

October 2
WSM, September 30, 1949
Representative Albert Gore

Good Morning, friends:

Both the House and the Senate settled down to work during the week and are now grinding away on the legislative program necessary for completion before Congress can finally adjourn sometime later on in the fall.

Final touches were placed upon the bill authorizing military assistance to the countries of Western Europe and it was sent to the President. Conference committees have been busy ironing out differences on appropriation bills, and the Senate has squared away to begin debate on a farm bill tomorrow.

Well,
I returned to Washington during the week from a trip to Europe where I went as a Delegate to the Interparliamentary Union by appointment of Vice-President Barkley.

I hope that you will be interested in a few of my observations from this most interesting and instructive experience. I would like to preface the statement of these observations with an omission that one should not consider with too much finality conclusions reached upon hasty visits.

Then
But some first hand information is surely better than none *and sometimes*

good, the best

The American delegates flew from Washington to Stockholm, Sweden, where the conference was held, in the old but substantial Presidential plane, the Sacred Cow. We left Washington late in the afternoon and flew to Newfoundland and spent the night. We left Newfoundland the next morning about six and flew 2500 miles non-stop to London *that night.* ~~where we had supper.~~ This was a *pretty* quick trip, but just to show the progress of science and industry in conquering space and time, my wife left Washington the day before I did and flew to

London on one of the new strata-cruisers now in service on the Pan-American
Went much faster, eating
lines. She ~~ate~~ supper in the United States and breakfast in London. Not
only was her flight ~~much~~ faster, it was much higher, ~~while~~ ^{it} the Sacred Cow,
being of the conventional C-54 non-pressurized type, flew 10 and 12 thousand
feet altitude. But this new strata-cruiser went above all the clouds, ^{above} all
the bad weather to 25 thousand feet where the air was thin and the sailing
Moreover
smooth and fast. ~~and~~ ^{what's more}, while the Sacred Cow has a capacity of
only about 20 people, the new strata-cruiser carried about 75 passengers
in addition to the crew.

We were very much surprised to find the austerity of conditions
in Great Britain. Of course, it is common knowledge that Great Britain still
has rationing and we knew that. But we were unprepared for the severity of
food rationing. I will not undertake to give details of the small amount
of butter, meat and other food commodities allowed, but in this hasty
summary perhaps it will suffice to say that the British people have far
less than enough to eat. Neither are they permitted to buy very many new
clothes as well as many other products.

The first call upon British industry is not for the satisfaction
of the wants of the British people but for exports. They are trying and trying
hard to make and sell enough to earn enough dollars, along with the assistance
the U. S. has given them, to buy enough food for their people to live on.

the people of
Every country in Western Europe, including Germany, can buy
more food and clothes now than can the British people.

I admire England very much as a nation and as a people and I am
sympathetic to their plight. The people are at work, they are working hard

and taking their punishment willingly, trying to pull themselves out of a difficult hole; but their economy is sorely sick. The war bled them white and they have a long, hard pull ahead of them and many obstacles to overcome. In my opinion, devaluation of the pound does not even approach a permanent solution to their difficulty. A more real obstacle is their antiquated industrial methods and easy going do-it-by-little social habits and customs. Despite devaluation it is going to be very difficult for British industry to compete with American industry. In order to do so, in my opinion, it will be necessary for them to stream-line their industry, *using* *so to speak* ~~with~~ a conveyor belt instead of ~~a~~ wheelbarrow. I must say that we were impressed by the hospitality and civility of the British people. We were only there a couple of days and nights, but that is long enough to get an impression of the situation, to get a feeling of the people. Where ever we went, people were very polite, very civil and helpful, whether it was a Bobbie on the street, an elevator operator or just the man on the street in London. They took time to be civil to us. If we inquired direction to a place they not only took time to politiely tell us but would almost escort us to the place.

Perhaps we have lost a little of the *charm* of living, a little of mankind's civility by our hustle and bustle and get-it-done attitude, but if the British are going to compete with us in the world market, if they are going to sell enough of their ^{industrial} products to pay for ^{our} wheat, our corn, our cotton, our tobacco and our automobiles, then they are going to have to drop some of their step-and-fetch-it methods and adopt some of good old American ^{ways} ~~grab-and-get-it-done~~ industrial ~~methods~~.

