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Courtney C. Pace to Walter Jenkins, 19 December 1963

Courtney C. Pace

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December 19, 1963

Honorable Walter Jenkins
Administrative Assistant to
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Walter:

Senator Eastland did not suggest this letter but stated that he had no objections to it.

The purpose of the letter is to bring to your attention and, through you, probably to the attention of the President, one of the most unworthy acts that I have encountered in my twenty-one years in this office.

The five Mississippi Congressmen voted against the ARA Bill originally. Senator Eastland and Senator Stennis voted for it originally. The five Mississippi Congressmen voted against the extension of ARA and so did the two Mississippi Senators. Amendments were adopted in the Senate that made the bill distasteful to Eastland and Stennis. The extension of ARA lost by five votes in the House, the number being the same number as the Mississippi Congressmen.

On the day that Eastland and Stennis voted against the extension of ARA, a \$600,000 loan for an industrial project had been approved for Beaumont, Mississippi, and the approval was being flown to Atlanta in person. After the vote by Eastland and Stennis, this individual was intercepted at Birmingham and the approval of the project was withdrawn. Beaumont, Mississippi, is located in

Mr. Kenkins
Page Two
December 19, 1963

COPY

Congressman Colmer's District. Colmer is a member of the House Rules Committee and was opposed to the extension of ARA. Within the next week or ten days, the agency called up seven or eight other Mississippi industrial project applications, which had tentatively been approved, reconsidered and rejected them arbitrarily. Thereafter I was told by the ARA Director in Mississippi that it was clearly indicated to him that he could consider himself on vacation but not to positively decline any applications that might come to him.

Concurrent with the ARA Program, of course, was the Accelerated Public Works Program. During the first year of these programs, Mississippi municipalities and counties were given their fair share of this money. There was neither preference nor discrimination so far as we could tell. After the ARA votes in the House and Senate, an absolute boycott, ironclad, was imposed by Mr. Batt against the approval of any Mississippi applications under the Accelerated Public Works Program.

Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas municipalities received loans and grants averaging, I suspect, around 75 to 80 for each of these states. Not a single Mississippi application was approved until I discovered through the Senate Committee on Appropriations the number of approvals in the adjoining states with not a single approval in Mississippi, our having been advised from time to time that each project inquired about was being reviewed.

I carried this information to Senator Stennis and he had a round with Mr. Batt in the Appropriations Committee hearings and thereafter the Community Facilities called up six Mississippi projects and approved them. Then, we were advised that all the money under the Accelerated Public Works Program had been exhausted. Over seventy

Mr. Jenkins
Page Three
December 19, 1963

COPY

Mississippi applications were on file, many of them for as long as eighteen months.

I took this information to Congressman Colmer and an inquiry was likewise had by the Rules Committee of the House, but, of course, the agency did not appear before the Rules Committee itself.

This action is demonstratively punitive, but why it was directed only at the Mississippi congressional delegation and not at other Senators and Congressmen who had voted the same way the Mississippi delegation did-- is a mystery to me.

I am calling this to your attention hoping that some time it could be mentioned to the President so that he would be advised of this action by one of his agencies. This undoubtedly is the most high-handed and unworthy action that I have ever known to take place in the government and I believe you would like to know it.

I know you are enjoying your new job and I hope some time to have an opportunity to see you again.

With personal regards and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Courtney C. Pace
Administrative Assistant

CCP:RL