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Letter, John C. Stennis to Boswell Stevens, June 22, 1951

John Cornelius Stennis

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

June 22, 1951

Honorable Boswell Stevens, President
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
Jackson, Mississippi

Dear Boswell:

I certainly appreciate your fine letter of June 20th and I continue to be impressed and re-impressed many times with your deep interest in and your zealous work for the rural people. As you say, they are our people. I have been much concerned about the operation of the controls law and wish so much that I could have talked with you about this while you were here. As you know, I have the over-all feeling that we must have some kind of regulation of the economy while we are undergoing the terrific impact of this military program because by September, the Military Department will be spending money at the rate of 1 billion dollars per week. If we should have runaway inflation, the adjustment period afterwards would be where the real suffering would come.

Virtually all of my time will be given now to the consideration of this bill which is to be on the floor of the Senate, beginning next Monday, and I am going to take the enclosed statement of the American Farm Bureau Federation which you sent me and study it over the weekend.

Keep up your good work, Boswell, and be thinking ahead for what is coming for agriculture in general and our area in particular following the buildup of this huge military program. I am not predicting that we will not have a general war, but there are a good number of pretty strong indications now that we shall avoid a general war -- at least for some time. And with everything speeded up to such a great volume of production and so much money being spent, it is certainly going to be rough on us when this enormous spending stops. For instance, should Stalin announce that he is pulling out of Berlin and pulling out of the Korean War and that he wants peace, think of the terrific impact on our economy. Think of what the stockmarket would do. I am not preaching calamity, understand, but it is the next phase which we must meet and that is why I feel strongly that we should hold these price spirals down some way, but then I get very much discouraged to see more than its share of the burden fall on agriculture.

So long as we can keep the support price for agriculture as a part of the program, we shall not be entirely knocked out at least. But our problems will be great.

With every expression of esteem and with fond good wishes for your continued welfare, I am

Your friend

John H. Lewis

J. S. Senator