But I do not want to dwell upon Great Britain, ^{at} too great length.

I found the Interparliamentary Union conferences very informative.

From 30 some free parliaments of the world there came delegates -- from India, Egypt, from Britain and Italy and Pakistan -- some in their native garbs and speaking many tongues, but mostly in conventional business suits now customary around the world. We gathered some 200 in number.

After discussion and debate on various world problems, resolutions were finally passed but I think of necessity these were general in character add language. The most concrete development that I can report is a slight broadening of international understanding and good will. We desperately need more understanding and good will among mankind and I must say that ~~I consider~~ even a small contribution to this desired end ^{is not} ~~with~~ importance.

I found Sweden quite Americanized. A charming little country. and Stockholm is a beautiful ~~little~~ city. I was surprised to find that most educated people in ~~Sweden~~ Stockholm speak English. English is now the secondary language in their schools and they begin to study it in the primary grades. Before the war, German was the secondary language. At a banquet I sat at the table with a Member of the Swedish Congress and I asked him why the Swedish schoolsystem had changed from Germany to English. I thought I knew the reason but I wanted to see what he would say. So, with a twinkle in his eye, he said, "Because you have won two wars." I think he said a mouth full because the ^{way} mean of victory in World War II can be read and seen in every country and almost on every street corner.

In Western Europe today the United States occupies a position

of incredible influence. Moreover, I found friendship for the United States prevailing and also confidence in the United States. Confidence not only in American motives but confidence, too, in her determination to undertake world responsibility. I think this latter is very important because when I was in Europe in 1945 I found wide-spread apprehension ~~that~~ ^{lest} after victory the United States would again refuse to undertake the world responsibility commensurate with her power and victory as was the case after World War I.

That doubt is now dis-spelled -- the ^{Greek} ^{program} Turkish Aid, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Alliance, the Military Assistance program, ^{all} entailing the sacrifice to Americans that the European people ^{seem to} know about and appreciate, has disspeled this doubt. Further, I see that they not only have friendship for but confidence in the United States American leadership.

After the Interparliamentary Union conference was over, I was very interested to inquire into two things. -- The effectiveness of the Marshall Plan and also an examination into the situation in Germany.

From my brief observations, the physical and economic fehabilitation of Western Europe is remarkable, but no more so than the developing political stability. Without a sound base of political or governmental integrity and stability nothing really permanent can be built.

In my opinion, the danger of another war between the East and West is still apparent and real. The touchy spots seem to be in Germany and Yugoslavia. Though Yugoslavia offers the more immediate dangers, I think that in the long run Germany is the more dangerous tinderbox.

The Germany people are working very hard - cleaning up rubble, rebuilding bridges, restoring buildings, making a living. Soon, they will again be a strong people.

Many thousands of Germans are slipping across the Russian Border by nightfall into the American, French and British zones. Everywhere, I found a belief that Russia has no intention of withdrawing from Eastern Germany. I flew the air lift over a part of the Russian Zone into Berlin and sat in the cockpit with a young pilot who pointed out to me many factory smoke stacks now belching smoke which he said were idle only a few months ago. I was told by officials that some plants in the Russian Zone from which machinery had been stripped two years ago has now had machinery reinstalled and were at work around the clock.

As Western Germany is rehabilitated there has been, and observers think there will continue to be, a growing desire of the German people for unification of their entire nation. Given strength, they may insist upon it. Let us not forget that in any conflict between the East and West, even within Germany, the United States would be involved. Every step therefore must be carefully taken.

All in all, my trip was an interesting and instructive experience. I sincerely believe that I can be a little better Congressman by reason of the experience. The problems of Europe are so great and complex, the stakes are so great and we are so inseparably tied to those problems and complexities that I think all Members of Congress who can possibly do so, and particularly members of the Appropriation Committee, should see these conditions and problems first hand.

Peace or war for Europe and the world hangs in the balance with
the success or failure of our efforts.