1961, 22-23, Remarks and Releases]

"It's not a secret that all Republicans do not look through the same pair of specs; there are differences of opinion on nearly every piece of major legislation that comes along. And that is nothing more than eloquent testimony, I think, to the size of the Republican umbrella. It admits of all shades of opinion, and frankly when you stop to think of the genesis of the Party made up of five or six different parties back in 1856 who coalesced and followed a single basic principle at that time while they preserved for themselves different opinions in other fields. And so we put no straight jacket on anybody. He's free to express himself; free to vote as his conscience dictates; and I think that that has been in the best tradition of the Republican Party."

[Republican Leaders' Press Conference, April 13, 1961, 12, Republican Congressional Leadership File]

During debate on aid to education bill: "The Senator from Texas [Blakley] knows that I have walked over to his side of the aisle, where there are 65 New Frontiersmen. I have only 34 troops on the other side. It has to be a pretty redoubtable commander who will start for a hilltop when he is outnumbered two to one. So I am here in a position of entreaty and supplication. ... My difficulty is that the only ammunition I

have is words. So often my feeble eloquence falls on sterile ground here on the New Frontier. It takes votes to get something done.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 17, 1961, 8206]

In complimenting Senate Majority Leader Mansfield (D-MT) on his leadership in general, and in particular on the commercial satellite bill: “He has made an effort to harmonize 100 diverse personalities in the U.S. Senate. O great God, what an amazing and dissonant 100 personalities there are—from the orchards of Oregon and Washington, from the cotton fields of Mississippi, from the cranberry bogs of Massachusetts, from the rockbound coasts of Maine, and from the cornfields of Illinois. What an amazing thing it is somehow to harmonize them. What a job it is.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 31, 1962, 15176]

“The course to pursue is the course of gentle persuasion.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

“The longer one is identified with public life, especially at the national level, the more one is persuaded, as an ancient philosopher said, that politics is the art of the possible. In any parliamentary body, you deal with many individuals who embrace different philosophies and represent different local interests. It would be strange indeed if members did not give attention to those items which meant the wellbeing and prosperity of their state and districts. So, in compounding legislation on the national field, there must be give and take. Nothing is ever black or white. If it were not for the adjustments made, it’s doubtful that the legislative machinery could ever operate smoothly and effectively.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

“When you assume leadership, you have to become decisive, whether you like it or not. Decisions have to be made every day. You can’t dawdle. The pace is fast. Life is a matter of development or decay. You either grow or you retrogress. There’s no standing still. You go backward or forward. The challenge will make you grow, if you are willing to assert a leadership and look on the challenge as something to be met and disposed of.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

Responding to a colleague’s criticism of congressional inaction and suggesting that the leaders should whip their members into line: “A good many years ago, a friend thought I should have a badge of office. So he and some of his friends scoured all of Georgetown stores, and found this whip. Someone curled it up and sent it to me, and it is in my office. But I have never used it; it does not become me. I prefer to find refuge in the couplets of Tennyson in which he refers to kindness as a weapon.”

[*Congressional Record*, November 22, 1963, 22683]

On Mike Mansfield:

Our working arrangements are excellent. Mike Mansfield is by all odds one of the most agreeable, amiable people to work with, that it

has been my pleasure to be associated with in the Senate chamber. He has a flexibility that is not a lack of firmness. He readily sees all sides of the picture and he can easily decide, as a result what to do.

There has never been a time with a divisive spirit in the Senate that Mike could not come in that door and put all his cards on the table. "All right," he'll say, "leadership is a two-way street—what do you think we should do?"

Mansfield has humility in the deepest sense of the word. There's no reaching for grandeur, no reaching for headlines. He is a patriot to the core. His whole public life is devoted to that which he thinks is for the benefit of the United States.

He is accessible at all times to everybody, to the humblest and the highest. Mike is like that. And those are the great Christian attributes of this fellow.

[Collection 156, Neil McNeill Papers. Reports, February 24, 1964]

Replying to critics who called Mike Mansfield's leadership soft: "Leadership can be of many types. A bold type that rides roughshod over everybody. That's a capricious leadership, one done regardless of cost. It's the leadership of Napoleon, who once told a General: 'I'll have plenty of time to listen to how you won, none to how you lost.'" And there's the leadership of Ghandi. He achieved independence for his country. His is worshipped in India. Ghandi was the essence of humility."

[Collection 156, Neil McNeill Papers. Reports, February 24, 1964]

Mansfield on Dirksen's leadership style:

You need his cooperation and collaboration, and he has always been willing to give it, sometimes under difficult circumstances. He's understanding of my problems and I try to be understanding of his. In my opinion, I couldn't have a better man as leader on that side of the aisle. We have an understanding that neither of us is caught flatfooted by the other. There's a fair exchange, scrupulously honored. If we can't work together, the Senate can't work.

[Mansfield to Neil MacNeil, interview, n.d., in Collection 156, MacNeil Papers, Notes, Mansfield]

"Well, you get more votes with an oil can than with a baseball bat."

[Quoted in "Dirksen Seeks GOP Unity," *Chicago Daily News*, June 25, 1964, Clippings File; Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

"Well, the role of the Republican Party, or any minority party for that matter, would be one of constructive opposition, not blind opposition, and by 'constructive opposition' I mean you accept the things that are good for the country, you try to amend or modify proposals that in your judgment and in the judgment of the Party are

not good and if they contain more of evil, shall I say, than of good, then you reject them. But always you try to follow a constructive line.”

[*Meet the Press*, January 24, 1965, Remarks and Releases]

In responding to the question, “How do you get men to work together?”: “If you have a common objective it is the starting point of course. There may be a dozen roads to get there. Some of them tortuous, some not satisfactory, some of them difficult, some of them over high ground—where lies the best road with the fewest barriers or obstacles on it? Well, it takes some doing of course to finally work around until you get onto that road and that does require patience and you do have to hear the other fellow’s case. He may not agree with you at all but, little by little, whatever difficulties are in the way begin to yield and before you know it you are at the end of the road and it looks as if it has been consummated by a rather satisfactory joining. And you say, all right, that’s the route to get there, that’s the route back and that is the route up there again.”

[*WMAL’s Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 7, Remarks and Releases]

In an interview, Dirksen was asked to describe the Johnson treatment: “That’s the rougher side of political life. There are several ways of going about it. You can threaten, or you can use an oil can. From the standpoint of the abrasive effect of either of these approaches, I prefer the oil can.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 21, 1965, 8205]

On a Sunday while the Dirksens were entertaining guests, their washing machine sprung a leak. When Dirksen attempted to fix it, the leak worsened. The senator went to a phone and spent a half an hour persuading a very reluctant repairman to come. “Why,” asked a guest, “didn’t you just tell him to snap to?” Dirksen replied: “I didn’t just want him *here*. I wanted him to come in a good frame of mind, prepared to do an excellent job. The oil can is mightier than the sword!”

[“We Hear You, Ev!” *Chicago Daily News*, May 13, 1965, Clippings, f. 500]

Dirksen describing the oil can approach: “You argue politely, amiably, and with the utmost good nature. It requires a lot of patience. You can’t violently disagree, and maybe you won’t succeed. Well, the next day is another day, and there’s the next day and the next day. You stay at it everlastingly.”

[“Dirksen and the Senate,” *St. Petersburg Times*, June 27, 1965, Clippings, f. 364; *Congressional Record*, July 15, 1965, 16996]

When asked how his leadership differed from Johnson’s: “Well, he has a slightly imperious quality. With him everything had to be done right now. I think you have to take time with these things. If you try to hurry them in a judgment you won’t succeed.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 15, 1965, 16996]

“I play for keeps. I use whatever weapons are in the rule book.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 22, 1965, in Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Dirksen on his leadership style: “You have a helluva time with some of these guys. Sometimes you want to kill ‘em, but you’ve got to stuff your pride. You can coax, you can entreat, you can supplicate, you can argue, but you can never *drive*.”

[Quoted in “Everett McKinley Dirksen: A Mighty Minority of One,” *Look*, July 26, 1966, Clippings, f. 432]

On leading his party: “You have to have the charm of Barrymore and the wisdom of Solomon to keep this party together. I’ve got to talk some of these people into making sacrifices. I don’t suppose there’s anyone else who can make them sit down at the table together and try to work something out. I’m not sure I can myself. But I’m trying.”

[Quoted in “Honk, Honk, The Marigold,” *Esquire*, October 1966, Clippings, f. 448]

Dirksen explaining the oil can approach: “The oil can is mightier than the sword. I pour oil on the legislative wheels and they go round. The lubricant’s ingredients are good nature, persistence and inexhaustible amounts of patience.”

[*Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 18, 1966, Clippings, f. 463]

Once, recalling a moment during debate, Dirksen revealed what may be the mainspring of his rhetorical soul: “I was able to bring a blush to my face, the blush of rage, as I brandished my clenched fist and thrust my face within six inches of another senator. Then I was able to relax instantly and smile to show it was all a sham. My colleagues seemed to think it was the funniest thing they had ever seen—I looked around and they were all near death from apoplectic laughter.”

[William Leavitt, “Everett McKinley Dirksen: Grand Old Voice of the Senate,” *Topic*, October 1967, Clippings, f. 532]

In complaining about press accounts that Dirksen had changed his mind on civil rights, thereby “fracturing” his relationship with Senator Roman Hruska (R-NE), his best friend in the Senate: “It would take nothing short of an engulfing tidal wave, the eruption of Vesuvius, and four or five conflagrations to ever fracture that friendship. It would probably take more than that, because, of all things, I fully recognize the right to every Senator to cherish a conviction and express a view that he thinks is right. I am sure every Senator accords me the same privilege.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 11, 1968, Remarks and Releases]

“There are times when the middle of the road is the proper course to pursue and especially so in view of the extreme thinking with which one must contend both left and right. I am afraid some of my friends forget that my job as party leader is to bring about a maximum of agreement between the extremes in the party. Has it ever occurred to you how far apart Senator Goldwater on the one hand and Senator Javits on the other really are, yet both are voting Republican in the Senate.”

[Dirksen letter to unnamed constituent cited in Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 66-67]

Legacy

Dirksen responding to a question about how few bills Congress passed: “As a matter of fact, I think instead of meriting criticism, it should merit commendation. The reason is that I always felt there was a good deal in what Thomas Henry Buckle had to say that “Human progress is made by not so much what goes on the statute books as by what comes off.”

[Transcript of a conference with the *Chicago Defender*, June 1951, 8, Remarks and Releases]

After noting that most people measure Congress’s success by the bills it passes and after quoting Gibbon: “More often than not it is the things that never get on the statute books and it is the things that we can take off the statute books that somehow release and remove the fetters upon the incentive and vitality and ingenuity and talent of the people, which somehow gives expression to the soul of freedom, which finally results in progress.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 14484]

An imaginary talk with his grandson, Darek Baker: “Junior, 13 years from now you will be old enough to wear a uniform, like your grandpappy and pappy and, Junior, you are going to be one of the trustees of America when you grow up. Now then, your grandfather cannot give you a great estate out of public service but then there is one thing, Junior, that your grandfather can do and may the Lord never forgive him if he fails, and that is to make sure that when you get old enough, God willing, you won’t have to wear a uniform but that your grandfather will have done his best to preserve the great, sweet, moral climate of freedom in which you shall become a trustee of America and that the constrictive and restrictive hand of government will not lay too heavily upon your life and on your comings and goings.”

[Remarks, American Petroleum Institute, November 13, 1957, Remarks and Releases]

Grandchildren and immortality: “I myself used to say from many platforms that one tastes immortality when he becomes a grandfather. Nothing else counts, for in a grandchild one sees blood of blood, sinew of sinew and issue of issue. In a grandchild there reposes every hope, every aspiration, every unrequited ambition that a man may ever have had.”

[Clippings, September 18, 1959, f. 171; *Congressional Record*, September 10, 1959, 18925]

“You know, Mr. President, I am the modest and shy type. I do not claim much parentage over legislation. I am afraid if they ever read the RECORD on me back home and say to me, ‘What did you put on the law books?’ the chances are I shall

say, 'I spent most of my time keeping bad legislation off the law books and taking off those books some that already got there.' If anybody ever wants to erect a monument to me, let him do it on that basis, rather than on things inscribed on parchment for which perhaps I would have no pride some years later."

[*Congressional Record*, June 22, 1960, 13752]

In remarks supporting the United Nations bond issue in 1962 and speaking of his grandchildren: "They will be the custodians and trustees of this country when they grow up. I want them to have a country free, solvent, and secure like the one their granddad had. Along with it, I want to vouchsafe to them as a legacy the last best hope of peace. What greater contribution can we make to those who will come after us than to enable them to summon up out of their souls all the talent the Lord gave them in an atmosphere of peace to achieve whatever a free country has to offer."

[*Congressional Record*, April 5, 1962, 6092]

Commenting on colleagues' testimonials to him in 1962: "It brought to mind that if I should promptly respond, it would be within the character of the admonition which one author of the Gospel wrote more than a thousand years ago upon the sacred parchments when he wrote the standard of judgment when one's time comes. In effect he said that it is not our sins of commission but our sins of omission upon which the eternal judgment will be predicated. In thunderous words, the author said: 'You did it not.' That is the basis for the judgment. I want to be sure that I have not left undone those things that a public servant and a member of the human race is called upon to do to fulfill his responsibility. The old Irish poet of long ago, John Donne, said: 'Every man's death diminishes me for I am a part of mankind.' Mr. President, I am of mankind."

[*Congressional Record*, August 23, 1962, 17390]

"I think that at any given time, every individual thinks of the day of his physical dissolution—and a very pointed philosophy has built up in me which is based upon the admonition carried in the Book of Matthew. There the Gospel points out: It's not your sins of commission, but your sins of omission that will be the basis of the final judgment. He says: 'Ye did it not.' You take that to heart a little. You hoped you haven't overlooked too many things and being charitable when that day comes."

[Collection 156, McNeill Papers. Reports, September 4, 1962]

After quoting Edward Gibbon that progress is often made not by what goes on the statute books but what comes off, Dirksen quoted John Garner's advice to Franklin Roosevelt: "Give the cattle a chance to get a little more fat on them before you start cutting off any more." Dirksen: "I think if we give the country a breather and keep some of the proposed legislation from appearing on the statute books, it will be good for our economy and the tranquility of our people."

[*Congressional Record*, July 31, 1963, 13756]

In explaining his support of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty: "I want to take a first step, Mr. President. I am not a young man; I am almost as old as the oldest Member of the

Senate, certainly older than a great many Senators. One of my age thinks about his destiny a little. I should not like to have written on my tombstone, 'He knew what happened at Hiroshima, but he did not take a first step.'

[*Congressional Record*, September 11, 1963, 15915, Remarks and Releases]

Speaking of the 1964 civil rights bill: "I do not wish to save any pockets of prejudice for the future. I have an interest in what happens long after I have left this mundane sphere. I have a couple of grandchildren. I want them to grow up in a country of opportunity as completely free from hate and prejudice and bias as can be consummated by legislation, and a maximum amount of good will on the part of the lawmakers, who will be the ultimate authors of whatever goes on the books."

[*Congressional Record*, April 16, 1964, Remarks and Releases]

"If at a heated meeting sometime someone who does not agree with me should rise and ask, 'In a capsule, what have you contributed? What bills have you introduced? What have you gotten enacted?' I think I would have to say, 'My forte in life as a legislator is not what I got enacted but what I kept from getting enacted because I thought it was not in the interest of the people of this Republic.'"

[*Congressional Record*, January 7, 1965, 402]

"In a feverish and bewildering age, let us quit taking our own history and great tradition for granted. We forget and become a little careless about our legacy. Our forefathers sought to build something as they sensed it and they left it to succeeding generations. ... Tears and every achievement was woven into the tapestry and when you unfold it there is America—our legacy. It is our history. Then a new generation of custodians follows after us, marching up the sunny slope as we march down the shadowy slope into infinity."

[Washington Day Address, Pekin, March 6, 1965, *Peoria Journal Star*, March 7, 1965, Clippings, f. 361]

Dirksen reflecting on his career: "You know I sometimes think in an obverse direction. By that I mean this: I think one of the most incisive writers today is Peter Drucker. Well, it's years ago now that he had a little chunk in the *Saturday Evening Post*. It still sticks in my mind and he said, 'There are occasions when there must be a legislative brake on progress.' And by that he means they are moving forward so fast, and so far at one time, that there is danger unless you set the signals and try to halt it a little bit—not destroy it—but slow it down. I have tried to make that part of my function. Because as Edward Gibbon said in his great history, 'Progress is made, not by what goes on the statute books but more often by what comes off.' So I've tried to think of that in terms of a weapon in the interest of the country. So everybody wants to get stuff on books. They want to have their tag on it. Well, it's all well and good. There's some things I think perhaps ought to get off the books. Maybe my ultimate epitaph will be, 'He tried to help his country by trying to keep them from making mistakes.'"

["Dirksen Confident of GOP Resurgence," *Kansas City Times*, April 22, 1965, Clippings, f. 362]

Dirksen when asked to write his epitaph: “He stood at the portal and killed off a lot of things that might have been detrimental to a free and independent people.”

[“Dirksen Gives Challenge to G.O.P. Workers,” Clippings, May 22, 1965, f. 363]

On speaking to his grandchildren: “They don’t understand a word I say. I think it’s grand that they don’t. But under my breast I say to them, I hope that if your grandpappy can leave any legacy at all it will be first of all, the moral climate of freedom and secondly, a formula to which you will dedicate yourself. Which means you will dedicate your days to the constant, intelligent, undramatic application of life on what is here. And if you do, I need have no further concern as to whether or not you will find that delightful attribute that will attend you all your days and that is, peace of mind.”

[Commencement Address, Hanover College, May 30, 1965, 8, Remarks and Releases]

In speaking on his intention to filibuster repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act: “A thousand times I have said to people in all parts of the country: There is one debt greater than the public debt itself and that is the debt that Everett Dirksen owes to this country and to all that it represents, to the freedoms that are here, because it afforded an opportunity that is well within the grasp of every citizen, young and old, if he will undertake to apply himself to it.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 24, 1966, 967]

When asked his “most important accomplishment, legislative or otherwise” Dirksen responded: “Well, if I had to put it in the large, probably it would be my endeavors to stop legislation that was not in the public interest. Because I have followed the old precept of Gibbon, the great historian, who said, ‘Progress is made not so much by what goes on the statute book but rather by what is kept off and what is not put on.’”

[*Issues and Answers*, July 3, 1966, 10, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

Dirksen on his epitaph: “Here lies Everett McKinley Dirksen--born a man and died a man”

[*Newsweek*, January 27, 1967, Clippings, f. 475]

“A thousand times I have said to people in all parts of the country: ‘There is one debt greater than the public debt itself, and that is the debt that Everett Dirksen owes to this country and to all that it represents.’”

[Dirksen to Lyons, August 5, 1969, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

Legislation

When asked what he thought of a proposal to reform Senate procedures: “Ha, ha, ha, and I might add: ho, ho, ho.”

[Un sourced, undated, Clippings, f. 4b]

Dirksen explained his vote on the “Economy Bill” in 1933, the first controversial vote he made in Congress:

On Saturday we considered the so-called Economy Bill known as House Bill No. 2820. Before it came to a vote I was receiving telegrams both for and against and so I could do nothing other than act according to my lights and my own conscience. When the roll was checked, it had carried by 266 to 138. Of the 138 who opposed the bill, there were 5 Farmer Labor, 42 Republicans and 91 Democrats. Party politics did not enter into the vote. It was everybody for himself. From Illinois, 5 Democrats and 1 Republican opposed it’s [sic] passage. I was the lone Republican. It reminds me of the time when Abraham Lincoln voted against President Polk on the so-called “Spot Resolutions” and was denounced in every newspaper in Illinois.

You will recall however that I have always vowed to myself that I would do that which was right and equitable and that I would not be a rubber stamp. In this instance, they used the gag-rule, would permit no amendments to the bill, had the good and the bad all rolled up in a single measure so you took all or none, and then began to question one’s patriotism and impugn his motives if he failed to support the President in a crisis. Now there is such a thing as supporting the President and there is such a thing as prostrating yourself in the dirt. The vote on this Economy measure look[s] to me like a supine capitulation of Congress and I’m damned if I would take the easy way out, no matter how much hell I might catch for it.

They talk about economy, It’s the bunk. Why not first begin by abolishing a lot of these silly and useless commissions and bureaus that are the roosting grounds for a flock of lame duck Senators and Congressmen at ten and fifteen thousand a year who let a few clerks and secretaries do all the work.

Already there seems to have been tacit approval of a naval building program to include new cruisers that will take 60 million a year for eight years in addition to the regular naval expenditure. Does this look like economy?

Now the organizations who have been wiring me to support the President will soon be wiring me to oppose some of his proposals. Wait until he asks Congress for 500 million to manufacture power at Muscle Shals [sic, Shoals] and put the government in business. This is already on the way. Then they will be urging me to resist. ... Wait until he gives us the substance of the Lafayette Costigan measure for billions to build useless public buildings. They will ask me to resist. Now no one can eat his cake and have it too and so I've concluded that the only thing for me to do is to submit these matters to my own sense of discretion and principle and let the devil take the hindmost.

[Dirksen to Ralph Warren, March 13, 1933, Scrapbooks, 1933, f. 1]

Speaking in support of a public works bill in 1933:

We are confronted with brilliant argument in behalf of and brilliant argument in opposition to this measure, and a cursory analysis will develop the fact that the argument in opposition proceeds from the head and the argument in behalf of the bill proceeds from the heart. I think of the millions who are unemployed today. ... These millions of distressed and unemployed are on the heart side of the pending measure.

On the other side we have the cold intellect that is too often concerned with the pure logic of a measure of this kind, or with its constitutionality, or its propriety of form. ... But, Mr. Chairman, the mind is no match with the heart in persuasiveness; constitutionality is no match for compassion. I see nothing else to do except to cast my lot upon the humanitarian side and to vote for this bill, because millions of unemployed feel that there is here a possibility of employment. To them it is a prophecy of hope, a harbinger of glad tidings, a note of cheer.

[*Congressional Record*, May 27, 1933, Scrapbooks, 1933, f. 2]

“We had a considerable day of it debating the Navy Appropriation Bill. The Committee expected to finish by two o'clock but it was about four thirty before we finished. I had a bit of fun today. Finally managed to offer two amendments to the bill, one to limit our navy maneuvers to within 300 miles of our coastline and the other to withdraw our troops from China. Got licked on both but don't care. It represents an affirmative effort to carry out the ideas that have persisted in my mind and the fact that they were turned down by the House is of small moment. It is both

curious and interesting and amusing to watch men vote against such a proposal and later come around and express their interest and state privately that in their judgment it is a good idea and should be done. The human race is a strange breed.”

