Mr. DIREKSEN. Mr. President, I trust that the time will never come in my public career when the writers 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 judgment I have for public service and such an exit and make way for others to carry on the responsibility I presently hold.

Last week we observed the anniversary of a wise and prescient man who perhaps was confronted with the greatest crisis that ever confronted the country. He observed that the occasion is pilked with difficulties, and that we must rise with the occasion. As our cause is new, so we must think and act anew. We must first disenchant ourselves, and then we shall save the Union.

I have pondered those words of Lincoln for some time. In an hour of crisis, if this challenge can be called a crisis, I trust I can discern my own way from all biases, from all prejudices, from all irrelevancies, from all material matters, and see clearly and cleanly what the issue is, and then render an independent judgment.

When I reached my desk this morning, after a week in the hospital and another week of convalescence, I found a number of clippings, some of which indicated that my native State, my office, and any other place where I may hang my hat will probably be picketed by an organization known as CORE.

Mr. President, I have been picketed before. On one occasion last year, I was picketed at O’Hare Airport. My office was picketed by those who marched with banners, and when I reached the hotel where I was to deliver a dinner address, I was picketed on the other side of Michigan Avenue; while inside, in the lobby, the place was fairly packed with people, because I had agreed to see 10 civil rights leaders and give them 15 minutes and very freely make a statement and answer questions.

Never have I been reluctant or hesitant with regard to the right to petition and assemble of any person or a group of persons who have a grievance they believe should be redressed.

Civil Rights: H.R. 7152, proposed Civil Rights Act

I am delighted to see them; but always I must clutch unto myself the responsibility as a U.S. Senator, which requires that I give to the people of the country, and to the State I represent, the greatest service I have to offer, and that is always to render an independent judgment.

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.

So I assure the distinguished Senator from Montana [Mr. MANSEN], with whom it is such a pleasure to work, that I shall cooperate in every possible way, consonant always with the duty to render an independent judgment, and consonant with my constitutional duty not merely to one segment of our people, but to all the people of the United States.

Sometimes we set apart a group, a tenth of the population, and because of the noise and the demonstrations that take place, their interest moves out of perspective and out of focus. Sometimes we are likely to forget that there are millions of other people in the country who also have an interest in the whole question of civil rights and who wish to see those rights maintained.

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.

It is fortunate indeed, as the bill comes today from the House and takes its place for a moment on the desk, that by virtue of the wisdom of the Founding Fathers we have a balanced government that has been responsible for our survival. In the framing and structuring of the Constitution of the United States, we sometimes forget how wisely the framers really wrought. One needs only to look at the interesting balance in our Government to realize it. We are a part of a coordinated branch of government, invested with the exclusive lawmaking functions within the framework of government, and we divide that responsibility with the House of Representatives. Members of the House are selected on the basis of population. They serve a 2-year term. Under the Constitution, they are entrusted with the power to originate all revenue-producing bills and, by custom, all appropriation bills. That is a wise balance. The Constitution-makers knew that, if, perchance, the authority to impose onerous and burdensome taxes upon the people should be unwisely used, with a 2-year term Representatives could be quickly turned out of office.

Senators are entrusted with a 6-year term. They are given the power to confirm the nominations of ambassadors and other appointees, and to advise and consent in the treaty-making process. But no legislation can reach the books until it has the concurrence of both Houses in the coordinate branch of Government. When we have impressed our will upon a piece of legislation, it is engrossed, and finally on parchment it finds its way to the President of the United States, to sign or not to sign, as he sees fit. That still is a part of the balance. But if the President undertakes to veto a bill, it is still given to this branch of the Government, by a two-thirds vote, to override the veto. All this is a part of the astonishing balance in Government.

It might well be that Congress and the Executive could join in an unhappy moment, to place upon the statute books a law that was not in the national interest, but the Constitution has also provided for a judicial branch, with authority to strike down, as in contravention of the Constitution, that which the President and both branches of Congress may have so unwisely wrought.

So we have a balanced government; and today, from one branch in the coordinate part of the Government, comes a bill for further consideration. It can never reach the statute books unless it first has the approval of the Senate, and the differences are ironed out in the third body, known as the conference committee; it then goes to the White House for signature.
I have never seen the time in any crisis when the Senate has not sagaciously worked its will and risen to its responsibilities as a part of the deliberative branch of government. That has been true in every generation. To be sure, there have been times when it has failed. There may have been times when it has been frivolous, but always when, in the language of the day "the chips were down," the Congress—and particularly the Senate—has been equal to every challenge that has thus far confronted the country, and I apprehend that the situation will be no different on this occasion.

I expect to give this measure considerate attention. I expect ultimately to render an independent judgment. To do otherwise would be to betray the confidence of the people who sent me, first to the other end of the Capitol, and then to this end of the Capitol to serve them within the limits of my talents and energy.

Therefore, I assure my distinguished friend the majority leader, the proposal will have considered attention; it will have earnest attention. One of the things which occupied a part of my time in the hospital was taking the bill as submitted and the bill as finally enacted by the House, and spelling out every word, every phrase, every line. Already, some amendments have occurred to me. I shall try to shape them. I shall try to put them in form. If I think they have merit, I shall offer them.

All the picketing that may be done in my home State, and all the picketing that may be done here with respect to the minority leader, I shall consider as nothing more than a form of unjustified duress, in order to obtain a judgment that is a departure from the convictions I hold.

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 logs and walk out of here and say that my usefulness in the Senate has come to an end.

So I make an appeal to my fellow Senators to consider this issue in the light of the national interest. It is a phrase that came close to the late President Kennedy. It is a phrase that comes close to our former majority leader, who now occupies his exalted position.

I want to do what I think is in the interest of the present and future well-being of probably the only real, true free republic that still remains on God's footstool.

I shall cooperate. I shall do my best. When the time comes, when the deliberations are at an end, and all facets of the matter have been carefully considered and discussed, I shall be prepared to render judgment, and I shall have no apology to make to any man or any group anywhere, any time, for the course that I shall ultimately pursue.

I am grateful to my distinguished friend the majority leader, a man of grace and humility, who has wrestled with this problem, and who is confronted with it now by virtue of his exalted and dignified position in this body. I shall cooperate as best I can within the limitations of the convictions that I hold.