

Kennedy-Era Watchword Is Changed

By Jack Anderson

A decade ago, John F. Kennedy aroused the spirit of sacrifice in America. "Ask not what your country can do for you," he said, "ask what you can do for your country."

Today the watchword in Washington has changed. The public is still asked to sacrifice, to hold down wage demands, to wait for promised better times. But they are expected to ask not their leaders to make similar sacrifices.

George Romney, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, made a brave attempt to set an example by turning back 25 per cent of his salary. When he suggested that his fellow Cabinet officers do the same, however, he didn't get a single volunteer. Instead, the Cabinet members accepted a salary increase from \$35,000 to \$60,000.

President Nixon, whose own pay had been raised from \$100,000 to \$200,000, dispatched his chief lobbyist to Capitol Hill to seek an increase also in the presidential pension from \$25,000 to \$60,000. Lobbyist Bryce Harlow slipped around to see

Speaker John McCormack who obligingly pushed the increase through the House. It is now awaiting Senate action.

Harlow has spread the word that the President really wants the extra pension for poor Harry Truman. But at 86, Truman won't be around long to collect it. The real beneficiary will be Richard Nixon.

Christmas Gifts

In the same Christmas spirit, House leaders also arranged a little going-away present for the retiring McCormack. They cooked up a resolution that would grant "Old Jawn" a two-year lease on his present Boston office, \$1,200 a year for office expenses, \$3,000 a year for stationery, free mailing privileges, \$700 extra for airmail and special delivery stamps, a \$27,000-a-year assistant and a \$12,000-a-year secretary. They also talked about tossing in the use of a chauffeured government limousine.

When the story leaked to the newspapers, the Speaker got hold of his old friend, House Administration Committee Chairman Sam Friedel (D-Md.), who is in charge of the

special resolution. McCormack suggested magnanimously that he could struggle along without the airmail and special delivery stamps. He also thought his staff could get by on less pay. And never mind the limousine; his assistant could drive him around.

Nor was McCormack's alter ego, Martin Sweig, now appealing a 2½-year prison sentence, to be left out.

Sweig has been unable to fix his own case, but he has arranged to get back on the House payroll for a nominal sum long enough to qualify for a pension. His benefactor, Robert Leggett (R-Calif.) explained to us that it was his own idea, not the Speaker's, to put Sweig on the payroll.

As a Christmas bonus for themselves, House members also voted this month to increase their stationery allowance from \$3,000 to \$3,500 apiece. The extra allotment will cost the taxpayers as much as \$218,000 each session.

The House also beefed up the telephone and telegraph allowance for each member, permitting an additional 2,500 minutes of long-distance telephone calls or 80,000 tele-

graphed words—or a mixture of both—at public expense during the session.

Washington Expose

Wives' Allotments—Wives of American prisoners in North Vietnam have complained to us that their husbands didn't leave adequate allotments. When they went overseas, they expected to be home in a year. Now they can't get word to the Army, Navy or Air Force to increase the amount. The Defense Department advises us that an appeal can be made to the service secretary at the Pentagon. The secretaries are authorized to increase the allotments up to 100 per cent.

Christmas Savings—Hart Mankin, the General Services Administration's top lawyer, has a Christmas tradition that saves him postage and Christmas-card costs. He sends out greetings to his 126 employees on GSA stationery using his official postal frank. Mankin says this is a suitable way to express holiday wishes to his employees. But it is no gift to the taxpayers who pay for the mailing.

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