[Personal Letters, February 26, 1937]

Describing House action on the Roosevelt administration’s relief bill in May 1937: “The mutineers who so heroically assailed the administration last week and were determined to earmark all the relief money for specific purposes finally ate their own vomit and backed down the hill. It reminds me of that old ditty

The noble King of France
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up the hill
And then marched them down again.

[Personal Letters, May 25, 1937]

Arguing for the election of Republicans to the House: “Instances might be multiplied to show how a one-sided Congress produces imperfect and one-sided legislation that is not in the best interest of the country. But more than that, when imperfect or ill-considered laws go on the books, they become painful and expensive. They cause friction. They disrupt business. They disturb confidence. They slow up recovery, and they can do and do do permanent harm to our nation.”

[WMBD radio address, October 21, 1938, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen expressed despair over the following language in a 1940 tax bill: “If during the taxable year there has been a short-term capital gain with respect to an inadmissible asset, then so much of the amount attributable to such inadmissible asset under subsection (b) as bears the same ratio thereto as such gain bears to the sum of such gain plus the dividends and interest on such asset for such year, shall, for the purpose of determining the ratio of inadmissible assets to the total of admissible and inadmissible assets and subtracted from the total of inadmissible assets.”

[Source: “The Congressional Front,” October 26, 1940, Remarks and Releases]

“It’s gotten to the point where a senator needs a pair of roller skates to take care of even a minimum of his work.”

[“10,625 Bills Swamp Congress,” *Nation’s Business*, December 1955, Dirksen Information file, f. Articles]

“So long as the foremost slogan in America is ‘There should be a law,’ you know full well there will be one.”

[“Decalogue,” February 18, 1956, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

Referring to labor-management reform legislation deliberations: “Mr. President, this very body which functions this afternoon is a product of a compromise made more than 170 years ago. I think it points up the fact that the country has gone forward and that results have been achieved by considering legislation as the art of the possible. It is a case of beating out hard truths on the anvil of discussion and controversy.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 25, 1959, 6727]

In a debate on foreign aid appropriations, “It has been said, Mr. President, that this free Government is a good deal like an old water-logged scow, ‘It don’t go very far at one time, and it don’t go very fast, but it never sinks.’”

[*Congressional Record*, July 2, 1959, 12564. See also *Congressional Record*, April 4, 1951, 3272]

“Commas have their place in the scheme of things. Some years ago a comma was omitted from a tariff bill between the words ‘fruit’ and ‘trees.’ That cost the Federal Government a tidy sum in losses, for without that comma the tariff applied to fruit trees, but not to fruit and trees. So it can be seen that commas have a place in the universe.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 22, 1960, 1127]

“Legislation is the art of continuous effort.”

[*Washington Post*, August 10, 1960, Clippings, f. 196]

On the use of tabling motions to kill legislation: “The tabling device when I use it is always good and justified. When someone else uses it, I have to examine it on its merits.”

[*Washington Post*, August 10, 1960, Clippings, f. 196]

In requesting of Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson a shorter Senate session: “Not only are we engaged in work on the Senate floor, but there is a file of correspondence on my desk. I never saw so many people in the Capitol. We cannot arbitrarily brush aside our folks from home, or people who are interested in legislation, and not see them. There comes a time when one must prepare himself on these new enfoldments that face us from one hour to another in the course of a day. I have had my lunch on my desk every day except one day this week, because there was not time for anything else. I think there has to be a little time for our meals, if for no other reason than that we best serve the national interest when the mind is a little more acute and a little more responsive to a body that is not fatigued by long hours.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 12, 1960, 16256]

On his opposition to co-sponsorship of bills: “I should make an apology for sending a bill and suggesting cosponsors, when at the same time I have pending a resolution outlawing the entire business of co-sponsorship. I think it is wicked; I think it is evil; I think it is unjustified; I think it is unwarranted; and if someone will hand me a copy of *Roget’s Thesaurus*, I shall pick about 100 other words to use in emphasizing my belief that cosponsorship of measures in the Senate is wrong; ... However, so far as it now obtains, I may just as well become a part of that inequity and ask for co-sponsorship.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 9, 1961, 358; Unsourced, June 19, 1961, Clippings, f. 217]

When asked to summarize his assessment of the legislative issues facing the country in January 1961: “It is a continuous pattern, government has to go on, and you discover that that [sic] when the durable bases for legislation in every field have been laid, succeeding Congresses come along and add a plaster here and a plaster there. So

when I said that the basic issues are not different from what they were long ago, I think that can be pretty well supported if one only wants to dip into the history.”

[ABC's *Issues and Answers*, January 29, 1961, 23, Remarks and Releases]

Speaking in the context of Senator Wayne Morse's (D-OR) contentious efforts to postpone consideration of the commercial communications satellite bill: “With respect to the observation of the distinguished Senator from Oregon anent the Senator from Oklahoma, there are people who deem themselves infallible half the time and never wrong the other half.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 31, 1962, 15126]

Speaking of the work to produce the drug bill for consideration in 1962: “The old Irish poet of long ago, John Donne, said: ‘Every man's death diminishes me for I am a part of mankind.’ Mr. President, I am of mankind. May that sentiment, that feeling and that impulse never forsake me when I undertake to sit with my senatorial colleagues to contrive difficult and perplexing language that must be constantly referred back to other legislation and other statutes before it ever makes sense, in the hope that we can derive something feasible, workable, and in the interest of the whole country, and in particular the consumer.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 23, 1962, 17390]

In opposing changes to Rule 22: “I do not know that I need to say anything more, except that the Senate has a rule which in an age of haste says to us, ‘Slow me down; I am going too fast.’ We have a Republic because we have not moved too fast. Someone has likened our Nation to an old scow: ‘It don't move very far; it don't move very fast at one time; but it never sinks.’”

[*Congressional Record*, January 31, 1963, 1514]

On the need to preserve Senate rules to prevent a rush to judgment: “You can't toss a bill into a slot machine and expect an act to come out 20 minutes later with a few nickels.”

[*Illinois State Journal*, July 6, 1963, Clippings, f. 325]

In responding to Senator Spessard Holland's (D-FL) suggestion that only committee members speak to a bill: “If one took to heart that statement and accepted the principle that the integrity of the committee system was involved, it would be like saying that every Senator who does not serve upon that particular committee should keep his mouth shut on the floor of the Senate, and have no imagination, no initiative, and no personal conviction with respect to subjects that come to the floor of the Senate. Time and time again, without being a member on any particular committee, I have undertaken in my own right to assail what has come to the floor of the Senate. That is the prerogative of every Senator. The fact that a Senator does not serve on a committee does not mean that he has not done his homework and undertaken to familiarize himself with the equities that may be involved. I hope we never embrace the philosophy that is here advanced by the distinguished Senator from Florida.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 9, 1963, 14696]

In criticizing Senator Wayne Morse (D-OR) and Senator Thomas Dodd (D-CT) for shirking their duty: “Mr. President, I would be the last Senator ever to use the Senate Chamber for a glorified wailing wall. I would be the last Senator ever to express publicly his own ineptitude to discharge his responsibilities. If I am against something, I try to defeat it, and I will raise unshirted hell in order to get it done. When I am for something, I will go the second mile to get it done.”

[*Congressional Record*, November 7, 1963, 21283]

Responding to critics of Congress: “Whenever, through rebuke or castigation or scorn, the parliamentary body of any country is weakened or impaired, at that point the people had better be vigilant, because it is the beginning of the end of free government.”

[*Congressional Record*, December 30, 1963, 25664]

The following exchange took place on March 13, 1964, regarding the legislative program:

Dirksen: Mr. President, I should like to inquire of the majority leader about the program for the remainder of the day and also for tomorrow, uttering along with it my own fond hope that perhaps there may be forgiveness, forbearance, repentance, and all that is necessary to achieve a Saturday holiday. But I know the majority leader has some thoughts on the subject, so, with utmost self-abasement and humility, I present the problem to you.

Mansfield: Mr. President, no one would derive greater enjoyment from listening to the chickadees, nurturing the flowers which are bursting through the earth of Fairfax County, and seeing what the sunshine and the sky look like for a change than the Senator from Montana.

However, unfortunately there is some important business before the Senate or at least, we are trying to reach the stage where we can take up important business, and to devote our abilities to its consideration.

[*Congressional Record*, March 13, 1964, 5242-43]

Dirksen expressing frustration over a filibuster against his reapportionment amendment. The pro-filibuster forces argued, in a ruse, that they had not had sufficient time or hearings to consider Dirksen’s proposal:

Mr. President, I have listened with distress of spirit to the wails and lamentations of my distinguished friend, the Senator from Wisconsin, over the limited time the Dirksen-Mansfield proposal has been before the Senate for discussion. [Dirksen recounts the lengthy time devoted to it and suggested two Court opinions available to understand the proposal]. I suppose that we could make the welkin ring and fairly rock the plaster from the walls of the Senate Chamber, but we shall not throw more light

on the subject than will be obtained from those two opinions. ... It does not make a particle of difference, because those who are opposed to it have freely stated over and over ... that they are going to keep this show going, whether or no. They will not do this for the purpose of adding light, because when we orate to an empty Chamber, day after day, we must confess that perhaps a Senator or two is in the Chamber, but no more, to listen to those words of wisdom.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 8, 1964, 21679]

More on the theme that restraint in law-making is a virtue. After noting that only six to eight percent of laws proposed are passed, Dirksen told an audience, it taxes the people of a democracy to “stand up under the weight of what is ground out in the lawmills of this country. The next time you talk to your congressman, don’t scold him because a bill of his didn’t get through; give him a pat on the back because it didn’t get through.”

[“Dirksen Says Law Must Be Obeyed,” Clippings, May 2, 1965, f. 363]

On beginning to filibuster attempts to repeal Taft-Hartley 14(b) as the Senate neared adjournment: “Senators want to go home. They are battle weary; they are fatigued; they have been loaded down with what we might call the productivity of this session. Of course, when I use the word ‘productivity,’ I am thinking in terms of sheer volume, not necessarily of quality.”

[*Congressional Record*, October 4, 1965, 25897]

During a particularly intense barrage of criticism over the paralyzing nature of the Senate’s “club” system, Dirksen opined: “I am always delighted to think of the Senate as a club, because it seems to me the Senate functions effectively and functions earnestly if we never quite lose the ‘clubby’ spirit. We can become very angry and at times, I suppose, so intolerant of one another, but I remember the almost iridescent line written by the great sales manager of Christianity, the Apostle Paul, who said: ‘Let your forbearance be known in the sight of men.’ Nothing can quite equal that line, because this is an arena in which tolerance and forbearance are so urgently necessary.”

[Quoted in “Honk, Honk, The Marigold,” *Esquire*, October 1966, Clippings, f. 448]

Media

When asked about his press conferences after meeting with President Eisenhower: “In press conferences and on TV and in the White House I used to say in advance [to reporters], ‘Look, if you ask of me something that really occurred, I am going to give you an answer and you may hang my hide to dry.’ And I did that in a press conference up on the Hill, but I felt it deserved a candid and a proper answer and I try to be candid, and if for any reason I had to pull a punch, I left it up to the press and the TV and said, ‘Look, you will get me in trouble, but I will answer you anyway if that is the way you want it.’”

[ABC’s *Issues and Answers*, January 29, 1961, 8-9, Remarks and Releases]

When asked if he were “distressed” about the stance of the Republican Party on civil rights legislation: “Well, now, why should I be distressed? I am NEVER distressed. (Laughter) So I can’t answer your question because I can’t accede to the premise you lay down that I must be distressed, because I am not.”

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, June 27, 1963, 12]

To begin a press conference: “You’re going to be confronted with a new Dirksen. Every time I indulge in a little balderdash or twaddle, it appears in the papers as a major crisis of some sort. I’m going to be insufferably dull. I’m going to be a bore.” The change was caused by Dirksen’s use of “snootrality” to describe the administration’s stance in Middle East. The press distorted this to say Dirksen had broken with administration. “No more wisecracks, no more jokes.”

[“The New Dirksen,” June 13, 1967, Clippings, f. 505]

Another version of the above: “I’ve decided to be a dull, morose bore at these press meetings. It’s the only safe course. You give me no choice. I tell a joke and you convert it into an international incident. I coin a whimsical term and you make it appear that I am at odds with the President. I indulge in some polite banter and you interpret it as a split in the party. I engage in a bit of twaddle and it becomes a crisis. I inject a bit of flapdoodle into our pleasant relationship and I get on the front page. You have become an unsafe breed. From now on, I shall become the consummate bore. I shall be insufferably dull and blasé. I shall turn aside questions with a shrug or a grunt or a profound silence with ‘No comment.’ You have but yourselves to blame.”

[“The Old Pro vs. The Boy Wonder,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1968, Clippings, f. 576]

In responding to criticism from the press: “With regard to the editorial in the *New York Times*, I determined long ago that those who would serve their country and their constituents to the best of their ability cannot afford the luxury of undue sensitivity to attacks of this nature, but must content themselves with the knowledge that Father Time and the history books will be the best and ultimate judge of their motives and ability.”

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 67]

Minority

Writing in March 1933 as Dirksen is about to begin his first term in the House of Representatives as a member of the Republican minority, outnumbered three-to-one:

The belief is still extant that a loyal party man will oppose everything which the other party proposes, right or wrong. This is the doctrine of regularity carried to vicious extreme. I do not believe that such political gospel appeals to the citizenry of this country, particularly at a time when high taxes are eating out the nation's substance, when court dockets are congested with farm and home foreclosures, when millions of unemployed are in a state of moral desperation, when banks continue to evaporate and business is in the doldrums. This is a time for the exemplification of citizenship and Americanism rather than partisanship, else how can we make any hopeful degree of progress out of this economic cataclysm.

[Dirksen, "Mr. Dirksen Goes to Washington," *New Outlook*, March 1933, 26, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

When asked about the attitude of Republicans at the beginning of the Kennedy administration:

If I were to use a single word, I would say a constructive attitude. But that I mean this, the election is over and now it is our responsibility, regardless of the labels we wear, to work in the interest of the country. We shall do so without rancor, without bitterness, and always on the constructive side, being mindful, of course, of what the Republican tradition and the general Republican principle is. I am quite confident that there will be no blind opposition to a program.

Certainly we will be in disagreement in a great many cases on means and methods, probably not so much disagreement on goals and we will undertake to modify as we go along and, if we cannot modify, there will be times when we will have to oppose—but it will be a constructive attitude.

["Washington Reports to the People," AFL-CIO Public Service Program, January 13, 1961, 1, Remarks and Releases]

When told that his constituents considered Dirksen and House Minority Leader Charles A. Halleck (R-IN) “obstructionist” on their “Ev and Charlie Show”: “Well, I would simply say that there is no warrant for that attitude. We have manifested over and over and over again that the opposition party must not follow an obstructionist line or a hostile line. Our business is to think in terms of the well-being of the country. Now, maybe our notions about legislation differ, and we would do it differently and in consequence, you can set that down as obstruction, that is simply from the position you have and the standpoint from which you see this, that you see through a different set of eyes.”

[CBS Television, “Washington Conversation,” March 5, 1961, 20, Remarks and Releases]

After describing opportunities Republicans have had to criticize the Kennedy administration on foreign policy, Dirksen concluded that the minority was owed consultation, but once the decision was made by the president, “the Minority has a duty to support the Chief Executive and to make it manifest to all the world that we do support him and that the nation is united. Could anything be more calamitous to American influence and prestige than to have incandescent headlines appear in Havana or Moscow, in Prague or Peiping, in Leopoldville or East Berlin, proclaiming the fact that one political party or another in the National Legislature was assailing the decision of the President of the United States on a course of action in one of the world’s fever spots? This then is the role of the Minority—to speak and to speak candidly and vigorously before ultimate and far reaching decisions are made, and to support the President of the United States once they have been made. Such a role may not propitiate some in whom partisan ardor is never quite still, but it will have appeal, I believe, to people generally in both parties in every section of the land.”

[Remarks to the National Press Club, May 2, 1961, Remarks and Releases]

“One can stand by his conviction and still not be an obstructionist simply for the sake of obstruction.”

[Dirksen to E.T. Johnson, June 30, 1961, Glee Gomial Collection]

In explaining the purpose of the joint Republican leadership meetings and press conferences: “Charlie [Halleck, House Minority Leader], I think it’s a good time to reaffirm the approach we took when these Joint Leadership meetings got under way. We said at that time we would not be captious in criticism; we felt that we ought to be consulted in advance on matters of high policy; we should have an opportunity to make comment and criticism, and then particularly in the international field, to abide the ultimate decision and the ultimate result. On domestic matters, obviously, we always have our day in court and when measures came to the House and Senate, there we could amend if we were not satisfied with the measures; we could oppose them if we felt they were not in the public interest; or we could accept them if we felt that they were. I thought that was a rather objective approach to our duty and

responsibility and as I look back on this whole series starting early in this session, I think we fulfilled that responsibility and have carefully, in every case, sought to be constructive and objective in our approaches.”

[Republican Leaders’ Press Conference, September 15, 1961, 5]

On minority leadership:

The minority is regarded, of course, as the loyal opposition, so to speak, although really that’s a British term. But, for practical purposes we can use it. However, it does require some refinement, because, standing by itself, it might give the idea that the role of the minority is to oppose and oppose all things.

It should be remembered that the minority has the same stake in the well-being and interests of the whole country as the majority, and in consequence you have to refine the role of the minority so that it will include these things—to support those proposals that the administration might offer if, in our judgment, they are in the interests of the country and if they’re sound.

If they admit of weaknesses it is our job to try to correct and to cure them through the amendatory process, which is the usual way in both Houses of Congress. If, for any reason, we believe that a proposition is not good for the country, that it’s a departure from the American concept, hey then, of course, it is our job to oppose.

[June 1962, Clippings, f. 259]

On the role of the opposition:

What is the role of a loyal opposition? Is it to oppose something that’s right, even though you have a conviction it is right? I do not believe so. Our first allegiance is to the well-being of the country. If the President is right, we couldn’t for a moment justify a position in opposition without having to confess that we want to use this thing for purely political purposes, forgetting about the well-being of the country. Our job is to go along when he’s right, because we’re just as much interested in this country as he is. Lincoln once said that every political proposition is a compound of good and evil, and you have to look and see whether it is the evil or the good that preponderates, and make your decision accordingly. I think that’s true of nearly everything that goes across the Senate floor. If the evil preponderates, our business is to try to stop it, or to knock off the rough corners. It’s not to oppose blindly just for the sake of opposing.

[*U.S. News and World Report*, May 3, 1965, Clippings, f. 363]

On bipartisanship in foreign policy:

Bipartisanship signifies support by the two major parties for such policy aims and means as are required for the security of the nation.

A bipartisan foreign policy imposes obligations both on the majority and the minority parties. For the majority party, it counsels frequent consultations with the minority as policy is formulated and access for the minority to information needed to determine the wisdom of that policy.

On the minority side, it imposes an obligation to avoid carping about trivia. The minority should avoid the hypocrisy of complaining about measures which it would favor if it were in a position of policy maker. No administration should be blamed for events beyond its control.

Members of both parties must weigh all the consequences of public criticism. There is an obligation to demonstrate to both friend and foe that the American people are united in time of danger. There is an obligation to avoid furnishing grist for the propaganda mills of the enemy.

But bipartisan foreign policy has never meant a cessation of debate, or criticism, or suggestion. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, who more than any other public figure in his time personified bipartisanship, said that bipartisan foreign policy ‘simply seeks national security ahead of partisan advantage.’ And then he added immediately, ‘Every foreign policy must be totally debated. . . . And the “loyal opposition” is under special obligation to see that this occurs.’

Debate, then should be encouraged. Only in the crucible of full and candid debate can the nation forge a foreign policy which will lead us to the ends which all Americans seek to attain—namely, peace, and freedom, and security. Only thus can public understanding and acceptance of foreign policy be achieved.

Bipartisanship in foreign policy demands that representatives of both parties give each other a respectful hearing, that both deal in facts, that both discuss genuine issues, that both avoid distortions and misrepresentations.

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, July 15, 1965, 2-3]

When asked if Republicans would support the Johnson administration’s conduct of the war in Vietnam:

The President is not only the Chief Executive of the United States, he is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Our constitutional power is to raise and equip armies and navies, and to provide the necessary funds, because you can't take a dollar out of the Treasury without an appropriation made in pursuance of law. However, I know of nothing in any court decision anywhere that has ever de-limited the power of the Commander-in-Chief. Now so long as we have an opportunity to offer our substitutes, our alternatives, our opinions, our suggestions, and they're thrown around the table, and carefully discussed—when the decision is finally made, what to do in the interests of the unity of this country, because you cannot, and you dare not present a dis-united front to a fevered world, you go along with the Commander-in-Chief.”
[NBC's *Today Show*, January 11, 1966, 5, Remarks and Releases]

“The function of the Minority and the Minority Leadership is to pursue the pledges and policies which it brought to the public in its latest National Platform, undertake to improve legislation which may be sound in principle but ineffective in its operations, seek both in Committee and on the Floor of the House and the Senate to press amendments which will eliminate the weaknesses and if unsuccessful in all this, to oppose legislation. There should be one exception to this general rule, and that is where foreign relations and funds for military purposes are involved.”
[Dirksen to James Schmidt, April 6, 1966, Remarks and Releases. Model Statements. Bipartisanship]

When asked about Democrats running to him to solve their problems:

Question: “Are you the Administration's bailer-outer?”

Dirksen: “No, I am nobody's bailer-outer. Here is the problem. I try to see it in proper perspective, see what is possible, because they say politics is the art of the possible. You can't let a problem sit there when it cries out for action. Somebody's got to do a little thinking about it and weaving around in order to find a satisfactory solution. So I try to come up with it, and I will talk with the Administration as well as with anybody else, if that adds up to a solution.”
[NBC's *Meet the Press*, August 7, 1966, 10, Remarks and Releases]

“It is unwise, it is dangerous and it can be disastrous, when an overwhelming majority is permitted to prevail without question of hindrance. Only as a majority is repeatedly questioned and checked by a strong minority can the foundations of this Republic be preserved. That we, a present minority, would welcome majority status is undeniable,

but until that inevitable day we believe it all-important to the American people that our numbers and our hand be strengthened sufficiently to outlaw forever from Capitol Hill the push-button, the computer, the soulless rubber-stamp.”

