

Air Travel Is Easy—the Dodd Way

By Drew Pearson and
Jack Anderson

This column has underestimated the enterprise of Senator Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) in solving his transportation problem.

He not only drives an Oldsmobile owned by a Connecticut contractor, as previously documented in this space, but he also flies in style around the country in assorted company planes.

He commutes regularly between Connecticut and the Capital, for instance, in a plane belonging to the United Aircraft Corporation. He also sends his family back and forth via this free transportation, and once he even arranged to fly his pet poodle to Connecticut in a United Aircraft plane.

The plane waited for 30 minutes while Dodd's staff struggled to box Beau, the poodle, in a crate suitable for air travel. Then company officials, who had boarded the plane and were eager to take off, refused to waste any more time waiting for a dog. The Senator was obliged to find other transportation for Beau.

But Dodd, if not his dog, is always welcome on board a United Aircraft plane. For he happens to be a member of the Senate Space Committee, and the company is deeply involved in the space business.

For his part, the Senator always seems happy to help any

company that flies him around. In a typical intra-office memo, a former assistant, Gerry Zeiler, reported to Dodd on May 12, 1965:

"Joe Barr of United Aircraft visited the office yesterday and had with him Bill Dell of United Technology, a subsidiary of United Aircraft. . . .

"You will recall that we arranged for a demonstration for United Technology of their snap-on 120-inch solid fuel booster rockets some months ago along with Jim Gehrig and the Space Committee staff.

"Barr and his associates would now like to see some general language incorporated in the Space Committee report such as I have attached with this memo."

Kaman Aircraft Corporation has also made a plane available to Dodd whenever he needed transportation. For example, his daily schedule for May 16, 1963, contains this note:

"Kaman Aircraft will fly you to Willimantic. The plane will leave from Butler. Arthur Crosbie will meet you at the Windham Airport in Willimantic. The plane will wait for you in Willimantic and fly you to Hartford."

Two days earlier, by an interesting coincidence, Dodd called upon Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuckert to urge him to award an Air Force contract to Kaman. Last

year, the Senator also brought

pressure upon Lockheed Aircraft, one of the Nation's biggest defense contractors, to grant a subcontract to Kaman.

"I have been personally acquainted with Charles Kaman, president of the company, for a number of years, and I know him to be a businessman of the highest integrity," wrote Dodd to Lockheed on May 20, 1965. "I believe that, if his company is awarded the contracts, the performance of the contracts will be at the usual high standards demanded on any work being done by Kaman Aircraft."

When the Senate Anti-Trust Subcommittee was investigating the drug industry, Dodd suddenly started flying in a plane owned by McKesson and Robbins, a large drug manufacturer. Dodd was a member of the Subcommittee.

The Senator was so spoiled by this particular plush plane that he began complaining that another private plane, occasionally provided for him by Connecticut contractor Frank D'Addario, had "no class."

Stung by Dodd's contempt for his humble aircraft, D'Addario recently offered to buy a new one. One day, he announced to the Senator's staff that Dodd "can use it any time he wants. It is always at his disposal 24 hours a day."

"One of the reasons he likes your plane," commented a staff member, "is that it doesn't have a company label on it."

"The new one won't have a

company label on it either," promised D'Addario. "We are not interested in having people know who owns the plane as long as Dodd knows who owns it."

Lately the Senator has been making frequent use of a private Aerojet owned by Thomas O'Neil, board chairman of R.K.O. General. Last Aug. 7, for example, O'Neil sent his plane to Washington to pick up the Senator's son, Tom Jr., and a friend. They were flown to Westerly, R.I., the closest airport to the Dodd country home in North Stonington, Conn., where the plane picked up the Senator and flew him to New York City. There Dodd changed places with his daughter, Carolyn, who was whisked back to Westerly.

Dodd's files contain an interesting note, dated Oct. 27, 1964, saying Tom O'Neil had called.

"Would you like to use his plane for the rest of the week?" added the note.

Exactly a week later the Senator wrote privately to O'Neil: "You can't imagine what a wonderful help the use of your plane was to me during this last week. . . . Also, I want to mention how very impressed I was with your pilot, Corbet Ballard. He is a very fine pilot and was most cooperative and courteous to me."

And that's how the Senator from Connecticut gets around without paying.

© 1966, Bell-McClure Syndicate, Inc.