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Campaign speech at Shelby, Montana, October 1952

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Maureen and Mike

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Transcript of Radio Tape of Senator Mike Mansfield

Campaign Speech at Shelby, Montana
October, 1952

I am proud and happy to present to you the man that has represented western Montana in the Congress of the United States for the past ten years and has worked untiringly for the people of Montana and for the defense of America and for every worthwhile thing that we have had, Mike Mansfield.

Mr. Chairman, my fellow candidates, my fellow Montanans, my fellow Americans. It's good to be in Jack Toole's hometown, and it's good to have this opportunity to meet some of my old friends in Shelby and I hope to make some new ones. It 's good to be in the town where you have once again activated a Marine reserve company. I think in this district which is relatively new to me that you should know something about the background of your candidates. As some of you may know, I was raised in Great Falls where my folks still live and where they used to operate a grocery store until a few years ago. At the age of fourteen I ran away from home, joined the Navy in the first World War for the duration and served nineteen months. After that, I joined the Army and then the Marine Corps where I obtained my highest rank, the rank of PFC. Five and one-half years of military service and then I came back to Montana and went to Butte. I got a job in the mines there smucking. I stayed in the mines until 1927 and I decided that I ought to do something if I wanted to live to a ripe old age and if I didn't want to die of silicosis. So I applied at the School of Mines for admission and I was told that I could be enrolled as a special student only because I hadn't

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finished the eighth grade; I hadn't gone to high school; and, consequently, I had no entrance units for admission. I worked nights and went to the School of Mines for a year. It was a little bit tough. At the end of the year I turned back to the mines entirely and worked until 1931. That was, as many of you will recall, the years during the depression. I was working two weeks on and two weeks off---staggered shifts, they called them in those days, and I decided that the mines were deep enough; that I had to look elsewhere and do something else to make a livelihood. So I went to Missoula and applied for admission there and was admitted as a special student on the same basis that I had been admitted to the School of Mines. I want to express publicly my thanks to members of the faculty of Montana State University and Missoula County High School who leaned over backwards in helping me get through my entrance examination so that in my last quarter at the University I was able to offer fifteen entrance units and become a regular student. I finished at the University in 1933 at the age of thirty.

There were two jobs open at the time in which I was interested. They were teaching jobs in western Montana towns. One paid \$75 a month; the other paid \$80 a month. I applied for both and thought I had a good chance, but I was turned down in both places and my heart was broken. I talked it over with my wife. She said not to worry; she would cash her insurance and we would get by. I went to see one of my professors and, he, out of the kindness of his heart, and it was real kindness, offered me a job as a graduate assistant at \$25 a month for ten months---\$250 a year.

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I took the job and I was glad to get it. The next year I went on the regular faculty at \$1400 a year. By the time the people of western Montana sent me to Congress in 1942, I was making \$2300 a year.

I tell you this because I want you to know something about the Democratic candidate for the Senate of the United States. I want you to know, also, that I think I have been a very, very fortunate man. I think that the people of Montana have treated me wonderfully, and I have tried to repay in part the faith, the trust, and the confidence you have placed in me. No matter how much I would be able to accomplish, I could never begin to pay you for what you have done for me over the years. After all, I am the first born son of immigrant parents, and I appreciate this state and this country, which has offered a haven to my parents and which has given to me opportunities no other countries in the world could offer.

I think in the past ten years we have been able to accomplish a great deal for Montana, and I am proud of the part I played in getting the Hungry Horse Dam, of getting Libby authorized and getting appropriations for Canyon Ferry, getting construction started on Tiber Dam and getting funds for other projects which mean so much to us and to generations yet to come. Those things are important because Montana is an empire as Governor Bonner has so often said. It is a big state. I know now how big it is because I have campaigned in Camp Crook, South Dakota, and Wibaux and Beech, North Dakota, north of the line in Canada and over into Idaho. I haven't hit Wyoming yet, but I'm sure somewhere

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along the trail I'll find some Montana people who are registered in this state in Wyoming and, if so, I'll go over to see them.