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, September 22, 1966, reprinted in “A Record of Press Conference Statements,” October 14, 1966, Remarks and Releases]

Mistakes

Dirksen admitted he made a mistake in referencing a certain bill during a civil rights debate. The following exchange then took place:

Mr. Holland. I am glad the Senator from Illinois admits his error. I hope he will apologize to the Senate for having made that mistake.

Mr. Dirksen. I will confess my sins in public any old time.

Mr. Russell. Mr. President, I refuse to yield for that long a time, at any time. [Laughter].

[*Congressional Record*, February 15, 1960, 2475]

“Let me tell Senators that the one vote in my lifetime that I would undo if I could occurred when, with a hoot and a holler and gusto we rushed through the provision during the Truman administration to put striking railroad workers into the Army within 48 hours if they did not go back to work. If it had not been for Bob Taft in the Senate, that provision might have been put into the law of the land. That is one vote that I would undo. However, I was caught up in the vortex of emotionalism, like everyone else at that time. We were in conflict, and something had to be done. ... That is the only time that happened within my experience as a legislator. Therefore, we had better take a good look at this bill.” [Civil rights bill of 1963]

[*Congressional Record*, March 26, 1964, 6445]

Responding to the question, “Is there any vote you would undo?”: “Just one. That is when I voted for a bill while in the House of Representatives in the Truman Administration to send miners and perhaps railroaders into the Army unless they quit striking and went back to work. That is the bill that Senator Taft stopped in its tracks in the Senate and as I look back I think if I could undo a vote that vote I would undo.”

[*WMAL's Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 11, Remarks and Releases]

When asked his biggest mistake: “The greatest mistake I ever made made” was voting for a bill backed by President Truman to draft striking coal miners. “Thank God for Bob Taft who stopped the bill in its tracks.” Dirksen said he got carried away in the anger of the times. “Beware of the multitude,” he advises.

[April 27, 1966, Clippings, f. 413-414]

Mood

Writing in March 1933 as Dirksen was about to begin his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives:

Our present problems are ethical and moral as well as economic. No one will contend that within this nation we cannot find men with sufficient vision and knowledge to fabricate feasible and practical and constitutional measures for the relief of business, agriculture, banking, transportation and other enterprises. The real problem lies in effecting a subordination of individual and group interest and in ironing out the real and fancied conflict of interests to the point where such measures can be inscribed on the statute books and that problem is ethical rather than economic. The lush days of prosperity seem to have created within us a total incapacity for sacrifice yet how can we reach firm ground without it.

[Dirksen, "Mr. Dirksen Goes to Washington," *New Outlook*, March 1933, 26, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

"Skimming thro [sic] the papers this morning, it occurred to me what a singular world we live in. There is a split in the ranks of labor. Civil War in Spain. Great Britain arming to the teeth. Hitler and LaGuardia calling each other name[s]. The State Department apologizing to Germany. President fighting with Congress and the Supreme Court. And while speculating on this strange panorama of struggle, a few bars of lovely church music came over the radio. And then I think: the world is what we make it. Either a place where we can fight with others or where we can find peace and joy thro [sic] right attitudes. And above all, where we can escape from this constant human friction in abiding love. So here I am, holding off all these disturbing thoughts so easily by finding security in an all embracing love for you and an abiding devotion and love for the Joyly. I ask no more."

[Personal Letters, March 7, 1937]

"The Senate Committee restored a good many of the items knocked out by us in the Agricultural Bill. It's now on the Senate floor and the fight is on. Everything seems to provoke controversy. It's part of the war psychosis. The irksome things, the inconveniences caused by rationing, the drain on man power, the impending taxes, the failure to achieve substantial victories all serve to provoke people as a mass and they must have a whipping boy. One enjoys the spectacle best if he can be introspective and imagine himself as a spectator watching the passing show. ... I find

such comfort in the fact that I have a couple of precious darlings who constitute my world and in proportion as they are happy and content and resolute, so I find faith for the daily battles and controversies. All of which is meant to whisper to you that I love youse kids. By-bee sweet thing.”

[Personal Letters, May 15, 1942]

“Let me say a word about food. I’m just a bit alarmed over what the situation may be next winter and in 1944. I believe we should anticipate a real stringency and plan accordingly. That planning should be done now. I would suggest you assembled [sic] as many fruit jars as you can. I would buy 15 dozen around right now. Later there will be a scramble. I would also look around and quietly buy about 8 or 10 kegs of the 10, 15, or 20 gallon size. Can be gotten now. Later they’ll be gobbled up. Grocers will have them. I’d prepare to fill them with kraut, pickled beans. I’d prepare to put turnips, rutabagos [sic], carrots, potatoes etc in the cellar. A food shortage is a frightful thing and it can be met only by preparation.”

[Personal Letters, March 13, 1943]

“Between race riots in Detroit, the Coal strike, and the acute food situation, we are getting into a beautiful mess. It’s a most unfortunate circumstance. Some of the New Deal’s social theories are coming home to roost. The danger in this race riot business is that it is like a virus which spreads to other areas where a large concentration of colored people reside.”

[Personal Letters, June 22, 1943]

“As we survey this vast agenda of problems in particular relation to the home front, it might be well to take account of that old philosopher Thoreau, who more than 100 years ago remarked that for every person who was hacking at the roots of evil there were 100 hacking at the branches. Much of our bewilderment, as we read of the activities of government, springs from the fact that we have not probed deep enough for causes. Bureaucracy, subversion, conflicting programs, multitudinous reports, burdensome regulations, controls, and many other vexing things are but results rather than causes and we must look deeper to find the solution for our fundamental problems.”

[“Dirksen for President” press release, February 18, 1944, Remarks and Releases; see also radio address reprinted in *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, February 7, 1944, A635, Remarks and Releases]

In writing about the future in December 1945: the key to the future is courage, “for faith in our future, for forbearance, for unity of purpose, for determination that the fruits of victory shall not be lost, for a determination to remain free. These needs are of the spirit. No act of Congress, no directive from a government agency, no proclamation by the President, no ukase or edit from Washington can fulfill that need.”

[“The Congressional Front,” December 22, 1945, Remarks and Releases]

“It is indeed no accident that as faith in and contact with the American dreams and the American tradition becomes dim and slender, so defeatism and escapism multiply. At a time when the world is beset with spurious ideologies and transient creeds which

are inimical to the holy cause of freedom and the divinity of human personality, it is so necessary to rediscover and to reglorify the tradition of which that great common man, Abraham Lincoln, is so large a part. It can be done by reasserting the very virtues and causes whereby this became a great land. ... It is high time to meet the threat of defeatism with a new kind of pageantry which reasserts the glory, the greatness, and the romance of our own past.”

[Address, Annual Republican Lincoln Dinner, Washington, February 5, 1948, reprinted in the *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, February 9, 1948, A773, Remarks and Releases]

“This is the \$64 age. We seem to be suckers for bigness. We seem bored unless things are colossal and astronomical. Whether it be Pyramids of friendship, the gate receipts at football games, the size of a college catalogue, the thrills of a movie, the immensity of a production line, or the federal budget, it must attain huge proportions. Even headaches are bigger. In such an era it is therefore not so astonishing that we should encourage bigness in government where it is measured in terms of debt, personnel, payrolls, spending, or functions. All of these yard sticks of bigness are after all only symbols of the real and dangerous bigness of government.”

[Remarks, Grey Iron Founders Institute, October 27, 1949, Remarks and Releases]

In remarks dealing with the atomic age and the fear that accompanied it and the hope for civilization: “Here then is the core of our fraternal purpose; and what is that purpose? In brief, it is to improve and strengthen the character of the individual man, to expand the belief that wise and good men will act well and wisely, that principles rather than programs will unite men in common causes for good, that personal righteousness and personal responsibility can alone bring bright light, and that the light of understanding will translate man’s conviction into action for the good of all mankind. This then is the only certain and durable answer to the fears and neurotic anxieties of our day.”

[Address, Annual Breakfast of the Masonic Lodges of New York, March 20, 1955, 6, Remarks and Releases]

In commenting on derogatory remarks by Democrats about Vice President Richard Nixon, Dirksen argued that Democrats were betraying an inferiority complex: “Some people manifest that complex by wearing loud neckties. The beatniks satisfy their inferiority complex by going around in dirty underwear, unshaven, reading poetry that no one understands, and carrying on in an amazingly crass fashion.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 25, 1960, 1159]

“What strange doubts assail this timid generation of today as it beholds the challenges to both liberty and equality. We seem beset with fear not faith, with doubt not confidence, with compromise not conviction, with dismay not dedication. We are drenched with the literature of fear and doubt. Survival has become the main theme. The fall-out shelter from which the stars of hope and courage cannot be seen has become the symbol of our fears and misgivings. Are we to become fearful, unworthy legatees in a blessed, united land where the earth is fertile to our every need, where

the skills and ingenuity of men are boundless, where the burdens are bearable, where decent living is within the reach of all, and where the genius to produce is unlimited.”
[Remarks, 98th Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, Gettysburg Battlefield, Remarks and Releases]

“This country is drifting on the high seas of uncertainty and confusion.”
[Quoted in Michael Armine, *This Awesome Challenge* (NY: Putnam, 1964): 164]

Speaking in support of his prayer amendment: “I think in proportion as we examine some of the mischief that is taking place in our country today, we had better conclude that what we are trying to do is reorder our whole social structure with individuals whose hearts have not been changed. So that must be the real goal. That must be the hope of America in the future. How are we going to achieve it? We learned long ago that as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined. That is what prayer means in the schools.”
[“Prayer in Public Schools,” Senate floor remarks, September 19, 1966, Remarks and Releases]

“Old faces go and new faces come, but somehow, like Tennyson’s brook, the free Republic continues on with vitality, vigor and an energized faith, as it moves to newer heights and newer achievements for its people in the great moral climate of freedom.”
[*Gallant Men* jacket cover]

On the mood of the country: “Americans today are a prosperous but unhappy people ... there is frightful turbulence and discontent and bewilderment. ... Not the least confused are those in Washington as they caterwaul and wander aimlessly about.”
[“Tribute to an Earthy Plainsman,” January 16, 1967, Clippings, f. 471]

“So you come to what kind of conclusion, that you’ve got to develop a new mood in this country at the community level because if you’re ever going to deal with crime effectively it’s got to be dealt with in the community and the counties of this nation. You can’t do it from Washington, you can ladle money out of the Treasury but it’s when you command respect for property and life in the community where you live, where you raise your children, where you go to church, where you pay your taxes to go to school, that’s where it’s got to be done.”
[“The Great Awakening,” March 20-26, 1967, Remarks and Releases]

In his session-ending report, Dirksen described the mood of Congress as beset by doubt and dismay before concluding:

It is for this reason that it would seem the time has come for us to rethink our history and to realize once more what has made our America the wonderful place that it is. That history should be given emphasis in every school, every church, every public forum in the land—and in every citizen’s heart and mind. The legacy that is ours came from those who stood so tall before us. Into this land they built their skills and talents, their hopes and dreams, their tears and sacrifices. Today, we are the trustees of America, each and all of us. Upon us, therefore, rests a double obligation. The one is to those who

came before us and gave us this blessed land for our inheritance. The other is to those who shall come after us, that for them and theirs it may ever be a better land for all.

How can we best meet this obligation of ours? Only and always, in Congress and throughout the nation, thorough dedication, discipline, **duty**.

[“Dedication, Discipline, Duty,” The Republican Report, Senate Document No. 113, October 11, 1968, Remarks and Releases]

Oratory

From the Senate Historical Office’s oral history with George Tames, photographer for the *New York Times*, conducted in 1988: “I’ve got others [stories] on him, but the other one I like so much was when he was on the floor and about forty women came it, an elderly group to lobby for Social Security. They sent word in to him, and he came bouncing out with his hair all aflutter, and shaking his head, that mass of white hair. He looked up and down this group and said: ‘Ladies, I was on the floor, defending the Republic against the onslaughts of the opposition, when I was informed that forty lovely girls wished to see me. I immediately removed the armor of the warrior and put on the cloak of the poet. What do you girls wish of me?’ There was dead silence, and then this little voice piped up from the back and said, ‘Nothing senator, we just want to hear you talk!’”

[Collection 183. Senate Oral Histories, f. Tames, George. 1988]

In remarks advocating neutrality before World War II: “What a stake you folks have, particularly the mothers of the land. You have a very personal interest in the matter, because I prophecy to you this night that if there shall be another war in our generation it will be your sons who are going to walk into the battle, your sons and grandsons who are going to walk into the withering fire of machine guns that are mounted behind pill boxes—your flesh, flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood, whose mucous membranes are going to be burned out with chlorine and mustard gas, and who are going to reach out convulsively for breath upon the slime of a battlefield, for breath that as it comes sears like the edge of a razor—your sons and grandsons.”

[Remarks before the 12th Women’s Patriotic Conference on National Defense, January 26, 1937, Remarks and Releases]

Speaking of unfair criticisms of the Washington Board of Trade, which governed the affairs of the District of Columbia: “But all these are like snowflakes on the broad bosom of the Potomac. For the moment, they seem white with transcendent importance and melt away.”

[Release, excerpts from remarks to the Washington Board of Trade, January 4, 1951, Remarks and Releases]

“Let’s be vocal, each in his own community, as God has endowed him with life and with the privileges of American citizenship; and out of that expressiveness, with a sense of tradition, a sense of responsibility, the will to preserve the trust for the beneficiaries that shall come after, and the willingness to make a sacrifice, out of that we will find salvation and be able to transmit, as citizens cognizant of our personal and group responsibility, the greatest trust entrusted to any people at any time or

generation; this blessed moral, free-minded thing called the United States of America.”

[Dirksen, “Your Responsibility in Today’s Emergency,” Address to the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, April 30, 1951, 14-15, Remarks and Releases]

“Mr. President, I have often wondered whether there is any greater, sweeter, gift which the Lord has given to humankind than the gift of remembrance. This would certainly be an impoverished life if we could not remember all the fine and gracious things which somehow nurture life, and which make it so eminently worthwhile, beautiful, and gentle, notwithstanding the severities which develop from time to time. I have often wondered what it would be like if we could not, from deep in the recesses of our memory, call up for reflection some of the wonders of life; for example, a beautiful sunburst in the western sky, a caressing hand on a fevered brow, or the radiance of a beautiful flower. Without such memories this would be a dismal world indeed. So we thank God for having given us the gift of remembrance.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 7, 1958, 16496]

Dirksen equated liberals with eggheads in humorous remarks at the Washington Gridiron dinner, December 6, 1958: “The egghead is here to stay. The poor professional politician cannot compete. In versatility, mental dexterity, adaptability, elan, poise and savor faire he is simply no match. Just as the egg itself can assume such Mephistophelian forms as an omelet, a custard, boiled, fried, scrambled, poached, Benedictine or otherwise, so our ogival domed colleagues will be equal to every political, social, and economic challenge.”

[Notebooks, 54-57]

When asked if there had been a decline in oratory in the Senate: “Well, I sort of disclaim the term. I’d rather say it’s conversation at a high level. But it has become something of an impaired art. I think much of it is due to the fact that we as a people generally have become a little careless and a little slovenly about our speech. You must have known it in conversation. Look how we elide words and phrases, and if you want to find out the difficulty that that causes, just ask somebody who is studying English, and you’ll have them all over the lot wondering what you said when you rapidly and carelessly elide words and phrases, and it gives them difficulty. And so, it does, to a certain extent, impair at the same time our appreciation of careful and precise speech.”

[CBS Television, “Washington Conversation,” March 5, 1961, 4, Remarks and Releases]

Indirectly challenging the authority of his colleagues [particularly Paul Douglas] on a particular subject: “I am intrigued by the industrial wisdom of some people who never met a payroll in their lives. I have looked at a good many balance sheets, as a contractor and as a businessman, and sometimes they have been in the red. Sometimes it makes one a little goggle eyed. I did not get all my business wisdom out of an economics textbook in college. Therefore we can discount some of the wisdom, even though it has the habiliments of omniscience, when it is uttered on the floor of the Senate. Some of the omniscience which is uttered on the floor, under the cold and

calculating scrutiny which is required when looking at this kind of proposal [Area Redevelopment Act], takes on an absolutely different form.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 15, 1961, 4005]

When a colleague said a piece of Senate business had been concluded in under a minute “without the aid of the pri-verbosity of the Senator from Illinois,” Dirksen rose immediately to ask that those words “be taken down. They constitute a personal reflection” and the offender should take his seat under the rules.

[*Congressional Record*, May 17, 1961, 8220. For follow up, see *Congressional Record*, May 18, 1961, 8318]

On why Dirksen did not want imported dates included in the agriculture bill: “Mr. President, unless in his lifetime one has indulged in the delight of sinking a molar into a succulent fig newton, much of life has gotten by him. If he had no opportunity to sink a molar into a succulent cookie filled with dates, he has not come to grips with life and reality, and he has no place on the New Frontier, I am sure.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 26, 1961, 13568; Clippings, January 7, 1962, f. 234]

On a wildlife bill: “Nothing brightens a day so much as to see a mallard with its wings outstretched, a body containing a perfect aeronautic structure, sailing out and moving down. We see him get the little feathers at the edge of his wings properly placed. He brings his feet up and makes a landing that would put any airplane and any pilot to shame. Nature has provided this ability for the mallard.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 28, 1961, 17179; Clippings, January 7, 1962, f. 234]

As the first session of the 87th Congress came to an end:

It has been said that this has been a long session; it only seemed long, I think. Perhaps the reason for that is that probably it is the first universal session of Congress that has been had; and when I say ‘universal,’ I mean it has reached into every corner and nook of the universe.

In that connection, I think of my friend the Senator from Washington [Mr. Magnuson], and his bill on oceanography. I anticipate that in due course, after all the researches are made, the skindivers probably will go 40,000 feet beneath the surface of the ocean, probably in what is called the Mindanao Deep, and there enjoy a vacation; and that is the lowest spot below the surface of the earth.

Similarly, I think of all the provisions we have made for moon shots. We have appropriated funds in order to send a man to the moon. ... And then, of course, I think of the foreign-aid bill, which reaches out to some 91 countries.

In truth and in fact, on this occasion, we could weep with Alexander the Great, as he took the tops off all the minarets in that oriental land

and bewailed the fact that there was no other world to conquer, because we shall reach to the bottom of the deepest deep and we shall send men to the moon, and we shall reach to the most sequestered and cloistered ends of the earth. So, indeed, it can in truth be stated that this is a universal Congress.

[*Congressional Record*, September 26, 1961, 21380]

“The deeper we get into this session,” Dirksen once confessed, “the longer the tip of my tongue gets away from my brain.”

[*Washington Post*, Clippings, January 7, 1962, f. 234]

Sometimes Dirksen did know when to withhold comment: “Mr. President, I had contemplated a rather long, philosophical discourse before the passage of this bill [Food and Agriculture Act of 1962]. However, we have been, as it were, cutting off the dog’s tail a little at a time, so much so that even the dog has almost disappeared. Only about 4 minutes of the dog are left. I shall extend that 4 minutes to my friend, the distinguished senior Senator from Idaho [Mr. Dworshak]. I shall forego any classical discussion of the subject and let the bill go on to its destiny without making a speech.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 25, 1962, 9330]

Remarks as the Senate adjourned in 1962: “The moving finger writes, and the fortuities of politics will probably result in a change of some faces when we return in January ... old faces go and new faces come, but somehow, like Tennyson’s brook, the free Republic continues to go on with vitality, vigor and energized faith, as it moves to newer heights and newer achievements for its people in the moral climate of freedom ... so au reve. We shall see you on the home diamond somewhere; and when it is all over, all the healing waters will somehow close over dissidence, and we shall go forward as a solid phalanx once more.”

[*Time*, “The Ledger,” September 14, 1962. Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

Dirksen upon returning a piccolo, a gift from an admirer: “I doubt whether I could summon sufficient lung power, or make the tongue, the lips, and the entire oral complex properly behave, to become even reasonably adept in piccolo playing. Worse yet would be the chore of going back to refresh myself on reading musical scores when there is scarcely time enough to read the necessary official documents. So, with distress of spirit, I must surrender my piccolo ambitions and suggest that you donate the instrument to some worthy youngster who, like myself in earlier days, was dying to tattle on a piccolo.”

[Press release, September 17, 1964, Remarks and Releases; Associated Press, September 18, 1964, Clippings f. 352]

Dirksen once took 99 words to say, “I don’t know.” The question, on September 25, 1963, was if a civil rights bill would pass that year. Dirksen’s answer: “Well, what’s today? The 25th? That’s almost October. Which reminds me, I’d better start picking my apples. They’re approaching a state of ripeness. So already you’re into November. As you know so well, with November comes Thanksgiving and that takes a big chunk

out of a man's life. Before you know it, we're into December and then the Yuletide begins. It begins coursing through our veins. Downtown they'll be hanging wreaths and soon they'll be singing, 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,' and after that, 'O Little Town of Bethlehem.' Where are we now? Who knows? Who is to say?"

[*Newsweek*, January 23, 1967, 25, Clippings, f. 475]

"I have never felt the necessity of invoking a live quorum in order to get Senators to listen to me. When that day arrives, I shall conclude for myself, in prayerful contemplation, that perhaps what I have to say is not worth listening to."

[*Congressional Record*, November 22, 1963, 22679]

Speaking of Democratic colleagues' eagerness to adjourn for the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City: "Mr. President, I have some solicitude for our brethren on the other side of the aisle. I know in this season of the year, the temperature being what it is there, is the allurements of the boardwalk in Atlantic City; there is the salty tangy breezes coming off the Atlantic; and there are so many diversions and distractions of one kind or another that would drive back the frostline of distress as we labor with many of these academic subjects that I thought perhaps it would be possible for them to get a running start on the inspiration that will come from that great resort area on the Atlantic coast."

[*Congressional Record*, August 18, 1964, 20033]

"Like the preacher, I don't like to see any empty benches when I hurl homilies and assorted preachments."

[*"Ev and Jerry Show Proposes . . ."*, January 12, 1965, Clippings, f. 358]

"Home. Motherhood. Some of my colleagues smile when I speak on such subjects—perhaps they believe I am being evasive. But these are basic. You can appeal to people only through things which motivate them strongly. If a man's home or his family are in jeopardy, he will stop at nothing to save them. Fear is the universal passion, even an infant understands the gesture of an upraised hand."

[Paul O'Neil, "Grand Old King of the Senate, *Life*, March 26, 1965, 99, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

"It has often been said that a hostile audience is always to be preferred to an indifferent audience. I agree. If it is hostile, you can discover the seat of its hostility and you can cope with it. Of course, this comes in part with experience. You must have poise. You must have sea legs. Some men are afraid. You can never be afraid. But if you know your subject, and if you can assess the audience, and if you understand the occasion, you can always gain command. You must expect to do so. But of course there are other things. I always hope people will enjoy what I have to say. But I'd think I'd really failed if I didn't enjoy it more."

