

for Congress as an Eisenhower Independent. I wondered if you would say whether you think he would be a useful Member of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, Marty Snyder, as you say, was a sergeant in my headquarters; he ran the headquarters mess.

So far as I know he has been a fine citizen. I don't know anything about him before that moment. He was a good soldier. He certainly got it in his head early to try to make one Eisenhower President of the United States, and stuck with it, and possibly thinks he is a bit responsible. Maybe he is.

Now, I would deduce from that that he would be a loyal supporter if he were down here. [*Laughter*]

Merriman Smith, United Press: Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: President Eisenhower's forty-ninth news conference was held in the Executive Office Building from 3:01 to 3:25 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, August 17, 1954. In attendance: 144.

201 ¶ Statement by the President Upon Signing Bill Amending the Water Facilities Act.

August 17, 1954

I AM HAPPY today to sign into law the amendment to the Water Facilities Act.

This is one of three legislative actions taken by the 83rd Congress which give important new strength to our national efforts to conserve the vital water and soil resources of the United States. This legislation is of high significance in the movement which came to life fifty years ago when Theodore Roosevelt gave new meaning to the word "conservation."

This legislation is significant because it gives new stimulus to local initiative and establishes for the first time a nation-wide program of conservation practices based on the concept that farms, streams, forests, and towns are all inter-related parts of a watershed. It recognizes in practical terms that the upstream part of the watershed, as well as the downstream part, must be taken into our plans if we are to have the water we vitally need and if we are to solve with maximum effectiveness three of our most challenging problems—soil erosion, floods and drought.

The first of these bills is the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. This Act recognizes by law for the first time the great importance of upstream watershed protection in our over-all water resource policy. For the first time also, this Act provides a broad program of Federal technical and financial assistance to such local watershed groups as are willing to assume responsibility for initiating, carrying out, and sharing the costs of watershed protection which will help conserve water for agricultural uses and supplement any needed downstream flood control measures.

The second bill amends the Water Facilities Act. Formerly limited to the 17 western states, the program established by this Act makes available, throughout the entire nation, loans for developing agricultural water improvements on farms and ranches. In addition, this law establishes a program of direct or insured loans for drainage facilities, reforestation, and other water and soil conservation measures. Farmers and ranchers frequently need credit to take care of the initial investments required in establishing conservation systems, or to tide them over an adjustment period while they shift to a better and, in the long run, more profitable type of land use. These new credit provisions, specially geared to conservation needs, provide a significant means of encouraging and advancing soil and water conservation.

The third legislative action is part of the Congressional revision of the internal revenue laws. It allows farmers and ranchers to treat expenditures for a number of soil conservation measures as current annual expenses which may be deducted from farm income in computing income taxes. This Act therefore gives farmers new tax advantages on these land improvement measures. Not only will these advantages benefit the farmer financially; they will also add incentive to the application of soil and water conservation measures.

These three bills rest on several sound principles.

First, we recognize that it is absolutely urgent to conserve and improve our water resources. For water is essential to every part of our life, and in quantities that are usually unsuspected. It takes 18 barrels of water, for example, to refine a barrel of oil. It takes 85,000 gallons to produce a ton of rubber. It takes something like 800,000 gallons of water to mature an acre of cotton. It takes some 1,300 gallons of water each day to supply the direct and indirect needs of each one of our citizens. As our population increases, so will these demands.

Even these statistics do not drive home the urgency of adequate water supplies nearly so well as the personal experiences many Americans have had this very summer—of insufficient water for crops and livestock, of failing wells, of restrictions on use of water in towns. Some of our cities have had to seek means of supplementing their failing or depleted reservoirs. Some have had to haul water from nearby streams. In rural areas, there has been a growing call for water for irrigation. These facts add up to a hard warning: we cannot afford to waste water.

Any attempt to conserve this water should take into account a key fact: that this all-important water—the water we use on our farms, in our homes, in our businesses, or in our factories—has been collected from all the lands of the watershed, beginning at its uppermost limits. Our streams, our deep wells, our storage reservoirs are merely accumulations of water that has fallen on the land in the form of rain or snow. Some of it runs off in creeks and rivers. Some of it evaporates. Some soaks in to nourish crops and trees. Some finds its way into springs or into the sands we tap with our wells. How much water runs off, and how fast, and how much soaks into feed crops and springs—these quantities depend in large measure on what kind of land it falls on, what this land is used for, and what kind of cover—trees, grass—the land has.