In travelling up and down this state, I have been amazed to rediscover just what treasures we do possess. The Williston Basin in eastern Montana is a huge oil field which in ten years will exceed anything yet seen in the state of Texas. Agriculture, of course, is our basic economy. In western Montana we have tremendous forest resources and around Butte and vicinity we have copper; we have tuncson; we have manganese. And in the Stillwater country we have great deposits of low-grade chrome. We have many things. I recall when I worked in the mines in Butte in the 20's, the scare talk going around then about how Butte couldn't last. It was just there for a short while; the copper would wear out, and the town would disappear. As a matter of fact, in twenty-five years every copper camp in this country will disappear because they will all be worked out. But the one exception, Butte, will be working just as strongly one-hundred years from now as it is today because the copper is there and it, like our state, has a great future. Then, of course, over in the northwestern part of our state in the ten Columbia Basin counties we have ten per cent of the potential hydro-electric power in the entire United States. Think of it. Roughly ten million kilowatts of power; power which must be developed for the benefit of the people of our state; power which must be developed for use in the state of Montana. It's going to cost the people of Montana 102 million dollars for the construction of Hungry Horse Dam but every dime put into the Hungry Horse is fully repayable at interest to the Federal government.

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Every single dime. Under the Reclamation Law it must pay for itself at two per cent interest within forty years. I believe that Hungry Horse will repay for itself fully in less than twenty-five years and all of the revenue derived after that will go into the Federal Treasury. What do we get out of Hungry Horse? We get practically three hundred thousand kilowatts of cheap power, public power for use in the state of Montana. It means new industry like the aluminum plant in the Hathead; the match company at Superior; and the phosphate plant at Silver Bow between Butte and Anaconda. It means a broadening of the tax base. It means more opportunities and more security and it offers hope to us and to our children. There will be some irrigation and a great deal of flood control attached to the Hungry Horse, and I might say, a propos to that, that, had the Hungry Horse been built at the time of the Grand Forks disaster some four years ago, the disaster would not have occurred because the crest of the Columbia at that part would have been lowered by twenty-seven inches. So you see it is a great project and it means a great deal to us. Then we have Libby; authorized and some money now being spent in pre-construction work. Libby is going to cost the people of Montana 220 million dollars, but every dime will be repayable and it will mean 620 thousand kilowatts of power for use in the state of Montana. Canyon Ferry will come in late next year. Another 50 thousand kilowatts of power. Those things mean something. Tiber is going to mean something---127 thousand acres of land will be irrigated. The Missouri in northeastern Montana is going to irrigate more land. I want to see Yellowtail built south of

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Hardin in the Big Horn country, and I want to see Powder River county developed, too, because it will put a lot of dry land under cultivation and furnish hope and security for a lot of people.

Those things are important. They should have been done forty years ago. But during the last ten years, at least, we are making a start in developing these resources which we possess in such great abundance in this Treasure State of ours. I want to see Montana grow. I want to see this state built because in my ten years on the faculty at the University I saw too many of our good youngsters leave the state because they said there were no opportunities here. No opportunities here---148,000 square miles and only 590,000 people. Why just compare that with the Japanese Empire before the second World War---150,000 square miles, 72 million people; not more than sixteen per cent of the empire was available for cultivation. I don't want to see anything resembling a population like that brought into being in our state; nor do I want to see Pittsburgh, Chicago or Detroit, but I do want to see the state developed so that we can offer opportunities to those of us who live here now, but especially to those of us who are coming up because we need them here to help us build this great state of ours.

I would like, if I may, to say a few words about rural electrification, a subject which is very close to my heart. As Mr. Frazer has told you, in 1935 five per cent of Montana's farms were electrified. Today the figure is pretty close to seventy-five per cent. But the National average is eighty-five per cent so we have still got a long way to go. In this particular part of our

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state we all remember the Havre-Shelby line. I would suggest to you who may have forgotten, for those of you who do not recall just what the Havre-Shelby line entailed, that you ask my old friend, Ed Kern, sometime to give you the details because he was sent back there and he knows everything that went on on both sides of the Capitol. It's a great thing for Montana, this REA, because it brings to the farmers benefits which they should have had a long time ago and don't think the farmer is unimportant because, in many respects, he is the most important segment of our economy. He has to feed us and, where he feeds four people today, by 1975 he will be feeding five. We want to stop this exodus from the farm to the city, and, if you're going to keep these farms cultivated, you're going to have to give these people a chance to enjoy what we consider in the towns and the cities the ordinary necessities of life. The cry has been raised that REA is disguised socialism. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are twenty-five REA's in the state of Montana, all of them cooperatives. They are farmer owned and they are farmer operated. The Federal Government does loan money to these REA co-op's, it is true, but every dime is repayable with interest and most of the co-ops in the state of Montana are ahead in their repayment schedule at the present time. To the best of my knowledge, only one is behind and that is to the extent of \$2,000. Now, I think that the REA's are a great boost to private enterprise because they buy the poles, the lines, the conductors, etc., from private enterprise. From whom does the rancher's wife buy her milking machine, her radio? From whom does the rancher buy the appliances which he needs to keep the farm

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going and to keep it electrified? Why, he buys it from the appliance dealers down on the main street of Shelby, Cutbank, Conrad, and other towns. He buys all of these things from private enterprise, and I think it's a good thing that we have got twenty-five REA's in the state of Montana, that we have 30,700 co-ops and that we have 18,700 miles of wire. I want to see the day when every ranch in Montana is electrified, and I am going to do all that I can to push the REA program so that in Montana it will not be a seventy-five per cent but one-hundred per cent coverage throughout the entire state.