[Paul O'Neil, "Grand Old King of the Senate, *Life*, March 26, 1965, 105, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

"I do not write speeches. I find a quiet room, sit at a desk and stare at a wall. If there is a crack in the wall, so much the better; there is no greater stimulus to the imagination. How did that crack get there? Does it go completely through the plaster?"

The mind seeks the answers and out of this reflection you make a start, you lay out a text, you develop it, and you prepare the final clout.”

[Paul O’Neil, “Grand Old King of the Senate,” *Life*, March 26, 1965, 101, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

“There is only one creative instrument under God’s canopy, and that instrument is lodged in the human skull. I can think of no other creative force in all the universe. Show me any great work of man, whether it be the Pyramid of Cheops, the Empire State Building, the Taj Mahal, or Hoover Dam—I do not care what it is called—but it had to come out of a human brain. There are two things I wish to see fully protected. The first is the atmosphere in which the brain of man operates—and it can operate best in the moral climate of freedom; and, second, that brain operates best when there is some incentive. When we close the door to human incentive, I do not know what we can expect. We can lavish all the dollars from the Federal Treasury on an idea, and it will not amount to a single hoot unless we have a catalyst which will convert that idea into practicality. That instrumentality is lodged in the human skull.”

[*Congressional Record*, June 2, 1965, 12498]

On making speeches in the Senate, “I learned long ago that no souls are saved after the first 20 minutes.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 15, 1965, 16996; *Congressional Record*, September 1, 1959, 17515; Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

“I always extemporize. I love the diversions, the detours. Without notes you may digress. You may dart. And after you’ve taken on an interrupter, you don’t have to flounder around the piece of paper, trying to find out where the hell you were.”

[Gene Shalit, “Everett McKinley Dirksen: A Mighty Minority of One,” *Look*, July 26, 1966, Dirksen Information File, f. Articles]

“We can discuss a measure as long as we want to, and if it is not worn threadbare when we get through, then there is something wrong with the lusty fellows and the windpipes of the Senators.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 14, 1966, 21750, in Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Dirksen was fond of closing a speech by saying, “... I think we ought to come to a termination here on a gently high and felicitous note.”

[Anne Culler Penney, “The Golden Voice of the Senate,” *GRIT* Family Section, June 1, 1969, Clippings, f. 648]

Dirksen’s advice on public speaking to a constituent:

There is not too much I can say about the technique of public speaking, however, one thing I can say is that behind it there is [sic] over 30 years of constant and unremitting effort to become thoroughly familiar with the psychology of audiences, friendly, indifferent, or hostile, and then the building of a speech which has a good structure and moves on to a central point. I know that is a bit vague From then on it is a case of reading one’s self full and developing

background which is always on tap, particularly when a speech is of an extemporaneous nature.

I do not write speeches; I do prepare and familiarize myself with a very brief outline in the case of a long speech, and then discard it and rely on memory and background. Public opinion is varied, and manifestly, the purpose and art of public speech is to persuade and alter opinions of those who may be in disagreement. Emotional appeal can be powerful and has its place with many groups. Reason and logic are all important, and the technique is to fashion in the mind a certain conclusion and then marshal facts, figures, and data to fortify it.

The voice is like an organ and must be suited to the occasion, the subject and the audience. Sometimes all stops are out, and sometimes for contrast, it must be soft and gentle. Gestures, as Shakespeare said, should be suited to the action. Before an audience is prepared to accept the speaker's message, a certain degree of good will must be developed. This is done in the introduction with the use of one or two anecdotes which are appropriate to the occasion and the audience.

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 101-102]

Examples of Dirksen's oratorical style:

One might say	Dirksen
The facts prove that	The truth will press forward [“Orator of the Old School,” <i>Houston Post</i> , February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]
Continue indefinitely	So long as we have breath and ingenuity [“Orator of the Old School,” <i>Houston Post</i> , February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]
Energetic	Its vigor in full flower [“Orator of the Old School,” <i>Houston Post</i> , February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]
Filibuster	Extended periods of expression [“Orator of the Old School,” <i>Houston Post</i> , February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]
Scold	Invoke upon him every condign imprecation [“Orator of the Old School,” <i>Houston Post</i> , February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]
Snowball's chance in Hell	Would the Senator initiate it as an independent bill? It would not have the chance of a snowball in Sheol. If there is any doubt about it, I ask Senators to look up the Old Testament, and they will find where Sheol is. It is hot there. A snowball would have not chance there. That is how much chance we would have.” [<i>Congressional Record</i> , August 13, 1964, 19447]

One might say	Dirksen
Chewing gum	<p>“Her mouth was doing a Chopin obbligato on some spearmint.”</p> <p>[“The Voice of Management,” February 25-27, 1952, 57, Remarks and Releases]</p>
Cow’s udder	<p>“Those conduits that deliver the milk”</p> <p>[“The Old Master Has Voice Box Full of Gold,” <i>Congressional Record</i>, September 22, 1967, Remarks and Releases]</p>
God created man	<p>“Then came the only creature that was created with intelligence, a soul, a personality, the prospect of divinity. There he was, this lonely creature. He had a beautiful home, if a garden can be called a home. God made it without the aid of the Housing administration. They were not even around then.”</p> <p>[“The Old Master Has Voice Box Full of Gold,” <i>Congressional Record</i>, September 22, 1967, Remarks and Releases]</p>
There is going to be a fight tomorrow	<p>I am apprehensive over a substantial fulmination. I would avoid a forecast of rain in favor of a contemplation of the possibility of precipitation. This oral embroidery has a virtue of avoiding a firm commitment that could be embarrassing if the sun came out.</p> <p>[Conversation with Roger Mudd, June 6, 1965, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]</p>

Pekin

Speaking on the importance of local government despite the focus on national government:

The award but confirms that a community can be what its citizens want it to be. When all is said and done, the citadel of strength of any community is in the hearts and minds and desires of those who dwell there.

Here as elsewhere any answer to the problem of generating the best kind of local government begins with a deep sense of pride in the community and with a sharpening of that proprietary feeling that the community does belong to its citizens. And when that pride has been transformed into a will for action the prospect of improved operations at the local level is already in sight.

Moreover, it requires a particular kind of action. It must be concerted and sufficiently diffused and embrace enough people of good will and high interest throughout the community so that it can be said that it is citizen participation in every sense of the word. It must be a kind of action that is at once unselfish and selfless and is directed to the goal of common good.

More years ago that I care to admit I served in a city council and learned in a first hand way of the road blocks which often render into ashes so many of the ideas which are advanced for the improvement of a local administration. ... There is too often a strange inertia which manifests itself in local affairs. There is an attribute of political indifference. There are those who somehow feel that they have done their whole duty for four years or more when they vote on election day and that thereafter the responsibility for good government at home rests entirely and exclusively with those who have been moved into positions of authority.

... Even when a good instrument for local government has been adopted, it would be ineffective unless it was directed by competent hands. That means, of course, that citizens with a sense of responsibility, a flair for public service and endowed with capacity and good judgment are elevated to positions of trust so that local government can be wisely and judiciously administered.

And behind it all there must then be the continuing citizen interest and participation so that those who have been selected to give direction to the affairs of the community will find the maximum of encouragement in a complete partnership with the citizens.

And when once such reliance and dependence on the national government has developed, we are then well on the way to a socialized state. So I think the conclusion will stand up that in proportion as the citizenry in any locality participates vigorously and wholeheartedly in local affairs and devote[s] time to the improvement of the municipality where they live, they not only make a great contribution to better community living and community pride but to return to the principle of self-government and home rule which has been the very essence of the American concept and which is in truth and in fact the rock of freedom.”

[Remarks, Award Ceremony of the National Municipal League and *Look Magazine*, February 5, 1954, 3, Remarks and Releases]

In announcing his candidacy for a third Senate term:

After long absences from home enforced by the duties of office in Washington, there always comes back to me some lines from that poem which I learned long ago, “Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, ‘this is my own, my native land.’” This is my own, my native land, my native city, where the family taproot went deep many generations ago, and it will ever be so, no matter what tasks life may assign to me.

All the major decisions in my life have been made here. The determination to go to college even though I had no funds when high school days were over; the decision to marry, if she would have me, the girl who has been my constant inspiration; my first venture into the field of public service when I became a candidate for the City Council; the decision to run for Congress and find public service at the national level; the decision to run again for Congress despite lack of success in 1930 resolved every doubt as to what course I wanted to pursue in life; the recurring decisions made every two years when I became a candidate for re-election to the Congress; the agonizing decision to retire after an eye malady threatened my vision; the decision to seek a seat in the Senate despite the fact that those who counselled this course stated at one and the same time that it would be impossible to win; the decisions to seek a second term in the Senate—these, all these decisions were made here in my home town.

The inspiration which I received here from a saintly mother, a devoted family, steadfast friends, the constant faith of teachers who taught me, the inspiration I found here in church, and the atmosphere of a quiet

and well ordered community were the forces which helped to fashion those decisions, and for these I shall be always and eternally grateful.”
[Address of Everett McKinley Dirksen at the Testimonial Dinner, Pekin, September 22, 1961, Remarks and Releases]



Philosophy

“I am not a moralist. I am a legislator.”
[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

In his April 11, 1936, “The Congressional Front,” Dirksen wrote about “new worlds to conquer” as he speculated about the future and the impact of invention: “Is it not possible that the next new advance will be to abolish the doctrine of scarcity, expand production of all products, that even the humblest family might enjoy the benefits of our highly developed civilization?”

[“The Congressional Front,” April 11, 1936, Remarks and Releases]

In a December radio address entitled “Loyalty,” Dirksen said, “In that day when all people in this land regard their country not as a collection of houses and factories and roads and bridges and skyscrapers and people but as a people united in a common way of life, that sentiment will speedily dissolve all desire to destroy or radically alter our form of government and give assurance that America will live forever and forever.”

[“Loyalty,” WMBD, December 8, 1936, Remarks and Releases]

On June 5, 1939, Dirksen wrote his wife following a particularly difficult vote on the Townsend plan: “For such a long time, I have perhaps done as other politicians have done. Never wanted to offend any considerable segment of the voters. But the trouble is that such a course sooner or later develops [sic] a fear-complex which if left to continue, must inevitably destroy that sense of conviction that a student of public problems should have. I am afraid that on other occasions, I have approved of or supported proposals which were broadly demanded by this or that group, which I knew deep down to be wrong. And so there came a time—there had to come a time—when I must emancipate myself from those fears and determine, irrespective of the cost, to do that which every impulse of conscience dictated that I should do. It was like going thro [sic] a mental crisis. There is the temptation to say nothing or to sit back and shirk the duty which heart and conscience imposed. And so I did. I believe I shall find now that if my own estimate of a proposal is that it is wrong, it will take more than the mere endorsement of an organization with votes to persuade me to change my mind. Thus Mother darling, as the years move on, values become more

fundamental and one sets greater store by the fact that he has a conscience with which he must live, long after the transitory things are gone.

[Dirksen to Louella, ca. June 5, 1939, Personal, f. 17-18]

In a House floor speech on September 19, 1941, Dirksen renounced isolationism: “Two words have done grave harm to America. One is ‘isolationist’; the other is ‘interventionist.’ Neither word accurately reflects American thought. There is room and time for a better and more definitive expression. It is ‘moderationist.’ It avoids both extremes. It is free from emotionalism. Its essence is reality and common sense.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 18, 1941, Remarks and Releases; quoted in “Oneness of Spirit and Purpose,” September 26, 1941, Scrapbooks, 1941-21, f.8]

“Some folks think of life as a kind of a sit-down strike against time. Truly, life is a great moral and spiritual adventure for every individual, and the function of education is after all to equip the individual with a knowledge of the rules and to prepare the mind, the body, the will, and the emotions for that adventure.”

[Release, Founders’ Day, Bradley University, October 7, 1949, Remarks and Releases]

“There are some markers on the road ahead that have marked mankind’s progress from the beginning of civilization. There will be a certain sameness in the pattern for the years to come because human nature will be much the same. The principles of human behavior will be the same even though expressed against the background of changed circumstances. There will be more people. The law of life—grow or die—will be the same. The rule of progress will be the same. It consists of the constant, intelligent, undramatic action of life on what is here. Human stupidity will be much the same. Conscience with its chastening effect on humanity will be the same. And science will continue to confound the politicians and theorists. These we may call the constant factors of history. But there is one variable factor. It will determine in large measure whether you as free moral men and women, moving Godward, shall have a full and unrestricted chance to make your talents and energies count in the years ahead. That factor is freedom.”

[Commencement Address, DePaul University, June 13, 1951, Remarks and Releases]

On whether or not Dirksen was an isolationist:

Mr. Spivak: Senator, your critics call you an isolationist. Are you an isolationist?

[Dirksen asked Spivak to define the terms, but Spivak declined and said Dirksen knew what Spivak meant by “isolationist”]

Senator Dirksen: No, frankly, I don’t Mr. Spivak, because frankly the gentry and the ladies of the press have such facilities for developing terms like interventionist and isolationist where the meanings are not simply precise and I simply don’t recognize the terms. I have always thought of myself as a moderationist rather than one who embraces either extreme.

[NBC’s *Meet the Press*, September 11, 1951, Remarks and Releases]

In response to a question if Dirksen were a conservative:

Senator Dirksen: First, if you will indulge me one comment, and if time will permit, on labels that are attached to people, once I was called an isolationist. I have been called a good many things in the more than twenty years that I have served in Washington. Labels don't mean too much to me, but I do like to regard myself as a moderate.

And if you will ever look up the word some time in Webster, you will find that a moderate is one who avoids both extremes. And so I try to avoid the extremes.

[CBS's *Face the Nation*, January 9, 1955, 14, Remarks and Releases]

In describing constituents' "advice" on the Agriculture Act of 1956: "I have been threatened with condign political extinction if I did not vote for this measure. I have been threatened with political extinction if I did not vote for this measure. So I simply fall back on the admonition of Edmund Burke, a sometime great member of the House of Commons, when he said that, finally, he must preserve unto himself his individual judgment as a representative, and to let that judgment be fortified and dictated by the facts in the case."

[*Congressional Record*, April 11, 1956, 6100]

Dirksen's response to charges in the 1956 campaign that President Eisenhower was a part-time president: "It is not the length of one's days but the worth of one's days that matters. It is the impress of character and leadership on one's own generation which matters. It is the legacy which one leaves to the future which matters."

[Remarks to the National Federation of Republican Women, September 6, 1956, Clippings, f. 97]

"I'm just an old-fashioned, garden variety of Republican who believes in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, in Abraham Lincoln, who accepts the challenges as they arise from time to time, and who is not unappreciative of the fact that this is a dynamic economy in which we live and sometimes you have to change your position."

[*Meet the Press*, May 19, 1957, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

On the principle revealed to Dirksen through his membership in the Masonic order: "That the hope of the universe and the hope of society reposes in the individual, in his integrity, his dignity, his peace of mind and the power that he can wield in the area where he lives and serves."

[Untitled remarks, 1958, Remarks and Releases]

"History is nothing if it is not the unfoldment of a divine pattern, to the unbeliever, this concept may be stuff; to the Communist, it may be rank heresy; to a counterfeit liberal it may be an amusing fancy. But to God-fearing men and women the world over it is an incandescent hope. And to the millions who died in the cause of human

liberty, it was the great sustaining force, for the whole Christian concept and hope is inextricably bound up with freedom.”

[Address, 174th Anniversary Dinner of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, New York City, March 17, 1958, Remarks and Releases]

In paying tribute to Lithuanian Independence Day: “Mr. President, nations, like individual beings, do not live by bread alone. Ideas and ideals, as spiritual sinews, are often as important for their existence and form an indispensable part of their fare. Freedom and independence, liberty to work, and the privilege of enjoying the fruits of one’s labor in a free society, are among the noblest of human goals.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1960, 2588]

“I do not know whether I am a liberal. I think I am a garden variety conservative. If I remember my Latin, I think the word ‘liberal’ was derived from the word ‘liver,’ meaning free, and the suffix ‘al’ means ‘pertaining to.’ So the word ‘liberal’ means pertaining to freedom. If that is it, I am a genuine, unmitigated, unreconstructed, unregenerate, 100-percent, dyed-in-the-wool liberal, in the sense of my devotion to freedom and that means the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and everything else that is the embodiment of the principles of freedom.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 17, 1960, Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes. NOT ABLE TO LOCATE in *Congressional Record*]

“So many terms have been fastened on me that sometimes I do not know which I must own up to. I am just a garden variety Republican who, like Lincoln, believes in the Constitution and in the Bill of Rights and in our free-enterprise system, and who wants to see the country go forward, so that those who will be the legatees of what we do here or fail to do will have a full, fair, and decent chance to enjoy the same benefits we have had in our generation.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 23, 1960, 3182]

In opposing a wage bill that he believed gutted the commerce clause of the Constitution: “Mr. President, public office does not mean everything to me. I do not have to be in the Senate. I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to serve, but I do not believe that my people, when they understand the full import of what is before us, expect me to forfeit my convictions merely because there might be a little political mileage involved.” [Goes on to quote Edmund Burke]

[*Congressional Record*, August 18, 1960, 16715]

“I believe it is a historical truism that what has been shall be, and that hope springs eternal, that the same basic fallacies are tried over and over, that the same challenging problems recur from one period to another and that if history teaches anything, it is that too often history teaches nothing.”

[“Speak Up,” 1961, Remarks and Releases]

“When you assume leadership, you have to become decisive, whether you like it or not. Decisions have to be made every day. You can’t dawdle. The pace is fast. Life is a matter of development or decay. You either grow or you retrogress. There’s no

standing still. You go backward or forward. The challenge will make you grow, if you are willing to assert a leadership and look on the challenge as something to be met and disposed of.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

“Every year that you are in public service at the national level broadens your horizons, your background, and the reservoir of information that you accumulate, and thereby gives you a better predicate from which to make decisions.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

“Time sharpens your charitable instincts. I made a practice for a time of reading a portion of the first dozen verses of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: ‘Though I speak with the voice of men and of angels . . .’ He ends by saying that there are three things, faith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity. That spirit sort of goes with you as the years unfold, and you look with more charitable eyes. You finally discover that you do not want to build up anger with anybody, never let the acid of anger in your soul.”

[Collection 156, Neil MacNeil Reports, September 4, 1962]

“History is but the unfoldment of a divine pattern.”

[Quoted in *Time*, September 14, 1962, Clippings File and Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

Explaining his stance against public accommodations proposals in civil rights legislation: “You may not be satisfied with my approach, but I don’t go around particularly trying to please everybody. I will adhere to my convictions, and pursue it according to my lights.”

[Un sourced, undated ca. 1963, Clippings, f. 307]

“When the day comes that picketing, distress, duress, and coercion can push me from the rock of conviction, that is the day, Mr. President, that I shall gather up my togs and walk out of here and say that my usefulness in the Senate has come to an end.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 17, 1964, 2885]

When asked to compare himself as congressman and senator: “I came here at age 36 or 37, full of energy and ready to just fairly push the dome off the Capitol, until older and well demeaned members advised me that that dome has been there since they came and would be there when they were gone and would be there when I was gone. So perhaps it might be well to slow down a little. Then I think you learn certain things which somehow fill out your philosophy as a legislator and I pretty much agree with this kind of language—that this free government is like an old waterlogged scow, it doesn’t move very fast, it doesn’t move very far at one time, but it never sinks and maybe that is the reason we have a free government today. I was thinking how many free governments are just in too great a hurry that suddenly flop over and take on a dictatorial and despotic cast because they can’t wait for normal forces to undertake the changes that are necessary in the constant climb of people to a better life.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 3, Remarks and Releases]

When asked about his inconsistency on issues: “Well consistency is a hobgoblin of small minds—was it Emerson who said it?—a foolish consistency or an inconsistency and I have often thought the only people who do not change their minds are sleeping peacefully in some cemetery or they are in an institution—involuntarily there—and have lost the capacity to change their mind. So I hope that the time will never come when I can’t adjust to new circumstances and new conditions because it is an accelerated world.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 3, Remarks and Releases]

Responding to the question, “How would you sum up your philosophy of life?”: “Well, I want to be ready for change at all times. I think I subscribe fully to the definition of progress as the constant and intelligent and undramatic action of life of what is here.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 4, Remarks and Releases]

When asked, “What is the greatest hazard of public life?”: “First of all, there is a danger of getting into a political rut, so to speak, and life may go by you. That’s very unfortunate indeed. That means of course that you will not adjust. What was it that Lincoln said: ‘The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present ... As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.’ ... And he added this one part. He said: ‘We must disenthral ourselves and then we shall save our Country.’ That is a great line and I think over and over a person in public life has to take inventory, to see where he is at the moment, to take a look back to see from whence you came and then see where the high road goes, and then if your thinking is not attuned to it you disenthral yourself. You take a new stance and a new look and if you are willing to look long enough and hard enough, I am rather confident that the right cast of mind and the right thoughts will come which are adequate to what lies ahead.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 7-8, Remarks and Releases]

When asked, “Does your optimism ever falter?”: “No, because even if there are frustrations and goodness knows every life is attended with some frustrations certainly; there is still ample time and room and cause for optimism because there are so many good things and so many blessing that you can count in life that come. So I see no reason why one shouldn’t look on the optimistic side.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 8, Remarks and Releases]

Responding to the charge that he had moved from the center to the right: “I have always abjured any kind of a label. When I’ve been asked I’ve said, a thousand times, ‘I’m a garden variety Abraham Lincoln Republican. Don’t tag me right. Don’t tag me left. Don’t tag me center. Because those terms came over here like a virus from the Old World and I don’t believe they fit a free country.’ I have convictions. I try to have a sense of history and certainly I try to keep abreast of the legislative history of the country and get as good a perspective as I can.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 21, 1965, 8205, Remarks and Releases]

“Life is a matter of development or decay. You either grow or you retrogress. You go backward or forward. The challenge will make you grow, if you are willing to assert a leadership and look on the challenge as something to be met and disposed of.”

[Dirksen to J.G. Bell, January 24, 1966, Remarks and Releases]

On his “Republicanism”:

MR. MORGAN: Senator Dirksen, you have been a Taft Republican, an Eisenhower Republican, a Goldwater Republican, and some people even call you a Lyndon Johnson Republican. What is your definition of a Dirksen Republican?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, a garden variety of Republican who takes seriously the traditions of his party, the precepts of Abraham Lincoln and very notably, of course, his constant and unremitting dedication to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. And incidentally, I think that is a good note to strike, because we are on the threshold of Independence Day. Wasn't it Lincoln, when he stood in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, who said if he had to give up those principles he'd rather die on the spot?