For this reason our water management programs must not go to work only in large streams or rivers, though the flood control and other measures there are of enormous importance. Our programs to conserve water must begin where the raindrop falls. And because of the extensive erosion and sedimentation damage which result from floods in headwater streams and small tributaries, and also because these parts of the watershed have up to now been relatively neglected in conservation planning, these programs must put new emphasis on their management.

Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, sound soil conservation plans will be developed to establish the right use for each kind of soil on all the farms of a watershed. Soil conservation will be supplemented where necessary with small detention dams, channel improvements, or other measures to protect the fertile bottom land along these small streams.

These measures will be of pronounced benefit to agriculture. More and more American farmers are coming to realize that good land use and land treatment can help them to conserve water as well as soil. They are seeing the advantages of inducing as much water as possible to soak into

the ground where it falls—water which will help grow crops and help recharge underground water supplies that are tapped by farms and by cities and industries. Thus an accelerated soil conservation and watershed program will also benefit urban centers by helping to keep sediment from cutting down the storage capacity of our large city reservoirs. It will reduce the amount of silt that has to be filtered from water before it can be used by city water systems or by industry. And it will help lessen the damage caused by drought and thus help stabilize areas where this hazard has been unusually severe.

Another significant contribution of the watershed legislation is that it gives new force and emphasis to local leadership. Its programs are not Federal work projects; no new agencies will have to be created to carry them out. These programs will be planned only at the instance of local people. They will be planned with the cooperation and participation of local and State governments. They will be initiated only when local people have demonstrated their willingness and ability to share equitably in the cost and to assume responsibility for direction and maintenance of the work.

The watershed and water development programs will also encourage a new and improved means of local-State-Federal teamwork. Locally, rural and urban interests must join forces in sponsoring and contributing to the programs—contributing the funds, labor, materials, lands, easements, and other needs that can best be supplied by local organizations. State and county governments are also involved. Floodwater retarding dams, sediment control structures, channel stabilization measures and the like, on the tributary streams, represent measures which individuals cannot be expected to install by themselves, and which may properly require State or even Federal aid because their benefits extend beyond the local community. The Federal Government also has a major role in providing technical, research, financial, and educational assistance.

To do this work, all levels of government and private endeavor must cooperate. And there will be a call for increased effort in the future. Because our population is growing rapidly, the demands upon the nation's soil and water resources are bound to become heavier in the years ahead. But we do have the resources to match this growth if we manage them wisely. In the long run, it is absolutely vital to the welfare of farm and urban people, and to the strength of the entire nation, that we work

soundly and vigorously to protect and develop our nation's vital water supplies and the related resources of farm land, range, and timber. In such a matter of national interest, we must act with effectiveness. These three measures show that we have so acted.

NOTE: As enacted, the bill (S. 3137) is Public Law 597, 83d Congress (68 Stat. 734).

202 ¶ Statement by the President Upon Signing
the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act.
August 17, 1954

I AM HIGHLY GRATIFIED by this new law which makes group life insurance available to Federal employees.

The economic security of an employee's family contributes directly and powerfully to his effectiveness as a worker. Group life insurance has therefore become an important factor in private industry's employer-employee relations. Enactment of this new law is a milestone in the effort to adapt to Federal personnel management the best practices of progressive private employers.

The Civil Service Commission will see that appropriate information is distributed promptly to all Federal employees, so that they will have the benefit of this insurance protection at the earliest possible date.

NOTE: The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act of 1954 is Public Law 598, 83d Congress (68 Stat. 736).

203 ¶ Address at the Illinois State Fair at
Springfield. *August 19, 1954*

Governor Stratton, Governor Craig, and distinguished members of this great audience:

For a number of reasons I am highly honored to be with you today. In the first place, I was invited here by your distinguished Governor, one of those young, virile men in our country who is giving his life to public service for the betterment of all of us.

Incidentally, just now, as I left the luncheon table of Governor