

William Proxmire

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Sparkman Clips Proxmire's Wings

By Jack Anderson

The banks have already received the first return on their investment in the re-election of Senator John Sparkman (D-Ala.).

The kindly, courtly Senate Banking chairman was returned to the Senate with massive banking support. One reason the bankers worked so hard to re-elect him was to prevent Wisconsin's maverick Sen. William Proxmire, the No. 2 Democrat on the committee, from taking over the chairmanship.

For Proxmire has fought against high interest rates, phony bank advertising and the concentration of economic power in banks. The thought that he might gain control over banking legislation caused cold chills in the nation's counting houses.

But once Sparkman was safely ensconced for another six years at the head of the banking committee, he quietly stripped Proxmire of half his power.

As second in seniority, Proxmire couldn't be cut out of a subcommittee chairmanship. So Sparkman simply sliced Proxmire's Financial Institu-

tions Subcommittee in half. The senator from Wisconsin was left with a choice only of which half he wished to head.

The maneuver was executed behind closed doors with all the elaborate politeness Sparkman could command. But Proxmire, unappeased by the Southern grace, raised a squawk.

"May I just make one more appeal to you, Mr. Chairman," he pleaded. "Is there any possibility you could reconsider?"

Bank Power

He laid the cards on the table. "There was a lot of talk in the last campaign," he said, "about the banking interests being enthusiastically opposed to me ever becoming chairman of this committee."

The division of his subcommittee in two, he indicated, would force him to give up the subcommittee dealing with financial institutions in order to head the subcommittee handling consumer credit.

"I think," he snorted, "that this is a way of making sure that I have much less to say about the financial institutions or consumer credit."

When Sparkman refused to relent, Proxmire snapped: "I don't see the point of it. What is the reason for it? . . . I see it as a ploy to knock me out of one or the other."

"It doesn't knock you out of either one," soothed Sparkman.

"Sure," shot back Proxmire, "(it) knocks me out of Financial Institutions."

Since the chairman traditionally is permitted to organize the subcommittees, Proxmire finally gave in. "Well," he shrugged. "I have said enough. That's it."

Sparkman remained as charming as he was unyielding. He said when campaign audiences asked him about his spats with Proxmire, "I told them we have a very fine working relationship. I sit next to you. I don't want to engage in any fistcuffs."

There was some quiet gloating inside the banks afterward over the news that Proxmire's power had been reduced. The subcommittee he gave up was taken over by Sen. Tom McIntyre (D-N.H.), a friend of the bankers, who received financial support from them during

his recent re-election campaign.



Associated Press

Map shows hospitals where returning POWs will be taken for treatment.

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Washington Post

6/8/74

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Would Abolish Selective Service, ICC, SBA

Proxmire Asks End of 8 Agencies

Boasting of his success in helping to kill nine federal agencies, Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) proposed yesterday that eight more be abolished, including the Interstate Commerce Commission, Selective Service, the Small Business Administration and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

"While almost every act of Congress sets up a new agency, bureau or commission," Proxmire said, "almost no act or bill ever wipes one out."

The nine agencies Proxmire said he helped to kill were creatures of the Economic Stabilization Act, the wage-price control law that expired April 30.

Introducing his bill to kill

eight more, the senator said "there are more cobwebs and whiskers at the ICC than any place in the government. With fierce competition among air, rail, barge and road transportation, regulation for other than safety purposes has long been unnecessary. The answer is abolition plus strong enforcement of the antitrust laws" governing mergers and rates.

"No one is being drafted. No one can be drafted. Yet Selective Service is asking for \$47 million in fiscal year 1975 to keep its bureaucracy afloat," the senator said.

The Small Business Administration is "a highly political agency which helps a minute number of small businesses," Proxmire charged. "The favor-

itism should end

Though the fitness council "has done some fine things," the senator said, "if there is any activity which is clearly private rather than a government one it is physical fitness and sports."

The senator also proposed stripping the Central Intelligence Agency of its involvement in "dirty tricks" abroad and all its domestic activities, abolishing the Overseas Private Investment Corp. ("why should the taxpayers provide funds to bail out International Telephone and Telegraph?"), discontinuing Civil Defense ("one of the nation's biggest boondoggles"), and dismantling the Renegotiation Board because many companies emerge from its deliberations with even bigger profits.