[ABC's *Issues and Answers*, July 3, 1966, 7, Remarks and Releases]

When asked to explain his rise above partisanship as he came into the leadership:

You know, I have a favorite quotation, oft times. When I am thoroughly frustrated I can say as Solomon said, ‘Lord, give Thy servant an understanding heart,’ and when you get an understanding heart and you get perception and some wisdom after the manner of Aristotle, of course the road is infinitely easier than it otherwise would be. But I think another thing happens. You see age gives perspective, too. You look back and you think about the people who were here before we were here, who built themselves into the roads, the bridges, the fields, the factories, everything that constitutes America, and they made their sacrifice and then they moved off into infinity, and then came another generation. So just think, we are the legatees of all those who have been in this country before, so we have an obligation to the past that we so readily forget, today. And with it goes a concomitant duty to the future and that we are likely to forget. But when we remember it, I think it begins to stabilize your views and begins to set you up on higher ground. Whether you like it or not, it becomes almost a very fixed thing and you are bound to take those views.

[ABC's *Issues and Answers*, July 3, 1966, 8-9, Remarks and Releases]

When asked if his opposition to the civil rights bill in 1966 would tarnish his image as a “civil libertarian,” Dirksen responded, “No. The mud will wash off in one shower. I am interested in being right.”

[*Washington Post*, September 17, 1966, Clippings, f. 444]

When asked what it was about small towns that accounted for the many leaders who emerged from them: “Well, first of all. Life is pristine. It’s simple. No one ever describes it better than Oliver Goldsmith in the deathless poem, ‘The Deserted Village.’ Do you remember how it begins? ‘Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain. Where health and plenty cheer the laboring swain.’ Then he goes on and on and takes off on all these characters in town. That’s the sweetness of a small town. . . . Character has a chance. Everything by way of a human attribute has a chance for better anchoring, better formulation, in a small town, better than the hurly-burly of a metropolitan center.”

[“Opinion in the Capital: A Metromedia-WTTG Presentation,” October 10, 1966, 1, Remarks and Releases]

“You asked me what makes Dirksen tick—I suppose a good Christian body from good Christian parents and a fairly perceptive mind and the latitude to make it, if I could. I must say it for my mother; she was always insistent in having us in school, even though I had one brother who didn’t like school and became something of a dropout. Otherwise there was opportunity, and how hard you are willing to work, find the necessary funds with which to get a higher education and then to move on into the blood stream of the country. You create opportunity as well as embracing it and, which I found out what I ought to do, I set myself to it. I was willing to apply myself to it hour after hour, day after day, and try to find myself some degree of perfection in that field because you have to do lots of work in researching of books to catch up with history—undertaking, of course, to keep abreast of everything that is current in a world that is so full of fever and a country, and a government that has expanded so many of its activities, so you work and struggle and fight and pray and you pay your bills and pay your taxes so that can always look the world right in the eye.”

[Interview, *The Oregonian*, September 22, 1968, Clippings, f. 619]

Politics

“There devolves upon the Republican party therefore an educational mission such as it has scarcely ever been called upon to perform. This is an hour for dispassionate truth and commonsense. This is an hour in which we must solemnly pledge ourselves to refrain from emotionalism and stick to the facts. This is an hour for careful abstinence from name calling, personalities and invective, principles must not be sacrificed to sound and fury. Instead of emphasizing non-essentials ... we must place the emphasis on important things and think in terms of national destiny. I am not insensible to the political philosophy that would bid us win at any price and that would have us match the promises of the administration with even greater and more generous promises but let us not forget that in the past, we builded this nation on the rock of enduring policies and that we can justify our high place in the history of this nation only by thinking of the years to come as well as of the fleeting present.”

[Remarks, Republican State Convention, May 22, 1935, Remarks and Releases]

“The very fact (between us) that the German Ambassador to Great Britain is named von Dirksen has prompted me to keep my own counsel and offer neither advice nor opinions on foreign affairs because they might be misconstrued. What is not said [does] not have to be taken back later. ... Volunteering information can do no good but might do much harm. It is a practical course to follow.”

[Personal Letters, March 21, 1939]

“My own Party has in days gone by been derelict in not recognizing the necessity for certain reforms such as the Social Security program, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the regulations of securities exchanges, and other legislation in the public interest. The real difficulty, however, lies in the fact that it [the Roosevelt administration] has dosed the country with such huge chunks of reform in so short a period of time as to make adjustment to such reforms difficult. The net result has been conflict between labor and industry, between business and government and the development of a contesting group spirit which has operated to keep the country on dead center. I would deem it the duty of my own Party to preserve the worthwhile reforms which have been enacted by the present Administration and to make them work under the most competent leadership that is anywhere available in this nation.”

[Address to the Mock Political Convention, Northwestern University, April 27, 1940, 12, Remarks and Releases]

In replying to criticism which Dirksen believed was based on false information: “The only trouble with it, of course, is that it is a good deal like the definition of a crab that a little boy got from his father. The boy wanted to get a definition of a crab and his

father said, 'My son, a crab is a small red fish that walks backward.' The young man was quite dissatisfied with the definition, so when he next encountered a Gloucester fisherman he said to him, 'My father told me that a crab is a small red fish that walks backward.' He asked the fisherman if that was correct, and the fisherman said, 'Son, it is substantially correct, except that a crab is not a fish; it is not necessarily small; it is not red; and it does not walk backward.'"

[*Congressional Record*, December 17, 1941, 10176, Scrapbooks, 1941-42, f. 9]

Dirksen described his primary campaign plans to Louella in 1942: "I can't get steamed up about this whole business [the possibility of a primary challenge]. We are at war. My place is here. And I can't persuade myself that for the sake of political office, I should forsake my post of duty no matter what the outcome. You and I have lived thro [sic] other episodes like this and we shall not now get excited or disconcerted over what may happen. The job has been too hard in these anxious days and there have been too many sacrifices to let this sort of thing bother us."

[Personal Letters, February 23, 1942]

Dirksen reported to Louella that an article in the *New Republic* urged his defeat: "It is quite interesting. It indicates that I am one of the 'abler' members of the House but that I am an obstructionist. My obstruction seems to consist mainly of knocking 48 million out of the Ag. App'n Bill. Had I failed in this effort, I would not have been noticed. It's only when one gets results that he becomes a target for criticism. Tickles me. The hit dog always yelps."

[Personal Letters, May 17, 1942]

"A political party does not make the issues. It is well defined issues which make the party. And having presented the issues in clear and simple terms to the electorate, it is a responsibility of the Party to maintain it's [sic] vitality and to carry through. We know that a single party brings ultimate dictatorship. We know also that many parties, no one of which is strong enough to administer government, finally results in coalition under a stern hand and eventually results in one-party government. The hope of a free America lies in a vital, virile two-party system under which one party administers the affairs for the people while the other acquaints the people with the mistakes and failures of those in power."

[Undated remarks, ca. January 1951, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen campaigning in 1952 for Republicans: "You'll hear a lot about prosperity. But when they say prosperity, ask them what kind. I call it a blood and graveyard prosperity! Ask them what they think we're going to do when we run out of aggressors! Tell me, would you give back your TV set if it would bring life to the boy in the next block who died in Korea? What would you give if you thought you could put back in its socket the arm an American boy left on a bloody battlefield?"

After touring an airplane plant where women worked: "As I watched one of the girls work, I wondered how she felt about that \$75 a week [her prosperity wage], knowing

that her sweetie might ride to eternity in the instrument of death she was helping to fashion.”

[*Knoxville Sentinel*, February 1952, Clippings, f. 45]

On the issues in the 1952 campaign: “I simply want to say that the issues of 1952, as I see them, are these: Peace and war, where the Administration has ingloriously failed. Preparedness where they have failed, after the expenditure of so many billions and billions of the people's money. Internal security, which is the Red issue, and it is a very live and vital issue today. There is the blood and graveyard issue of prosperity. And when they say prosperity to me, I am not forgetting it has a lot of warm, young blood on it, and that it is built upon the production of destructive weapons and planes and tanks, and that is not a very durable prosperity in my book. Finally, there is the moral issue. Then there is the freedom issue, and taken all in all, these issues finally become rather moral in character. So, those are the main issues on which we are going to go to the country, and this time it is going to be a militant campaign, if I have anything to do about it. There will be no me-tooism in it. We will bring, militantly, the issues to every section of the country.”

[*The American Forum of the Air*, March 2, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen said electing Governor Adlai Stevenson to succeed President Truman would be like leaving soiled diapers on a baby and “just changing the safety pin.”

[*Pekin Daily Times*, September 3, 1952, Clippings f. 55]

“Politics is a cruel business and sometimes vindictive, but there isn't any place for reprisals and certainly not within the structure of our own party.”

[January 1959, Clippings, f. 144]

Speaking to Republicans in Chicago: “Our cause is to keep the nation at peace, to keep it secure, to keep it sound and solvent, to preserve the dignity and integrity of the individual as an end in itself, to assert the national interests as distinguished from the narrower and more selfish interests of a group or segment of the whole, and to do those things which Lincoln once described as the legitimate objects of government, namely those things which people cannot do at all or do so well in their separate and individual capacities.”

[Release, February 13, 1959, Remarks and Releases]

“Politics has been defined as the art of the possible. One might, in the light of what has been stated [about the civil rights bill in 1959], say it is also the art of the attainable. I think we can proceed as practical persons by subscribing to that thesis.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 20, 1959, 6283]

“The Republican Party, in my judgment, since the days of Abraham Lincoln has been conservative. When I say conservative I mean a party that is dedicated to conserving cultural and spiritual and economic resources of the country under a free system where the major economic judgments are made in the free market. We do not believe

in control. We believe in regulation but no more than is absolutely necessary to keep the system functioning, and I think that marks a distinction between the two parties.”
[NBC Program for Radio, January 18, 1960, Remarks and Releases]

“Protest as we may about political activity and sermonize as we will about the views and votes of men elected to public office, these are the verities of political life. And the key to our economic, social, and political future lies in the philosophy, the character, the views, the courage, the perspective and the understanding of those who are invested with the power to help direct the affairs of government.”
[“Illinois Politics,” IL State Chamber of Commerce, August 1960, Clippings, f. 195]

“I’ve always said that the Republican umbrella is a large one that admits of all shades of opinion. Don’t forget that the Republican Party started as an amalgam of a half a dozen parties in 1856. But they had one objective and one great ideal—that was the preservation of the union, and ultimately freeing the country of slavery. They didn’t agree on a great many other things, and so you never expect in these vagarious times for all Republicans to agree on all things. My hope as a leader always is that on the fundamental issues, and at the top of it I’d put freedom and individual liberty, that there we can use it as a measuring rod when we evaluate all the policy matters and all the programs that are advanced upon the Congress for attention.”
[*Youth Wants to Know*, March 11, 1962, 4, Remarks and Releases]

“The longer one is identified with public life, especially at the national level, the more one is persuaded, as an ancient philosopher said, that politics is the art of the possible.”
[*Time*, September 14, 1962, Clippings File and Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

“Mr. President, I trust the time will never come in my public career when the waters of partisanship will flow so swift and so deep as to obscure my estimate of the national interest. If and when that time comes, then perhaps I shall have lost whatever talent and justification I have for public service and should make an exit and make way for others to carry on the responsibility I presently hold. ... If the day ever comes when, under pressure, or as a result of picketing or other devices, I shall be pushed from the rock where I must stand to render an independent judgment, my justification in public life will have come to an end. ... I trust the time will never come when my perspective is so narrow or becomes so diminished in scope that I cannot see the problem which is now on the doorstep of the country in the larger perspective of all the people of the United States. ... When the day comes that picketing, distress, duress, and coercion can push me from the rock of conviction, that is the day, Mr. President, that I shall gather up my togs and walk out of here and say that my usefulness in the Senate has come to an end.”
[*Congressional Record*, February 17, 1964, 2884]

When questioned about rumors that Dirksen’s decision to place Barry Goldwater’s (R- AZ) name in nomination at the Republican National Convention in 1964 was either a “snap” decision or a deliberate one made at his home in Virginia: “I love

those accounts that cast me in solitude, in moments of reverie [sic], when I'm given over to deep reflection. (Laughter) But I've discovered in public service that you don't have too much time for it—and that doesn't necessarily mean that decisions are snap decisions. You must remember that Webster's reply to Haynes was supposedly an extemporaneous thing—actually, it had been incubating in Webster's mind probably for a year or more—before it was finally made. And so that incubation process is always with us. And, if you want to carry it a little further, you might even call it the gestation process to the point where the creature is born.”

[Joint Senate-House Leadership Press Conference, July 2, 1964, 7]

On life in politics: “One of the main requirements, it seems to me, of a man in public life is that he has patience, that he be able to suffer fools gladly and that he take all the other little inconveniences which comes [sic] along and doesn't let these things get to him. ... The gift of patience, of course I think, is a highly desired attribute because you are dealing with people, they have fixations, they have convictions about any number of controversial matters. You have to hear them out. You have to be careful not to be too precipitous or capricious in pointing out what you think the weakness in the other fellow's case may be, especially if he is on your side of the aisle politically speaking. So that requires, I think, gentle discussion and a very gentle oil can art as I call it, so that the bearings never get hot. You don't develop frictions that suddenly blow into pieces and if you can keep it on the quiet side and have every aspect of the matter explored without anybody becoming fractious at any time you're most likely to get results. What was it that Lincoln said, —we shall sooner have the chicken by hatching the egg than by breaking it.”

[WMAL, *Close-Up*, February 7, 1965, 6, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen on campaigns: “Parties do not defeat each other. A party becomes the victim of its mistakes and of its blunders because these are communicated to the public quickly through newspapers and news magazines. There are TV reports and radio reports every hour on the hour. What's more, this is a literate country. People are in a position to read, to understand and to judge.”

[*U.S. News & World Report*, January 17, 1966, Clippings, f. 380]

“Parties do not defeat each other. I've said this a thousand times. They had an old professor of politics at Wisconsin University. He said, ‘Parties accumulate barnacles and people finally become incensed. They think off with the old and on with the new.’ And so, it's only because of this accumulation of faults, and sins, and defects. It's not that they elect another party, they defeat the party that's in power.”

[“Opinion in the Capital: A Metromedia-WTTG Production,” October 17, 1966, 7, Remarks and Releases]

In many of Bob Michel's speeches at Republican events, he attributed the following to Everett Dirksen when Dirksen was asked what he thought was the most important factor in politics: “The most important thing in politics is the margin. That little bit of extra effort that makes the difference. So many important issues are settled on the

margin. And the fellow who is willing to take the extra step, to make that margin, is going to win.”

[Robert H. Michel Speech and Trip File, Bob Dole’s “Campaign for the 100th Congress,” March 10, 1986]

Quips

A Dirksen story:

The Harvard professor asked the hotel clerk: “Have you a Britannica?”

“No, but what would you like to know?”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

“Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I suppose I ought to make the same confession that everybody here can honestly make after hearing the lengthy discussion on this matter, pro and con. I presume we are all going to be in the same position of the judge down in Missouri who, while officially sitting on the bench, was imbibing a little from a bottle of Missouri corn. Along about 4 o'clock in the afternoon he came out of the courthouse and started to throw the saddle onto his horse. He threw the saddle on backwards. There was a young attorney standing there, and he said, ‘Judge, I think you have that saddle on backwards.’ The judge looked at him and said, ‘Young man, how in the devil do you know in what direction I am going?’”

[*Congressional Record*, April 11, 1933, 716-17, Scrapbook, 1933, f. 2]

Speaking against a bill for the Muscle Shoals power project: “I have seen the valiant efforts of the minority party in seeking to torpedo some of the legislation that has come here for deliberation, and as a member of the minority party speaking on this bill I presume I ought to preface my remarks with the same statement that was made by the Christian martyrs when they were gathered in the Roman arena. It will be recalled that they looked up and said something to this effect, ‘We who are about to die, salute you.’ So we minority Members will salute you of the majority as we are about to die upon the roll call that will be held upon this bill.”

[*Congressional Record*, April 24, 1933, Scrapbook, 1933, f. 2]

Speaking in favor of a public works bill: “No Scotchman ever learned to swim until they began to build toll bridges in Scotland. The Scotchman then learned to swim as a matter of sheer necessity, and this particular bill pending in the House today is here, I would say, by the same token, namely, as a matter of strict necessity.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 27, 1933, Scrapbooks, 1933, 79]

To illustrate the importance of “disenthraling” oneself in order to save the nation. “I like to disenthral myself insofar as I possibly can, and so I do not want to be in the

position of the man who is in the hospital, and the doctor said: 'Here is some medicine, take that according to the directions.' Two days later the doctor looked in on the patient and had noticed him sitting up in his bed. He said: 'I knew that medicine would fix you up.' Then he noticed the bottle beside the bed and no medicine had been taken from the bottle. Somewhat dismayed he said: "Why, you didn't accept my medicine?" The patient said: 'Well, Doc, I followed the directions.' The doctor grabbed the bottle, and there sure enough was the bold legend which said: 'Keep the bottle tightly corked.'"

[*"The Congressional Front," The Executives' Club News, February 9, 1940, Remarks and Releases*]

To illustrate "a sweet way to say something, but it does not mean anything": "I often think of the young chap who filed an application for an insurance policy. He was asked to fill in the questions on the application, 'How old was your father when he died, and of what did he die?' His father had been hanged, so he did not like to put that fact in writing. So he wrote, 'My father was 65 when he died. He came to his end while participating in a public function when the platform gave way.'"

[*Congressional Record, April 4, 1951, 3270. Another version is contained in "The Congressional Front," Address to The Executives' Club of Chicago, February 9, 1940, Remarks and Releases*]

"But all these are like snowflakes on the broad bosom of the Potomac. For the moment, they seem white with transcendent importance and then melt away."

[*Remarks to the Washington Board of Trade, January 4, 1951, Remarks and Releases*]

To illustrate how temporary policies become permanent: "I remember a fellow in my home town who was in jail. The jail stood on the corner, and he could see me as I crossed the street. He called out and I said, 'Sam, how long are you in for?' He said, 'I am in from now on.' And this legislation is going to be in effect from now on."

[*Congressional Record, March 9, 1951, 2189*]

To illustrate the tendency of the Senate to pass off the responsibility to control spending to some other entity such as an executive department or a future Congress: "I think of the little girl whose father gave her 10 cents for an ice-cream cone. While she was proceeding to the drug store to buy the cone, a kind lady encountered her and said, 'Where are you going?' She replied, 'I am going to the drug store to buy a cone. My father gave me a dime.' The good lady said, 'Well, why don't you give the dime to a missionary in China?' She replied, 'I am going to get a cone, and I will let the druggist give the dime to the missionary in China.'"

[*Congressional Record, July 26, 1951, 8928*]

After apologizing for having to leave and, thus, delivering only a short speech:

I am reminded of the young minister who went to his church one night and found only one parishioner in his church. He said, "My friend, I am charged with a lot of brimstone and fire and a long sermon. Do you think I ought to preach to you?"

“Well Parson, I will tell you. I am just an old Oklahoma cowhand. All I know is cows. But I know this: If I had a wagon load of hay and went down to the corral to feed the cattle and found only one lone pinto there, I would feed her.”

The minister said, “You win.” He delivered himself of a great sermon, uttered a benediction, and then said to his friend, “My friend, how was it?”

“Well, Parson, I will tell you. I am just an old Oklahoma cowhand, and all I know is cows. But I know this: If I had a wagon load of hay and went down to the corral to feed the cattle and found one lone pinto there, I am darned if I would drop the whole load.”

[“Road to Competence in Government,” Remarks to the A.I.M. General Assembly, November 1951; Address, May 22, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

After admitting that he wondered if the government would run out of money:

I used to feel like that lady who went to the Governor and said, “Governor, I want to get my husband out of prison.”

The Governor said, “Lady, what is he in prison for?”

She said, “For stealing a ham.”

“Is he a good husband?”

“No, sir”

“Is he good to the children?”

“No, sir, when he is drunk he beats them”

The Governor said, “Madam, why do you want him out of prison then?”

The lady said, “Frankly, Governor, we are out of ham.”

[“The Voice of Management,” February 25-27, 1952, 55, Remarks and Releases]

In describing efforts to call the “deficit” something else, like “going in the hole”: “It reminds me of a southern undertaker who was in London attending a fancy dinner where everybody was dressed in an iron shirt and gates ajar collar, and it was agreed that everybody at the dinner should introduce himself and tell who he was and where he came from. Well there were industrialists, capitalists, bankers, and he didn’t want to say he was an undertaker, so when they got to him he said, ‘My name is John Jones, I am from Memphis, Tennessee, and I am a Southern Planter.’”

After noting that the per capita debt stood at \$1,900 in 1952:

It reminds me of a friend in Peoria, who went to the hospital and got on the wrong floor where they had the baby ward. He looked through that big window, the babies all wrapped in sterilized wool and saw all these beautiful little angelic faces, some smiling, some cooing, some squalling and bawling. When the nurse came by he said, 'What makes those little brats bawl like that?'

She looked at him and said, "Mister, if you were without a job, and owed \$1,900 and your pants were wet, you would squall too."

[Remarks, Salt Lake City, May 22, 1952, 11-12, Dirksen Papers, Remarks and Releases]

"I remember a story told about an old Negro who was loitering around a fashionable church in New York on a Sunday morning, and a passerby said, 'What are you going to do?' The Negro replied, 'I am going into that church.' The passerby said, 'I would not do that if I were you.' The Negro said, 'Why?' The reply was, 'That is one of those churches where God got lost in the machinery.' I am afraid we are getting lost in the rather complicated machinery of the world. We can be saved only as the American principle is asserted over and over again."

[*Congressional Record*, July 14, 1953, 8746]

In challenging the logic of a colleague: "It reminded me of the advice an old lawyer once gave to a young lawyer. He said, 'When the law is against you, argue on the facts. When the facts are against you, argue on the law. When both the law and the facts are against you, just raise hell generally.'"

[*Congressional Record*, January 25, 1954, 694]

In commenting on a colleague's vigor in addressing the Senate: "I thought of the minister in a little country town in Illinois who forgot his notes for a sermon. He had left them on the pulpit, and the sexton of the church found them on Monday morning. The sexton got out his 'specs' and began to peer at the notes. He saw many strange little marginal markings. In the second paragraph the minister had written: 'Throw your arms up in a great and reverent gesture.' A few paragraphs further on, he had written: 'Throw your arms up with a wide-open gesture and glower at the congregation.' When the sexton got to the next paragraph, the notation there was: 'Argument weak here. Yell like hell.'"

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 15482]

In expressing his affection for, and disagreement with, Senator Wayne Morse (D-OR): "As I think of this spirit of accord and amity and concord, I always think,

Wayne, of the 2 deacons, the Republican and the Democrat, who were kneeling together in their supplications in a little church in a small village in Illinois. The Republican deacon was praying to the Lord, saying, 'O, Lord, make us Republicans

unlike the Democrats; make us hang together in accord; make us hang together in concord.' And just then the Democratic brethren said, 'Lord, any cord will do.'"

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 15482]

To illustrate the impact of amending a bill: "Mr. President, the proposal of the Senator from Louisiana reminds me somewhat of the story of a proprietor of a fish market who had taken a piece of chalk and scrawled on a large blackboard the words 'Fresh fish for sale here today.' A friend of his came along and said, 'Why do you say "fresh"? If they were not fresh, you would not sell them.' So the proprietor scratched out the word 'fresh.' His friend then said, 'If they are not for sale here today, then when are they for sale?' So, the proprietor wiped out the word 'today.' Finally, by logic, he wiped out everything except one word, and the billboard just contained the word 'fish.'"

[*Congressional Record*, February 23, 1955, 1937-1938]

"An expert is someone who can advise you how to go wrong with confidence"

[Annual Meeting of the American Life Convention, October 1955, and American Petroleum Institute, November 13, 1957, Remarks and Releases]

A Dirksen story to show why voters should return Dwight Eisenhower to White House in 1956: "A New Hampshire farmer wanted to sell his rocky, hilly farm. The real estate agent heard his description, and wrote up an ad in flowery real estate style. He read it to the farmer, who sat listening wide-eyed, and asked for it to be read again. When the agent had read his glowing description for a second time, the farmer grabbed his hat and started out. At the door he paused and said: 'I guess I won't sell after all. That's the kind of farm I've been looking for for 20 years.'"

[*Chicago American*, October 17, 1956, Clippings, f. 102]

In speaking about the complexities of an oil price increase: "The subject is so immense in its dimensions that I apprehend that sometimes we get lost in the machinery. I recited before the investigating committee, since I am a member of that committee, that it brought to mind a man with very modest habiliments who tried to get into a very fashionable church in New York, which had formally attired ushers, and that sort of thing. When he came out, he saw a friend who asked him how it was. The man replied, 'Well, I expect it is one of those places where God got lost in the machinery.' Sometimes it seems to me that the crux of the matter gets lost in the machinery."

[*Congressional Record*, February 19, 1957, 2245]

In speaking against an amendment that would cut off foreign aid to a specific country: "We do not make a Christian by hitting him over the head with a baseball bat."

[*Congressional Record*, June 5, 1958, 10269]

To a Senate colleague:

Yes; but \$35 million is \$35 million; and \$40 million is \$40 million. Even though we have gotten into the habit of dealing with billions, it is still a lot of money, which has to come from the taxpayer. It still constitutes a hole in the budget, which was submitted in the hope that its main lines could be observed, so when the record was finally closed there would be a balanced budget.

I close on this note. I think sometimes of the story of the young lady who said to a very attractive young man, "I will marry you if you save \$1,000." But all her associates were getting married, and she was getting eager. One day she said, "How much did you save?" He said, "\$35." She said, "That's enough."

[*Congressional Record*, February 5, 1959, 1862]

In making the point that one must tell the whole story when justifying spending: "I think sometimes of the fellow who saw an automobile accident out home, when he was put on the stand to testify. Counsel said, 'Did you see the accident?' He said, 'Yes, sir.' Counsel asked, 'How far away were you when it happened?' He said, 'Twenty-two feet nine and three-quarter inches.' Counsel looked at the court and looked at the jury and said, 'Well, Smartie, tell the court and jury, how do you know it was twenty-two feet nine and three-quarter inches?' He said, 'When it happened, I took out a tape measure and measured from where I stood to the point of impact, because I knew some lawyer was going to ask me that question.'"

[*Congressional Record*, February 5, 1959, 1853]

Commenting on the changing nature of an issue: "I think I am a little like the Scotchman who refused to buy a world atlas until the world got just a little more settled."

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1959, 2340]

"The statement made by the majority leader on a number of occasions on the floor and in the tables he inserted in the *Congressional Record* are quite correct, as far as they go. As I said before, however, it is like the man who fell off the 20th floor of a building. As he passed the 6th floor, a friend of his shouted to him, 'Mike, so far you are all right.'"

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1959, 2339]

"I think I am like the bureaucrat downtown whom a constituent of mine went to see. When he got through talking, he looked at the button the bureaucrat had on his coat, and the constituent asked him, 'What do those letters BAIK mean?' The bureaucrat said, 'They stand for, "Boy, am I confused".' The constituent said, 'You do not spell "confused" with a "k".' The bureaucrat said, 'You don't know how confused we are'."

[*Congressional Record*, January 14, 1960, 540]

Cat-in-the-well story to illustrate the problem of financing at a loss:

The situation is a little like that of a fellow I knew in Bridge Square in Minneapolis, when I went to school there. He had in front of his store a sign, "Clothing Below Cost." I asked him, "How do you sell it below cost and still stay in business?"

He replied, "The reason is that we sell so many suits." [Laughter]

So, Mr. President, you will realize that if many suits are sold, and if a loss is taken on each suit sold, something is going to happen. But he said that was the way he stayed in business.

[Dirksen continued by attributing the following story to a former colleague, Dr. Easton, in the House]

He said that a teacher once told her pupils to get out their pencils and their slates and figure the answer to the following: Suppose a cat fell into a well 100 feet deep, and suppose the cat tried to climb out of the well; but suppose that every time the cat climbed up 1 foot, the cat fell back 2 feet. The question, then: How long would it take the cat to get out of the well?

Dr. Eaton said that the children went to work with their pencils and their slates; and finally one boy raised his hand. The teacher said, "Johnny, can I be of any help?"

The boy replied, "Teacher, if I can have a couple more slate pencils and another 45 minutes, I'm pretty sure I can land that cat in hell."

[Laughter]

[*Congressional Record*, February 4, 1960, 2075; earlier version in "The Congressional Front," The Executives' Club of Chicago, February 9, 1940, Remarks and Releases; later version in Address to the 14th Annual Republican Women's Conference, May 6, 1966, 6, Remarks and Releases]

"I believe it was a professor at Johns Hopkins who told of going through the agony of propounding what he thought was an irreducible and incontrovertible truth. Then when his professorial associates knocked it into a cocked hat he fairly screamed, 'Is nothing eternal?' One of his associates said, 'Yes; one thing is eternal, and that is change.'"

[*Congressional Record*, August 12, 1960, 16248]

On people talking about topics they know nothing about: "This reminds me of the story of a man who brought an action for slander against his neighbor who, 13 years

earlier, had called him a rhinoceros. When asked why he had waited so long to take offense, the man replied: "I saw my first rhinoceros yesterday."

[Address to the Michigan Manufacturers' Association, October 20, 1960, 11, Remarks and Releases; *Houston Post*, April 21, 1963, Clippings, f. 319]

A story used in reference to the desire to speed up committee work: "I am reminded of the country doctor in a horse and buggy racing down the roadside. A friend shouted to him, saying, 'Hey, Doc, why such a hurry?' The doctor replied, 'I got to get out there before the patient gets well.'"

[*Congressional Record*, March 9, 1961, 3587]

Speaking of Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN): "Mr. President, one of the finest qualities of the distinguished Senator from Minnesota is that he is never inhibited by facts or lack of facts."

[*Congressional Record*, March 14, 1961, 3885]

In describing a colleague's surprise at an action taken by the White House: "Many years ago a chap who used to study Webster's dictionary got into difficulties when his wife caught him kissing the maid. She said, 'I am surprised.' The young man never lost his composure. He said: 'Oh, no, my dear, you are not surprised; you are astonished. I am the one who is surprised.'"

[*Congressional Record*, August 31, 1961, 17710. See also "The Voice of Management," February 25-27, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

In illustrating why he could not determine the final impact of an event: "I should tell you about the editor in Southern Illinois who got a letter from a farmer who said: 'I'm a sinful person; I do all wicked things, but look at my crops and how much better they are than those of my neighbors.' He said: 'Here it is in October and I'm so much better off than anybody in the neighborhood.' And the editor gave him one line. He said: 'Dear Joe: God does not make up his accounts in October.'"

[Republican Leaders' Press Conference, April 12, 1962, 9]

A story used to point out that someone need not be an expert on a subject to make a valid observation:

I often think of the story about a man who went to the Corcoran Art Gallery in the city of Washington, and, while looking at a painting there, began to make a great many adverse comments.

A man came up to him, and asked, "Are you an artist?"

The man who had been making adverse comments replied, "No."

The other man asked, "Then why do you make all these critical and captious remarks about that painting, if you aren't an artist?"

The man who had been making the comments looked at the other man and said, “Well, I don’t know who you are.”

The reply was, “I am the artist who painted that picture.”

The other man said, “Then let me tell you, in justification, that I ain’t no chicken, but I know when an egg is rotten.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 21, 1962, 17239-40; *Congressional Record*, August 13, 1959, 15777]

When asked if he would release the results of his investigation into the Bay of Pigs affair to the press, Dirksen replied: “In due course, I will put it in the proper hands. But if the proper hands don’t start working properly at the proper time, I may have to find proper use for it elsewhere.”

[*Washington Post*, February 10, 1963, Clippings, f. 310]

During debate on Dirksen’s amendment to add language to indicate that funding for a program came from the taxpayers, not the Treasury: “Whenever it comes out of the taxpayers’ pockets, we are elusive and timid about saying it. I am reminded of the man who took an examination to become a mail carrier. One of the questions was, ‘How far is the sun from the earth?’ He did not have any idea. He finally wrote, ‘Far enough so it won’t interfere with my duties of carrying the mail.’”

[*Congressional Record*, January 14, 1964, 380; Joint Senate-House Leadership Press Conference, April 21, 1964, 12]

On returning to the Senate after a brief illness in 1967 during which Republicans lost three key votes: “Perhaps you can imagine my bedridden amazement, my pajama-ruffled consternation, yes, my pill-laden astonishment this week to learn that three Republican-sponsored proposals had been defeated by very narrow margins, victims of that new White House telephonic half-Nelson known as the Texas twist. To those of you on the Democratic side of the aisle who are still rubbing your bruised arms, I can only extend my sympathy and hope that you who must face the electorate this fall won’t need them.”

[“Words of the Wizard,” September 1969, Clippings, f. 656] NOTE: According to the *Congressional Record*, Dirksen expressed this in a letter read to the Senate while Dirksen was hospitalized on February 7, 1964 [*Congressional Record*, February 7, 1964, 2378]

On his Senate colleagues’ tendencies to promise too much: “I am a little less liberal, I believe, than my distinguished colleague. I feel a little like one of the two sailors who were marooned on an island. Their plight was desperate. Finally, they erected a pole with a shirt on it. One of them got on his knees and began to pray. He said, ‘Oh, Lord, if Thou wouldst save us, we would give you everything we have. Oh, Lord, if Thou wouldst save us, we will do anything for you.’ Just then the other sailor spoke up and said, ‘Wait a minute. Don’t promise too doggone much. I think I see a ship.’”

[*Congressional Record*, May 8, 1965, 7527]

Referring to “unfunded liability”: “It’s a nice sweet term. It’s like so many phrases in government that completely disarm you unless you look under the chip. It’s like that fellow that I used to tell about who made a rundown of a lady’s genealogy to build up the family tree and he noticed she had a great uncle who had been electrocuted in the penitentiary, well he didn’t want to say that in the family tree because he was going to get a good fee for doing it and finally he covered it over very sweetly. He said there was one great uncle named John who occupied the chair of applied electricity in a large public institution.”

[“Don’t Push Too Hard, March 8, 1965, Remarks and Releases]

During debate on the debt ceiling on June 16, 1965, Dirksen recounted the stories of the men digging a hole in the street, the man chasing the mule, Johnny saving the cat in the well, the woman who wrote the bad check, etc. Excellent examples of using stories to make a point.

[*Congressional Record*, June 16, 1965, 13884-13885]

A stock phrase when pointing out how a remark, an action, or a bill would have little impact: “[Insert action] has all the impact of a snowflake on the bosom of the Potomac.”

[Clippings, April 20, 1966, f. 401]

“It is said that the mind will contain what the seat will endure, and I want you to be comfortable”

[Address, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, May 2, 1966, 2, Remarks and Releases]

In calling attention to half-truths he charged the Johnson administration of propagating: “It is like the man who fell off the 20th floor of a building. As he passed the 6th floor, a friend of his shouted to him, ‘Mike, so far you are all right.’”

[“Honk, Honk, The Marigold,” *Esquire*, October 1966, Clippings, f. 448]

When asked if he would endorse a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968: “No.” “Do you have any feelings?” “I have feelings.” “What are your feelings?” “They are undisclosed.”

[*Pekin Times*, June 12, 1968, Clippings, f. 604]

“We elected a sheriff up in our county; he called his wife about 11:00 o’clock and said: “Darling, I’m elected?” She said: “Honest?” “Well,” he said, “Why bring that up?”

[“What’s Down the Road?” Remarks, USSL Annual Convention, Miami Beach Florida, Remarks and Releases, November 14, 1968]

When asked at a press conference what had happened to a tax reform message he had said two or three weeks ago would be available “in two or three weeks”: “Well, you know, a week is a relative thing. I will remind you of the Scriptures. It says: one week is 1000 years and 1000 years is one day.”

[*Washington Post*, March 17, 1969, Clippings, f. 635]

“That idea has as much effect as a snowflake on the bosom of the Potomac.”
[Anne Culler Penney, “The Golden Voice of the Senate,” *GRIT* Family Section, June 1, 1969, Clippings, f. 648]

Religion

“The sermon text was ‘How Shall We Find God.’ I thought the preacher did a rather poor job of developing the text. Sort of left the congregation up [in] the air so after church, I got to reflecting on it and answered it for myself. I find Him in the beautiful and peaceful and happy experience that we’ve had together and in the fact that as the years march on, I find an even greater happiness and joy in the devotion and love which we’ve shared. I find Him also in the opportunity to say a kind word, do a good deed, lend a smile in the dark and obscure places in the hope of making things just a bit brighter for someone else. I find Him everywhere.”

[Personal Letters, April 5, 1937]

“About the Newburg matter, think nothing of it. Continue to go to church. Don’t get angry or bitter. Treat him civilly but cool. There have been a million preachers before him and will be millions after him. Despite all of them, the world will not be perfect. It’s a sign of weakness in a preacher when he seeks to make the world good by abolishing all forms of temptation. The Great Preacher 1900 years ago did’nt [sic] use that technique at all. He was’nt [sic] even concerned with the external manifestation of temptation and sin. He had but one interest, but one approach, but one technique. It was not to remove temptation but to make heart and mind and soul secure against temptation. Did’nt [sic] he say in the very shadow of the cross, ‘Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.’ By world of course he meant worldliness. He did’nt [sic] say, ‘Be of good cheer for I have passed an ordinance abolishing all places where one might get a drink or play pool.’ He did’nt [sic] say, ‘Be of good cheer for I have caused all automobiles to be banished.’ He perfected the heart and made it proof against the blandishments of the world. Why is it that our preachers with few exceptions are so short sighted, so lacking in discernment that they have wholly departed from the method and technique of the Galilean? But because preachers do it, is no indication that we must do it. We shall continue, even as we have always endeavored, to bring some sunshine to dark corners, to bring gladness, to dispel gloom, to reach a hand to those in distress and try in our humble way even as the Great Physician tried to heal hearts. An Old Hebrew Proverb says, ‘A merry heart causes good healing.’ There is far more good healing in a blithe spirit, a ringing laugh, a joyous countenance than in all the preachments of Stanley Newburg and a million others. So, precious darling, keep your merry heart because it causes good healing, not only for yourself but for everyone with whom you come in contact. Perhaps empty churches are no accident after all, especially when one sees people,

Sunday after Sunday, struggle to get a seat in some of the churches here. And now a kiss to seal my own little preachment.”

[Personal Letters, ca. February 25, 1939]

On proposing a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary participation in prayer in the public schools:

Several thousand years before the Galilean was born—and perhaps far longer than that—the original parents were warned about the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. They were warned only that to touch it or eat of the fruit meant death. But the tempter serpent beguiled Eve and she took of the fruit and shared it with Adam. There was no compulsion. There was complete freedom of choice and having chosen, they must bear the consequences. This then is the foundation for the whole doctrine of vicarious atonement. This freedom of choice not only in the spiritual but the material world as well has been eroding and with it come the vexations, the frustrations, the desperations which mark the lives of so many.

Men must look to God for comfort, for solace, for consolation, for guidance, for hope. ...

Prayer is the road map to God. It should become the greatest adventure for young minds. Each must find the way for himself. This takes some doing—the development of the right habits, the building of spiritual muscle. This can come only from practice and rehearsal day after day when minds are alert.

How strange that we spend hundreds of millions of public funds every year to develop physical fitness and harden the muscles of American youth but when it comes to hardening the spiritual muscles through practice and rehearsal of prayer, it becomes enshrouded in quaint legalism and the jargon of church and state. Give Caesar what he requires but give God a little also.

[Press Release, ca. March 22, 1966, Remarks and Releases]

On the role of prayer:

EVANS: “Does prayer play an important part in your life?”

DIRKSEN: Oh, I believe, the most important part. Because when the way is not clear, then you’ve got to go to the pipeline. And what is the pipeline to the Almighty if it isn’t prayer.

[“Opinion in the Capital: A Metromedia-WTTG Production, October 17, 1966, 2, Remarks and Releases]

Thanksgiving prayer:

We are thankful, oh Lord, who in your own mysterious way has responded to our every entreaty in time of trouble and desperation as individuals and as a Nation.

We are thankful for the grace of a benevolent God who has watched over the destiny of the Republic; who has imbued the people of every generation with compassion for the less fortunate peoples of the earth; who has kept alight a zealous love of liberty from which has come the opportunity to provide creature comforts which we enjoy in abundant measure; who has sustained us in troublous days and years when high ideals and noble purposes were in jeopardy; who has been the lamp to our feet as we sought to bring charity, mercy and justice into dark corners; who has inspired our search for the abundant life for all people; who has prospered the work of our minds and our hands; who has ever sought to keep our feet in the path of righteousness and has kindled in us a steadfast determination to preserve peace on earth and good will toward men; for the sacrifices made in every generation that freedom might live; for every generation that was here on earth before us and builded themselves into every structure, every rose, every spiritual and moral attribute of this blessed country; for every sturdy soul who asserted his convictions and so enriched the legacy which is ours; for those who this day stand on freedom's frontier far from home to help keep the promises which we have made to a weak and defenseless people. For all this we are thankful.

[“Thanksgiving Prayer,” November 1966, Remarks and Releases]

Speaking in favor of his proposal for a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary prayer in public schools: “What we have in this country is a religion of secularism, an official Government position favoring the non-believer over the believer. Freedom of religion was intended and it ought rightly to be, a shield protecting the right of conscience of a citizen. It is being used now with the endorsement of the Government as a weapon to strike down the free exercise of religion protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution.”

[“Prayer Amendment” typescript, July 9, 1968, Remarks and Releases]

Memorial service for Robert Humphrey:

The work of the Great Designer cannot be destroyed by fire, for that but transmutes what man put together into other forms such as light, heat, energy and gases. Not by earthquakes, which but tumble man's work, but do not destroy the elemental substance. Not by storms and tidal waves, which only rearrange what the Great Designer placed there. In autumn the gaily colored leaves fall gently on earth not to be destroyed but to be embraced by nature for future use. From the hand

of the Great Designer comes the inevitable caress of spring to bring life and color and fragrance and beauty to the eager earth.

It is the resurrection of spring. It is an answer to the ageless question of Job. "If a man die, shall he live again?" Surely he shall, as surely as day follows night. As surely as the stars follow their course, as surely as the crest of every wave brings its trough.

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 85-86]

Senate

When Senator John Pastore proposed a rule requiring Senate debate to be limited to the legislative subject for the first three hours, Dirksen replied: “Ha, ha, ha and you might add ho, ho, ho!”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

“Congress is really the home of the split infinitive, where it finds its finest fruition. This is the place where the dangling participle is certainly nourished.”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Dirksen described debate in the Senate as “the home of the split infinitive, where it finds its finest fruition. This is the place where the dangling participle is certainly nourished. This is the home of the broken sentence.”

[No date, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

As a House member: “Tonight, at 7:30 we had a conference with the Senate on agricultural appropriations. Senators are such fun. They don’t know much, they’re homely, they’re stubborn and sort of stupid. But I guess we have to have Senators just like we must have mosquitoes and frogs. We finished with the Senators at 11:00 p.m. Or I hope we will. It was like a gory battle in which neither side won. ‘Gory’ is really not a good word. There ain’t enough plasma in a Senator to make a good pot of gore.”

[Personal Letters, June 23, 1943]

During debate over the nomination of Charles E. Bohlen to be Ambassador to Moscow, Dirksen, who was opposed, stated: “I may say to my good friend the Senator from Idaho [Mr. Welker], ‘be not weary in well doing,’ because in my opinion we have a good function to perform. Besides, what kind of Senate would this be, what kind of country would this be, if there were no dissonance of spirit? There is one place where there is no dissonance, and that is Russia. God forbid that the Senate of the United States should reach the stage where we would all think through the same medium, through the same funnel, as it were, and all come up with the same conclusion. That would not be worthy of America. Let conscience and conviction have free play. Let heart and mind speak.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 27, 1953, 2387]

“Mr. President, the United States Senate is truly a great deliberative body. There are, of course, occasions when it is not so deliberative. Discussions may not be as deep as the sea on occasion, but they are, at least, as wide as the 48 States. I have been

entranced this afternoon by what started out as a protestation of the order or policy announced by the Secretary of Agriculture. It was not very long before that discussion encompassed the Federal Reserve System, the Economic Report, the Soviet Union, high price supports, utilities, and everything else under the sun. So now I propose to disturb the equanimity of the Senate for a moment with a fact or two. Facts as we know, are stubborn things, but now and then it is necessary to advance or present them.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 16, 1954, 1772]

“I am always delighted to think of the Senate as a club, because it seems to me the Senate functions effectively and functions earnestly if we never quite lose the ‘clubby’ spirit. We can become very angry, and at times, I suppose, so intolerant of one another; but I remember the almost iridescent line written by the great sales manager of Christianity, the Apostle Paul, who said: ‘Let your forbearance be known in the sight of men.’ Nothing can quite equal that line, because this is an arena in which tolerance and forbearance are so urgently necessary.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 20, 1954, 15482]

During debate over the censure resolution re Joseph McCarthy, Dirksen entered into the record the following examples of “robust language” uttered on the Senate floor over the course of history:

Falsification

A doctored report

Cowardice

Liar

A dirty dog

A willfully malicious, wicked liar

Trickery and sharp practice

Making the Senate a sewer for the vaporings of a Senator

Contemptible speech

Conspiracy to steal an election

Jackasses.

Two-bit committees

A tissue of falsehoods

Political trickery and subterfuge

Blasphemy

A Senator in company with Stalin and the Daily Worker

Trained seals

Rotten filth

Cards that are red with the blood of treachery

Defiling his seat

Subordinating integrity for a few slimy votes

Like a rotten mackerel that shines and stinks in the moonlight

Most contemptible and degraded of beings

A scavenger bird hunting offal and putrefying matter

A great lair and a dirty dog
[*Congressional Record*, December 2, 1954, 16373-16374]

In justifying a pay increase and an increase in the office allowance: “Why are we so niggardly about our own affairs, I should like to know? Do we not want to do a good job, Mr. President? Can my colleagues not explain their need to their constituents? If I thought for one moment that enough of my constituents had some doubt about my integrity in public office and the expenditure of this fund, I would quit the Senate. It is just that simple. When are we going to get over our timidity? When are we going to vote for ourselves the instrumentalities which are necessary in order that we may serve the public? ... Running a senatorial office has become almost an industry.”
[*Congressional Record*, February 25, 1955, 2152-2153]

After Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson (D-TX) noted Dirksen’s move from the House to the Senate and that some do not consider that a promotion, Dirksen replied: “I have heard that said, too, but I point out, of course, that in this great deliberative body—and I am glad of it—we constantly preserve its deliberative character, and its sometimes lightly unpredictable character. We have no rule of germaneness. We have no limitation on debate. After all those years of difficulty trying to compress world-shaking remarks into 5 minutes, under the House rule, what a sheer delight it was, what abandon of spirit I experienced, when I came to the Senate and discovered when I got the floor I could keep it endlessly, so long as there was any breath in this poor and feeble body.” [Laughter]
[*Congressional Record*, June 29, 1960, 14879]

Commenting on the close of the Senate in 1961 after paying homage to Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-MT) and other colleagues: “I ought to say a word about the program that has been consummated thus far. I think the Congress finally has succumbed to the very infectious virus of bigness that began at the beginning of the century, when we first heard about big business. After a while we head about big government. Then we began to hear about big labor. This whole bigness idea has intruded itself on the thinking of the country.” Goes on to give examples of “bigness.” Resumes: “Big debt is one aspect. We have the biggest debt we have ever had.”
[*Congressional Record*, September 26, 1961, 21381]

Commenting on Rep. Charles Halleck’s (R-IN) observation about delay in the Senate on a civil rights bill: “I’m sure he didn’t imply for a moment that the Senate was not diligent ... probably what he meant to indicate was that the Senate was diligent in one place for a hundred days.”
[Joint Senate-House Leadership Press Conference, June 26, 1964, 10]

Dirksen thought the word “filibuster” was “odious” and preferred “extended discussion.” He explained why: “Moreover, it’s more readily translatable into giving information to the country. You see, Thomas Jefferson once said, ‘To inform the

minds of the people is the duty of a public servant.’ So I am just trying to inform the people.”

[CBS’s *Face the Nation*, September 19, 1965, 9, Remarks and Releases]

“I am opposed to a modification of the Rule 22, and it is simply a case of trying to save and keep intact the kind of a parliamentary system we have today, and that has endured beyond any other constitutional government on the face of the earth. This government, representative government, in all its glory, is the oldest without any significant change under God’s sun, and the reason we have it is because we haven’t made it too easy to rush through a lot of panaceas, and the things on which they pant so hotly in order to shove through as their brain children, and probably not for the benefit of the country. I think Rule 22 has served a very useful purpose, and I say that if you have got a proposition that has merit you can get cloture if you have to have it.”

[ABC’s *Issues and Answers*, January 15, 1967, 11, Remarks and Releases]

Just before a vote to approve a proposal to authorize the installation of a concealed public address system by sacrificing, if necessary, their ink wells, quills, pen holders, and blotting sand to make way for the hidden microphones, thus breaking a tradition going back to 1819, Dirksen concurred with the idea while assuring his colleagues that they would not have to give up their snuff boxes:

I think we ought to update the Senate chamber. I thought at one time every Senator’s desk was equipped with a snuffbox. I understand they have the snuffbox down near the door and it is glued down or something so Senators can get some snuff but can’t take away the box as an antique of souvenir.

But I do not know what these gadgets are [he conceded while pointing to his desk]. There is this sand shaker. I never used it in 16 years in the Senate [he said of the device once used to dry ink quickly].

This is the first time I have shaken any sand from it. I hope that we will be willing to spend a little of the public’s money to get the best gadgetry we can.

We can punctuate the air with many speeches and hurl an assortment of rhetoric at one another.

Well, it is rather relaxing and restful to modulate the voice a little into the upper reaches, and then let it sink into the cellar, or let it be musical at times, or let it thunder like a burst of oratory from Daniel Webster.

But we cannot do very well in this chamber. If we had one of those little gadgets [referring to the microphones], oh, what we could do then, particularly if we project some poetry into our speeches. I think it would add not only eloquence but also persuasiveness to our speeches.

[ca. January 27, 1967, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

“What amazes me is that, after the laboratory work done in committee, so many amendments seemed to incubate in the fecund brains of senators.”

[February 22, 1968, Neil MacNeil Collection, Notes, Dirksen]

Spending

Explaining his philosophy on government spending: “I am not opposed to Government spending, but I am opposed to increased Government spending unless there is an absolute need and a conclusive justification for it, and that has not been demonstrated in connection with the bill that is before us today. We are going to have to be like the old wag who, when he was asked to donate to the building of a fence around the cemetery, said, ‘I will not donate because it is not needed. In the first place, nobody who is in the cemetery can get out, and in the second place, nobody who is on the outside wants to get in.’”

[*Congressional Record*, March 31, 1939, Remarks and Releases]

“The treasury cannot afford to give any creditor a bad check. It cannot act like the wife who received a notice from her bank saying her account had insufficient funds. When her husband scolded her, she said: ‘Oh, I know what I will do. I will just give them a check for whatever the deficit is.’”

[“Penny Pinching Comes Naturally to Illinois Senator,” unsourced, Clippings, f. 4j]

On spending in 1940:

The fact is that \$465,000 would probably run this Government two and three-quarters minutes today, an indication of how we have expended money in astronomical proportions, without adequate results. I recognize the fact that the Government must spend money in periods of distress and aggravated relief. But my contention is that for all of the money that has been expended, with the national debt nursing the ceiling of almost \$45,000,000,000, that no commensurate benefits have been accomplished either in the domain of farm relief or for unemployment. ... And about the only answer we get, of course, is that, “Oh, you are definitely better off than you were in 1932.” Well, that is like pulling a fellow out of the well, and when you get him three-quarters of the way up you tie the rope and when he begins to expostulate and raise Cain and wants to be pulled out of the well you say to him, “Oh now, shut up! Aren't you better off than when you were down at the bottom of the well!” So he is still dangling in mid-air, three-quarters of the way above the bottom, and that is the apology that we get for the expenditure of some \$22,000,000,000 for all kinds of recovery and relief, and the results are evident if one will lift his

eyes like Ishmael did in the wilderness a long time ago and survey the continuing misery, unemployment, and farm prices that are still far from parity. And until those two primary problems are solved all other things are just like so many mustard plasters put upon a boil when the scalpel is necessary, and we contend that we have to get back to some of those fundamentals if we ever expect to get this country out of its trouble, and the real fundamental is to develop venture capital and the expenditure of venture capital.

[*The American Forum of the Air*, March 3, 1940, Remarks and Releases]

In remarks on the House floor dealing with the need to manage foreign aid more effectively in order to save money: “You cannot do it by saving a million here and a million there. Real economy depends on how many billions you can save for the taxpayers of the country”

[*Congressional Record*, October 4, 1945, Remarks and Releases]

In commenting on Democrats’ penchant for expanding government, Dirksen compared President Truman to a little boy at a party. The hostess says, “If you eat any more cake you’ll bust.” The little boy pauses and then says, “Pass the cake and get out of the way!”

[*Notebooks*, f. 116, 246]

Dirksen assailed “the stubborn belief that thrift is good for the people but not for the government. The way to develop buying power is not to vote it but to produce it. A taxpayer gets more from his dollar when he spends it himself than he does when it makes a wasteful journey to Washington and back.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 26, 1949, A6151-A6152]

Opposing a federal program to provide \$10,000,000 in grants and scholarships for educational purposes: “Mr. President, I have no doubt that all these things which come within the purview of the Congress are desirable and nice for the country. I doubt that I have ever seen a bill which has been carefully prepared and circumspectly considered that did not have some merit. But today we are at the jumping-off place. The solvency of the Nation is our great challenge on the domestic front today, and I am not going to see any of these bills get by, if by lifting my voice and devoting my feeble talent I can stop it, until we get a pretty firm and convincing answer as to where we are going to get the money necessary to implement the legislation.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 12, 1951, 2239]

Opposing spending for public health: “Mr. President, that is all I have to say. It is a very simple story. Economy is old-fashioned. It reminds me of the sweet young mother who called the doctor to come and attend her baby. Finally the doctor said, ‘Well, my dear, just give the baby some castor oil.’ She was a rather arty person, and she said, ‘Doctor, castor oil is so old-fashioned.’ The kindly doctor said, ‘I know, my dear, but babies are old-fashioned things, too.’”

[*Congressional Record*, March 15, 1951, 2480]

Dirksen on funding for the International Children's Welfare Fund: "I was about to relinquish this line of inquiry, except to emphasize once more that while I am on record as being against all kinds of foreign aid, there is one field in which we do ourselves proud, and where we get a return for our money. That is in the case of the tots and youngsters in the formative stages who still know something about the virtues of gratitude and who express their appreciation to this country. So I wanted to be reasonably certain that there would be adequate funds to carry on, because this is one feature on which we can look back with pride."

[*Congressional Record*, May 21, 1951, 5511]

During a debate over appropriations: "Today we have an astronomical budget. In 1950 I spoke before many people, saying to them, 'If you expect me to go to Washington and get you money out of the Federal till, you are badly mistaken. I do not propose to do it. I propose to see the good of the whole country benefited, and the knife will go deeply into all requests for further spending.'"

[*Congressional Record*, June 11, 1951, 6363]

On an upcoming bill to raise taxes: "Let me remind the Senate that it will not be too long before there will be a tax bill before us. Perhaps it will be before us in several months. No one knows at the moment what additional taxes will be required, whether \$5,000,000, \$6,000,000, \$7,000,000, or more; but we have no moral right to sweat that kind of money out of the pocketbooks of the taxpayers unless we can justify the expenditures authorized by Congress—and in that connection I refer not only to billions of dollars, but also to millions of dollars, and also to hundreds of thousands of dollars, as well."

[*Congressional Record*, July 26, 1951, 8927]

Preparing to introduce an amendment to reduce foreign aid by \$500,000,000: "I do not know whether other Senators share my concern about the fiscal difficulties and the menace of the suicide route. Mr. President. We lift our voices in magnificent cliches about the danger from outside. Are we alert to the fact that America can die by suicide from within? The suicide route, the disaster route, is the fiscal route. If anyone has any doubt about it he need only lift his eyes, as did Ishmael, and contemplate what happened to Italy, contemplate what happened to the once great Republic of France, and contemplate what has happened to the other great Anglo-Saxon country, England."

[*Congressional Record*, August 30, 1951, 10836]

In reference to foreign aid spending: "Mr. President, within a stone's throw of where we are debating today sits a committee of Senators sweating, laboring earnestly to find a million dollars here, a million dollars there, in taxes. They are sitting within a few steps of this Chamber. I am referring to the Senate Finance Committee. They are trying to protect the business structure of the country which generates the wealth which produces the taxes we so wantonly and with blithe spirits and gleeful abandon freely squander. And I think it is squandering as a matter of fact. This is the most

remarkable area of contrast that I know anything about. In that committee they try to find a few million dollars in taxes. Here we are considering an amendment increasing an already huge appropriation by \$1,000,000,000. It is like using a teaspoon in order to get a few taxes into the Treasury and at the same time at the back door using a scoop shovel to shovel them out.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 31, 1951, 10889-10890]

“How much is a billion? I do not know, and I do not believe anyone in this body or in Government has a conception of what a billion dollars really is. I do know that it is painful and anguishing to sweat it out of the American people, and the time has come to have some regard for them and for the solvency of our economy as we put larger and larger burdens upon them. But we must not be deluded and taken down some fallacious avenue of emotionalism of which we have heard so much. It seems to me that ‘give-away’ has become a mania. It is astonishing, I say to my friend from Vermont, what a strange passion has grown up in the country that the checkbook is a cure for every problem, foreign and domestic. I do not share that idea, because the progress we have made so far does not support and justify that kind of theory.”

[*Congressional Record*, August 31, 1951, 10879]

After totaling the requests for military expenditures: “If that amount cannot give this country financial indigestion then I do not know what money really means.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 13, 1951, 11235]

In recalling his time in the House when he was a member of the House Committee on Banking and Currency, and Marriner Eccles appeared before the committee. The White House had announced that the nation could endure a debt of \$155,000,000,000. Dirksen asked Eccles, “What is the limit of our debt?” Eccles replied, “I don’t know. It can’t be expressed in money, but it is that point where people finally begin to put their money in nylon hose and hide it under the Beautyrest mattress, when bond redemptions exceed the amount of bond sales, and when the fiscal solidarity and the financial structure of our country begin to show signs of weakness and disintegration.” According to Dirksen, “What else matters? Then we are on the way toward a kind of totalitarian strait-jacket in our own country. It means that every other value disappears.”

[*Congressional Record*, September 30, 1951, 11235]

In consideration of a supplemental appropriations bill, which Dirksen called (and what used to be called) a “deficiency bill”: “Then as the end of the fiscal year approaches there will be an urgent deficiency bill. Then there will be a superurgent deficiency bill, and finally a superduper urgent deficiency bill.”

[*Congressional Record*, October 8, 1951, 12751]

“Our future, then,—its character and the kind of freedom we shall enjoy will be determined in large measure, I think, by that one talent, that one great capacity that is within the hands of the people themselves; and that you spell in the form of a six-letter word that begins with ‘T’ and ends with ‘T’! What is it? Well, frankly folks, it’s

the word Thrift, which is just a synonym for frugality—the talent for saving, and doing it systematically.”

[“Thrift and the Individual,” National Thrift Committee, January 19, 1952, 5, Remarks and Releases]

On President Truman’s budget in 1952 calling for \$85 billion in spending: “So when we talk about the national budget, we mean the nation purse—what goes into it, meaning taxes, what comes out of it, meaning the spending that is authorized by Congress. So they [the people] should have an interest in this national budget, for the thing we’re talking about this morning is a book the size of an unexpurgated edition of [the] Sears Roebuck’s catalogue, with a thousand pages in it, which is nothing more than a blueprint of what we’re going to spend and what we’re going to extricate from the people’s pockets.”

[*People’s Platform*, CBS Radio, January 27, 1952, Remarks and Releases]

“How much is a billion? Ladies and gentlemen, I served on the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives. I thought I had some familiarity with figures. I thought I had some fine comprehension of what a million is. Pretty soon million was edged off the page and billion crept in, and I can now see that trillion is coming into rather common use and it frightens me a good deal.”

[National Automobile Dealers Association, January 30, 1952, 7, Remarks and Releases]

Opposing an increase in appropriations for mutual security in 1952: “But our business here as custodians and stewards of the Government is to make sure that we do not fasten a burden upon our taxpayers that is going to destroy the incentive, risk capital in enterprises, destroy our economy, pour our country into a strait-jacket, and finally invite collapse.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 28, 1952, 6093]

In a debate about spending for public housing during President Dwight Eisenhower’s first year: “I do not believe in cheese paring. I went through a sad and dismal experience of that kind during the 12 years I spent on the Appropriations Committee in the House or Representatives. It was a cut of \$100,000 here and a cut of \$200,000 there. I am not unmindful that a penny saved, as Franklin said, is a penny earned, but it is a long and tortuous course toward a balanced budget to do it that way.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 20, 1953, 5198]

“Mr. President, there is no royal road to a balanced budget. If there is, I have never discovered it in all the time I have been dealing with the millions of little figures that to some of us what looks like an unexpurgated mail-order catalog but what we call the budget of the United States, which contains some 1,100 pages.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 20, 1953, 5198]

During debate on an agricultural appropriations measure:

As I seek to analyze the measure proposed I think of a man at home who had a balky little mule, the mule lay down on its side, and the man could not do anything with it. Not even building a fire under the

little critter would do any good. After a while a veterinarian came by and said, "What is the matter, Joe? Can you not do anything with your mule?"

The man said, "No."

The veterinarian took a syringe and injected some fluid into the mule's hindquarters, and 60 seconds later the mule got up and bounded down the street. The owner of the mule said to the veterinarian, after looking at him with a big smile like a western sunburst, "How much did that cost?"

The veterinarian said, "About 25 cents."

The man said, "Here is 75 cents. Give me two shots so I can catch the mule."

[*Congressional Record*, April 11, 1956, 6099-6100]

On inflation: "When fire destroys a structure, there is tumult and excitement. Dry rot destroys just as completely and is never noticed. So with inflation. Like a thief in the night, it destroys the value of pensions, annuities, pay checks, cash, government bonds without being properly noticed or understood."

[*Chicago Daily News*, January 1957, Clippings, f. 108]

During debate about funding federal pensions: "Mr. President, \$589 million is not hay. This provision would become effective in the fiscal year 1959. Where are we to get the money? Already we have preliminary estimates that the Federal deficit will be eleven thousand million dollars. I say 'thousand million' instead of 'billion' because it sounds bigger, and because it scares me more than the other way of expressing it. When I was a little boy and was good all during the week, my mother would give me a penny on Sunday, and to show her arch-frugality, she would say, 'My son, don't spend in all in one place.' So a country boy is frightened by these figures. So I say 'eleven thousand million dollars' will be the deficit, according to all present reports."

[*Congressional Record*, July 30, 1958, 15571]

"I have referred to the budget as the national pocketbook. We cannot take anything out of it unless we put something in it. Every child knows that. I have seen little girls who received pocketbooks for Christmas. A little girl immediately opens the pocketbook to see what is in it. Something must be put into it first. So we put something in the pocketbook. If we undertake to remain within the limits of the pocketbook, we will have a little nestegg. That would be a pretty comfortable feeling for the years ahead."

[*Congressional Record*, January 20, 1959, 919]

“We cannot spend the country rich. It has been tried before under the philosophy of John Maynard Keynes. I believe that greatest thing he ever said was, ‘In the long run, we will all be dead.’ He ought to know, because he is dead.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 20, 1959, 919]

“Even though we have gotten into the habit of dealing with billions, it is still a lot of money, which has to come from the taxpayer.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 5, 1959, 1862]

In advising the Senate that he would vote against a housing bill that cost too much: “As I think about it, I think about the old cowpoke who went into Nieman Marcus’ store in Dallas, Tex. He looked around at all the fancy gadgetry. When the saleslady came up, she said, ‘Is there something I can show you?’ He was rather shy and timid, but he said, ‘Lady, I ain’t never seen so many things that I could do without.’ I think the time has come for this country to do without a few things in the interest of a balanced budget.”

[*Congressional Record*, February 5, 1959, 1914]

Regarding the budget: “I have said, with respect to authorization bills, that I do not want the Congress or the country to commit fiscal suicide on the installment plan. I never think of the fiscal situation without being reminded of a Government project out home many years ago. It was a make-work project. There was a huge hole in the street. When the work had been finished and the hole filled, there was a great mound of earth, which constituted a traffic hazard. The gentlemen wielding the shovels did not know what to do. Finally they held a conference on the curb. Someone said, ‘I will tell you how to get rid of that mound of earth. We will just dig the hole deeper.’”

[*Congressional Record*, February 9, 1959, 2100; See also *Congressional Record*, April 23, 1951, 4158]

“Some people would have us believe that the Federal treasury is a bottomless grab-bag which never needs to be conserved or replenished. Because of this attitude we have seen the national debt soar to dizzying heights. The Federal debt in December, 1958, was \$283 billion—about \$7,000 per family in the United States. ... We cannot spend our way into prosperity, nor can we preserve our prosperity and our free enterprise system following a reckless policy of spending beyond our income in peacetime.”

[Dirksen, “Battle of the Budget,” *Progress*, March 1959, p. 7, Clippings, f. 156]

“Rubber is good in a woman’s girdle, but not in the buying value of a dollar.”

[Remarks before the 7th Annual Republican Women’s Conference, April 14, 1959, Remarks and Releases; Daily News Wire Services, April 1959, Clippings, f. 159]

Opposing an appropriation for the National Institute for International Health in 1959, in which he favored spending for health and research but wanted to see results: “Mr. President, I must say that I have never had ‘spender-itis’; I have never had ‘squander-itis.’ But I freely admit to having ‘budget-itis’; and there is a reason for it—because I have watched this Government in its every function grow. ... I say to those afflicted

with ‘spendthriftitis,’ ‘squanderitis,’ budget busting, and ‘squanderomania,’ these figures [on spending beyond the president’s budget] speak for themselves.”

[*Congressional Record*, May 20, 1959, 8615-8616]

In arguing against overriding President Eisenhower’s veto of a spending bill: “As we approach this vote, I can only say to Senators, from the very depths of my heart, to think about the vote earnestly. This is not a light matter. If there should be a tottering of values at some time because one too many straws have been put upon the back of the fiscal camel, let us not look for guilt and culpability elsewhere. Let us be a little introspective and say, ‘Perhaps we in the legislative branch were at fault.’”

[*Congressional Record*, September 10, 1959, 18925. The bill passed over the veto.]

During debate about the budget: “We are talking now about moon shots. It has been indicated that perhaps we ought to spend \$8 billion, \$9 billion, or some such amount, over a period of 5 years in order to get to Luna. It is a great thing in the field of lunar dynamics, I suppose, and there must be people who think this is one of the urgent matters before the country today. I can only say that I hope lunar dynamics will not become dynamic lunacy before we finish, and will not continue to push the budget ceilingward until we reach the moon. We are almost in orbit with the budget now. We have finally crashed the \$100 billion barrier.”

[*Congressional Record*, June 12, 1961, 10000]

Opposing unbudgeted spending included in the Marine Sciences and Research Act of 1961: “We are talking about moon shots today. I do not know when we shall put a man on the moon, but we have put the budget on the moon. If we would translate the dollars into silver dollars and lay those silver dollars end to end they would make 50 strings from the earth to the moon. We may not put a man on the moon for awhile, but our budget is there.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 28, 1961, 13894]

On spending for waterfowl conservation: “But I never get away from the fact that from day to day we are living with a structure of government that must be made to function properly. It must be kept within fiscal bounds in the hope that not only our own generation but the taxpayers who come after—the children, the grandchildren, the great-grandchildren—will not regard what we did in this time and generation with a baleful and cynical eye and say, ‘What a tragic and dismal inheritance we got from our great grandpappies back in the decade of development—the 1960’s.’”

[*Congressional Record*, August 28, 1961, 17179]

On spending in the Kennedy administration: “The favorite sum of money is \$1 billion—a billion a year for a fatter federal payroll, a billion here and a billion there. For this year—\$93 billion—the biggest peacetime budget in American history.”

[Republican Leaders’ Press Conference, March 8, 1962, 5]

When asked if he would favor a tax cut: “Well, if there are reductions in expenditures so that you don’t plow an atomic hole in your budget and enlarge the deficit to

dimensions that ought to frighten anybody, then of course, you're on different ground. But we haven't reached that point yet."

[Republican Leaders' Press Conference, June 29, 1962, 10]

"The budget submitted by President Kennedy is incredible. We are told that the New Frontier is going to get over its chronic deficits by having a deficit so big that the nation will enjoy rapid growth and the jobless will commence returning to work. It is a somewhat puzzling theory. If deficit financing hasn't solved the problem, it isn't because a balanced budget is better but because the deficit wasn't big enough. In other words the best way to correct mistakes is to make bigger ones."

[Press release, January 17, 1963, Remarks and Releases]

On the Kennedy administration's budget: "When you're talking about economy and cutting of budget, that doesn't mean you cut every item in the budget. Certainly there must be some acceptable and agreeable items. A seven pound budget with one million five hundred thousand items in it—that looks like an unexpurgated edition of a mail-order catalog—surely in it there must be something with which we can agree. But you do a selective job when it comes to cutting a budget."

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, March 19, 1963, 6]

During debate on the debt ceiling: "Then, Mr. President, we go into an interesting fiction: We now make a distinction between the permanent debt ceiling and a temporary debt ceiling. We have had nine temporary ceilings and three permanent ceilings in the last 8 years. Then, to outdo ourselves, we have actually had five ceilings in the past 3 months. There was one ceiling on the last day in March. The following morning there was a different ceiling. Then there was still another ceiling, as the chairman of our committee well knows. On June 24, there will be still another ceiling; and on June 30 there will be another ceiling; and if we do not do anything by the 30th of June, there will be still a different ceiling. So we are willing to be 'ceilinged' to death, it seems."

[*Congressional Record*, May 28, 1963, 9731]

Commenting on opening the door a crack for further appropriations: "It is something like the question a teacher asked Johnny: 'If there are 20 sheep in the barn, and you let 1 sheep out, how many will be left?' Johnny said, 'None.' The teacher said, 'Johnny, you know that 1 from 20 leaves 19. You don't know your arithmetic.' Johnny said, 'Teacher, you don't know your sheep.' Just open the door a little, and pretty soon the whole flock will be out."

[*Congressional Record*, June 4, 1963, 10046]

On the tension between "pork" and financial solvency: "That gives me the opportunity to say that I am as selfish as any other Member of the Senate when it comes to getting a little 'bacon' for my own State. It is the old story of whether one sees the trees instead of the forest. The forest is the whole country and its solvency at an exceedingly critical period. This obviously calls for sacrifice on the part of everybody, regardless of any political implications which may be involved."

[*Congressional Record*, July 30, 1963, 13702]

“Before we get off the spending thing, let me just say that I’m like the fellow who got run over by a steam roller, and he got up and brushed himself off and said: ‘I now know how a pancake feels.’ And I know how a pancake feels when that steamroller on spending runs over me every so often if I make a motion to recommit or offer an amendment or substitute on any spending bill that’s on the floor. But notwithstanding that, so long as there’s life, breath, energy, and disposition, the good work has got to go on because justice must ultimately prevail and the solvency of the country must be secured.”

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, August 14, 1963, 9]

During debate on the debt ceiling: “Now let some miracle man, some genie, drop from the planet Mars this minute, catapult himself through the gorgeous ceiling of this Chamber, and give us the magic word as to how, in the foreseeable years of the lifetime of anyone now living, we shall ever retrieve enough difference between expenditures and revenue to keep the debt within reasonable bounds. ... I have seen no such force. I have seen no such reflection in the expenditure field as a result of such a debt ceiling. I am disinclined to delude people. I am disinclined to disillusion them, too.”

[*Congressional Record*, November 21, 1963, 22602]

During debate on funding the Bank of the Alliance, Dirksen was corrected when he used “millions” instead of “thousands.” He replied: “We are becoming so accustomed to millions and billions of dollars that ‘thousands’ has almost passed out of the dictionary.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 14, 1964, 379]

In January 1964, Dirksen attempted to amend appropriations bills to insert the language herein described. In Dirksen’s first effort, Senator William Fulbright (D-AK) succeeded in getting the Minority Leader to withdraw with the promise that Fulbright would support it in the next bill. At the time, Fulbright called Dirksen’s proposed language the “Dirksen formula.” According to the formula, the word “appropriated” would be expanded to include “appropriated out of funds supplied by the Nation’s taxpayers or out of funds borrowed on their credit.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 20, 1964, 657; *Congressional Record*, February 27, 1964, 3823]

During debate to repeal a series of excises taxes: “Like Tennyson’s brook, once such levies are placed on the statute books, they go on forever and forever.”

[*Congressional Record*, January 29, 1965, 1553; Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

In opposing Medicare: “I would be eligible [at 69]. Why should I be allowed to use dollars the government is taking from some young factory worker in Cleveland in the promise of providing for his old age?”

[Paul O’Neil, “Grand Old King of the Senate,” *Life*, March 1965, Information file, f. Articles]

“For 30 years we have been witnessing an ever-accumulating concentration of power in the Federal government through the ingenious device of taxing—and borrowing—

away the people's money from them, sending it to Washington where it is processed at huge cost and then what's left is returned to them in the form of assistance, grants or so-called government services. ... The central thesis of the Great Society is that bigger and bigger government means better and better health, better and better education, better and better transportation and better and better environment. It resembles political 'perpetual motion.' Cost is scarcely mentioned; Federal controls are not mentioned at all, nor is there any discourse on the greatly diminished powers of state and local government which the program entails."

[Joint Senate-House Leadership Press Conference, March 4 and 18, 1965]

During debate on the debt ceiling on June 16, 1965, Dirksen recounted the stories of the men digging a hole in the street, the man chasing the mule, Johnny saving the cat in the well, the woman who wrote the bad check, etc. Excellent examples of using stories to make a point.

[*Congressional Record*, June 16, 1965, 13884-13885]

On fiscal responsibility (adequate funding of the civil service retirement fund): "I do not need a seeing eye dog to identify a moral issue."

[*Congressional Record*, July 13, 1965, 16610; Dirksen Information File, f. Quotes]

When asked about the decline in the cost of living: "Well, I'm always cheered when it goes down, but frankly I've been doing a little work in that field. Now, when you talk about the cost of living, just don't pick out a succulent pork chop that you can sink a molar into, or even a juicy chunk of sirloin. Get the whole ball of wax—and that will include rent, it will include clothing, it will include hardware, it will include drugs, it will include food—and you take a look at that and I think it presents a different picture and that we ARE in a state of inflation and the more we expend on projects and procurement where you don't generate consumer goods, the more accelerated that inflation will become. You can call it 'crawling,' you can call it 'creeping,' you could call it 'inching' inflation, you can call it 'galloping' inflation, but whatever term you call it, it is still inflation."

[Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership Press Conference, September 30, 1965, 10]

When a reporter asked Dirksen whether he thought the U.S. should send astronauts to the moon, he replied: "Well, I'll tell you. I am reminded of the story about the fellow who applied for a job carrying the mail. He had to take a written examination, and one of the questions was, 'How far away is the moon?' The fellow thought about it for awhile and then wrote, 'I don't know how far away the moon is, but it's far enough that it won't interfere with me carrying the mail.'"

[*Washington Scrapbook*, January 15, 1967, Clippings, f. 471]

When asked about the difficulty of cutting domestic spending: "We cut the poverty program three quarters of a billion dollars last year. We cut foreign aid by \$250 million. Those are areas where you can make cuts that really amount to something. To just go about this business of cheese-paring and finding a million here and a

million there, while it is very useful it doesn't add up to very much when you get through."

[ABC's *Issues and Answers*, January 15, 1967, 4, Remarks and Releases]

"I have grave doubts if we can find enough in the budget to cut out to make it manageable. When you go about this business of cheese paring—a million here and a million there—you don't come up with much."

[ABC, *Issues and Answers*, January 15, 1967, Clippings, f. 471, Remarks and Releases]

Dirksen on the federal debt: The interest on the debt is "only over \$4 billion every 30 days, and bless your souls," he told an audience, "you are buying the hole in the doughnut."

[Lincoln Day remarks, Rockford IL, February 10, 1967, Clippings, f. 481]

Comedian and variety show host Red Skelton to Dirksen: "Has anyone thrown a dollar across the Potomac lately?" Dirksen: "No, they're too busy throwing billions across the ocean."

[Clippings, August 13, 1967, f. 518]

Arguing for austerity: "We can't afford squandermania any longer."

[Remarks to Pure Milk Association, March 16, 1968, Clippings, f. 586]

Dirksen referred to the manipulation of financial numbers by Washington policy-makers as "... hallucinatory estimates for masquerade and mirage in an extravaganza of political chicanery...."

[Anne Culler Penney, "The Golden Voice of the Senate," *GRIT* Family Section, June 1, 1969, Clippings, f. 648]

Threats

On the threat of financial insolvency: “I am afraid that perhaps one day Stalin and his Communist ideology will seek to liquidate the American capitalistic system, and liquidate the liberty of America. There may be another way of liquidating liberty in the United States than through the instrumentality of troops. It might be liquidated on the home front by spending the country recklessly into a state of insolvency. Then surely liberty will be liquidated. ... My reason for lifting my voice in the interest of frugality, in the interest of economy, and in the interest of the abandonment of measures which we can do without, is that I experience a genuine alarm about the home front and about the domestic fabric of my own country.”

[*Congressional Record*, March 16, 1951, 2527]

Against what does the country defend itself?

We defend it against a marching Soviet imperialism which is the spearhead of a ruthless, brutal idea and that idea is to liquidate freedom, to destroy incentive, to make young and old subservient to the state, to deny God and religion and to convert the world into one great slave camp. Red fascism is also dedicated to equality but it is equality of enslavement. But today I am concerned about the forces within our own country. Once liberty was a struggle between people and king. Today it is a struggle of groups against the people. This includes the devil’s brigade known as the Communist party which takes orders from a foreign master and with fanatical zeal pursues the party duties against the day when our free system is liquidated and the Red flag becomes the gory epitaph for mankind’s noblest concept of government. It includes the socialists—so many of them men and women of good will—who earnestly believe that the shortcut to the millennium is for government to take over the means of production and let the economic decisions by which we live be made by a governmental bureaucracy. It includes a certain type of liberal with authoritarianism in his heart. It includes politicians who from the vantage point of an administrative job speak with Delphic wisdom on every subject under the sun and who have the answers for all problems so long as the Federal Treasury holds out. It includes that intellectually dishonest group who continually wax eloquent that nothing will happen to freedom while economic freedom erodes under their very

eyes. It includes those devotees of centralized government who honestly feel that in an age of modern technology nothing less than strong centralized power can save the advances we have made and meet modern problems. It includes the tribe of defeatists who believe we have come to the end of the achievement era and that from here on out our destiny is nothing more than a leveling process. It includes the vocabulary twisters who have contorted the very meaning of the word freedom and whose accent is not upon the individual as set forth in the Declaration [of Independence] but on the mass. It includes that group who know that freedom is being leached away but who think it is all right because we do it to ourselves within the framework of free elections. They seem strangely content with the dubious freedom to elect their own master and then lapse back under a despotism that can be brought about by directive and regulation instead of an outright seizure of power. These are the forces whether inspired by good will or venal design who look upon true freedom as an outmoded thing and who regard the individual as a means rather than as an end.

[Independence Day Address, Chicago Junior Chamber of Commerce, July 4, 1951, 3-4, Remarks and Releases]

In opposing increased benefits for Social Security recipients: “What are we going to do for money? How many burdens are we going to put on the Federal Government, and how far do we go down this road until we encounter the disaster signs? There is danger of insolvency here, as there would be in any other country. Of course, the insolvency of a nation does not show up by its being hauled into the bankruptcy court under the statute of 1890. It shows up in the imposition of increasing controls over a free economy, when we reach the point where the economic decisions of the people are transferred from the free market place to the minds of the bureaucracy. Once we do that we are in the same unhappy fix Great Britain is in. We do not have to take over the coal mines, the cement mills, the steel plants, and the airlines to socialize the country. The very essence of socialism is control. We can do it by the soft, back-door approach. When we proceed far enough along the line, of course, the experts will come to Congress and say, ‘The fiscal situation is now so full of peril that we need more and more money in order to manage through this difficult period.’ Give them enough authority and then, of course, the liquidation of a large part of our free system will be complete.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 18, 1951, 8345]

In proposing a \$13,000,000 cut to the 1951 agricultural appropriations bill: “So, Mr. President, wherever there is an opportunity I am going to lift my voice in the hope that some modest economies can be developed, so we can keep the budget in balance in the next fiscal year, God willing and I say it reverently—because if there is a more inflationary force, if there is a greater public inflationary force than debt and additions to that debt—I do not know what it is. I think there is a solemn personal duty on the

part of anyone who has been elected to public office to leave nothing undone to see that all the relief is afforded that can be brought about.”

[*Congressional Record*, July 24, 1951, 8740]

“I need but briefly sketch the forces which menace and threaten our Republic today. There is a fading faith in the moral integrity of the trustees who are now in power. We are threatened by the economic cancer of insolvency. There is the strange delusion of prosperity built on young blood and on the production of things with which to kill. New doctrines of power have arisen to flaunt the very document which [Benjamin] Franklin helped prepare. There is the menace of backdoor Socialism in the form of controls. There are those sappers in the citadel who would subvert liberty from within. There are those commitments which hold forth promise of a kind of permanent war everywhere all of the time so long as a single aggressive force exists in the world. These are but some of the forces, subtle as autumn smoke, which are making inroads upon the Republic that has been entrusted to us.

[Address, June 19, 1952, Remarks and Releases; Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 59-60]

“I think, however, that one other point deserves mention. It is all too often forgotten that a nation can be destroyed by suicide as well as conquest. National suicide is the end result of mistaken domestic policies which bring on unrestrained inflation, hardship, unemployment, government control and finally the liquidation of economic freedom.”

[Remarks, Republican State Convention, June 18, 1960, Remarks and Releases]

“When are we going to make up our minds in this country at every level that we do not propose to see any group or any individual sabotage or impair or destroy the greatest legacy and the greatest inheritance people ever had. Now, that is the simple question. You know the destroyers are united, the ultra-liberals are united, the aggressors are united. They know where they want to go. But what about the defenders of our way of life, and our faith and our organic act? They are confused today; there is no general stand, and they haven’t made up their mind that the moral climate of freedom is as important, if not more important, than the goods that issue from a conveyor belt in a factory. When the day comes that we make up our minds that we have got something to be cherished and defended and that we will do so patiently and with every instrument at our command, then, of course, we can move from that point on and do the job. This is the thing that disturbs me so much.”

[Remarks, 58th Annual Banquet of the Michigan Manufacturers’ Association, October 20, 1960, Hotel Statler, Detroit MI, Remarks and Releases]

“Secondly, I think attention must be called to the fact that we are really the targets of the Soviet Union in this so-called Cold War. Actually, it’s an ideological war; it’s a system they have which fairly obliterates all freedom, versus the system we have, where freedom is [sic] the central force. Freedom is the essence of the free market of the free enterprise system of America. You can call it capitalism, call it the free enterprise system, call it anything but freedom is its essence and that’s precisely the thing that Mr. Khrushchev and those who’ve gone before him want to destroy

because it is antithetic and absolutely in sharp contrast to the kind of system they have where a little, tight, monolithic corps at the top runs the show and they'll extinguish as much freedom as absolutely necessary in order to make it go."

[“The Operational Crisis of 1961,” May 15, 1961, radio and TV broadcast, Remarks and Releases]

“The trend today, however, is toward power and control. It is so often referred to as a regulation in the public interest, but more and more it takes on the character of general control. Let it then be emphatically and unequivocally said that control is the essence of socialism. This or any other nation can be socialized without firing a shot, without taking over a single airline or railroad, without acquiring a single mine or mill or factory, without taking over a single filling station or corner grocery. Let government but dictate when to sow and reap and sell and juggle prices with loans or by surplus dumping; let government soak up surpluses with public funds; let government but manage public opinion by every modern device of communication; let government but prescribe under penalty how businesses shall be operated and the whole system of production and distribution placed under prescribed controls, and socialism becomes complete without fanfare or struggle or bloodshed. Somehow this simple inescapable truth has been forgotten.”

[Remarks in Boston, February 1, 1962, Remarks and Releases]

From a campaign speech in 1962 in which Dirksen explained that one of the greatest threats to the security of the U.S. lay in the consistent efforts of certain irresponsible or unthinking parties

to foist upon a trusting and unsuspecting public all manner of costly, unworkable, “hair-brained” schemes which have been dressed up and glorified by Madison Avenue “hocus-pocus” artists as “cure-alls” for all of the world’s ills from time immemorial to eternity. The way these schemes come about is for some longhaired Utopian visionary who never tilled the soil, operated a machine, or run a small business, to suddenly get a brainstorm for putting one of his pet social or economic theories into effect. He runs to Washington and sells the idea to certain social, economic and political visionaries who always seem to be looking for excuses to spend other people’s money, expand the bureaucracy, and increase their own power. The next step is to enlist the help of the slick, smartly-dressed Madison Avenue propaganda crowds who work up all kinds of fancy slogans and pretty words designed to overpower us into parting with our money and our freedoms. The next thing you know is that we’ve got another “task force,” a new “corps,” a new “give-away,” or some other unwanted and unneeded program or device that has the effect of expanding Federal spending, bureaucracy and power, and putting another dent in our individual liberties and pocketbooks.

[Un sourced, Clippings, October 21, 1962, f. 292]

“Can we spend ourselves rich and prosperous? Can heavy taxes be justified without a reasonable amount of curtailment of the spending budget? Can we subsidize elementary education out of the Federal Treasury without inviting Federal control over the school systems of the Nation? Are new and dubious functions justified in the face of large deficits and a colossal budget? Do we calmly accept an astronomical budget merely because of a rising gross national product? Do we blithely accept the increasing intrusion of the Federal government into the affairs of the people and the slow but steady erosion of their freedom of action? Do we throw overboard the present Federal-State cooperative program for medical care for the aged and supplant it with a socialized system under which the whole operation will be directed from Washington? Do we continue at present levels a costly and not too effective program of foreign assistance? Do we in a single step adopt an all-inclusive civil rights program which could invite a host of constitutional, legal, enforcement, and adjustment problems to disturb the tranquility of the Nation for a long time to come? These are but some of the problems where a divergence of viewpoint exists between the Congress and the Executive and they will not be lightly brushed away.”

[“The Republican Report,” December 13, 1963, Senate Document No. 47, 7-8, Remarks and Releases]

Washington

On attending a reception for the Dominican Minister: “It was a ‘black tie’ affair altho the ladies came out in their regimentals. And such a lot. The men for the most part were’nt [sic] half bad but the ladies—phooie [sic]! Big busted, fat, overstuffed ladies for the most part who eat too much and drink too much and who talked silly nothings and whose only interest in life is to preserve the existing order of things under which they lead a lazy, useless and parasitical existence. One of them whose age I judged to be over 50 and who was quite oozy and blubberous got tipsy and you can imagine how I feel about that. If there is anything more ghastly in the annals of human conduct than an intoxicated women [sic], I do not know what it is.”

[Personal Letters, December 17, 1938]

Everett writing to Louella: “I have an idea how satisfying it must be for you to get back in the swim. You’re such an active and capable person. You couldn’t do without it. It is so much more satisfying than to ‘rust’ out as so many of the women do, especially in this city of bridge luncheons, teas, dinners and functions.”

[Personal Letters, February 4, 1939]

Youth

Reflecting his impatience with young people demonstrating in protest during the 1960s: “I don’t suppose today’s youths are allergic to service to their country—they’re just not equal to it.”

[“Orator of the Old School,” *Houston Post*, February 13, 1966, Clippings, f. 387]

Dirksen’s response when young people asked him for advice: “1) In a verbal slugfest, watch your temper and choose your words oh! so carefully. Profane or insulting language can kill a glorious argument. 2) Learn to tell good stories. 3) Oppose with vigor, but never so vigorously that you lose a friend. 4) When dealing with people who differ, first determine how much common ground there is. Then try to close the gap.”

[“We Hear You, Ev!” *Spotlight*, ca. 1967, Clippings, f. 4b]

On draft resisters and evaders: “Mr. President, the spectacle of young men, willing to perjure themselves to avoid the draft and willing to let the world know that they do not support other young Americans arrayed in battle in Vietnam in the cause of freedom, is enough to make any person loyal to his country weep. Ascribing the blame to Communist influence or to leaders of pacifist causes is a subterfuge which does not come to grips with the real issue and does not place the blame where it belongs; namely, on the wailing, quailing, protesting young men themselves.”

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 181]

Advice to a young constituent:

Man’s nobility, his success if you will, comes, I think, with his determination to try, his willingness to strive after an ideal. Resolve, young man, early in life what you want your purpose to be, then walk steadfastly toward that goal. Most men do not accomplish all that they would like to have in life. Had they been able to, their aims would not have been high enough. Remember the line by Robert Browning, “The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life.”

Also start with the determination and aim suggested by James Russell Lowell:

Greatly begin! Though thou have time
But of a line, be that sublime—

Not failure, but low aim is crime.

In school you are concerned with grades as an evaluation of your scholastic performance. In life the grade to strive for when one is given for achievement, occurs three times in the word SUCCESS—the letter “S”—for superior selfless service.

[Fred Bauer, *Ev: The Man and His Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Hewitt House, 1969): 113]