There are other things I would like to talk to you about concerning Montana, but time just does not permit it. I would like to talk about a few of the issues of the campaign because I think that you are entitled to know the truth. You know, the people I am facing tonight, you people, are the government of the United States, and those of us sitting on this platform are your hired hands. We come before you every two, four, or six years to make a report on our stewardship and to depend upon you to decide in your own minds whether we have done a good job or a bad job. The decision on November 4 is not ours, but it is yours and the responsibility you have on your shoulders is a great one indeed. I hope you will exercise that responsibility with discretion and caution, and I hope that, as far as all candidates are concerned, you will go on the record and the record alone because we can say what we want but we can't go back on what we have done. I have a record of ten years in the House of Representatives, and my opponent has a record of six years in the Senate of the United States.

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It is up to you people to study that record and to make sure that what we have done has been in the interests of the state, in the interests of the country and in the interests of world peace.

Now, there are some issues raised in this campaign. One is the issue of corruption. I think that there is no room in the government for even one corrupt public official because I think one corrupt public official is one too many. I feel that we should do a great deal to bring about an organization of our government, and I am in favor of the Hoover reorganization proposals except as they affect Veterans' hospitalization. We have had in the Congress of the United States this past year a number of proposals but three of them I want to call to your attention. One was to take postmasters and rural mail carriers out of patronage and to put them on a merit and fitness basis. The other was to do the same thing to the Internal Revenue collectors and the third was to apply it to the Customs collectors. I voted for all three of those measures. My opponent did not. I think that they are good measures, and I think they would do a great deal to bring about a streamlining of the government and to bring about greater efficiency and to do away with the possibility of corruption. Incidentally, the only jobs I have as a Congressman from the western Montana district are the postmasters and rural mail carriers. I have introduced bills in the last three sessions---in the last three Congresses, rather---to take those jobs out of the hands of Congressmen and put them on a merit and fitness basis. So far, I have been unable to even get a hearing on these measures, but I think that these things

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should be done because I don't want the patronage jobs. I think people appointed to government positions should be appointed solely on the basis of fitness and merit. I think it is good business if you do that and keep in line, except for the Veterans' hospitalization proposals, the suggestions made by the Hoover committee.

Then, of course, we have the question of Communism. Communism is a danger. It is a terrible danger in the world today because no American can subscribe in any way or to any part of the atheistic ideology which that particular type of politics entails. I think that we Americans are becoming more and more aware of this insidious danger, and I hope that all of us recognize just what the ultimate aims of Communism are. What the Communists want to do is, if they can, impose upon the free world their aims and they want to make all of us their slaves. Make no mistake about it. We do live in serious times, but you want to know the truth about this thing as you go along. I think that, as far as this government is concerned, we have adopted a pretty good policy in trying to stem Communism abroad and I hope that we will do everything we possibly can to stem it at home. I don't think that you can be an American and a Communist at the same time. I don't think that you can be a Christian and a Communist at the same time and, to that end, I have introduced legislation in the Congress of the United States to outlaw the Communists party so the break will be final, clear-cut and clean because you can't owe loyalty to two countries and you shouldn't belong to a party which advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States.

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In the field of foreign affairs, since the end of the second World War, we have embarked upon a number of policies. The first thing that this government did, and I am speaking of your government, never forget that, was to expend some money to keep Turkey and Greece free, to keep them from being overrun by the Communists, to keep them from becoming Communist-dominated states and to keep the Mediterranean from becoming a Communist lake. That cost a lot of money for the people of the United States but, in my opinion, it was money well spent. It was not money down a rathole as some of the Republicans would have you believe. Just as an illustration, coming close to home, let me call this to your attention. Your government spent 125 million dollars stopping the spread of the foot and mouth disease in Mexico, a foreign country. Was that money thrown down a rathole? Why, of course it wasn't and I supported it to the full because I think American cattle and the American cattle industry should be protected, no matter what the cost. I think that was money well spent to save the cattle in the United States, and I want to tell you here and now that our own Jack Toole, a member of the Livestock Sanitary Board, and Governor Bonner both did a great job in calling to the attention of the people of Montana and in the placing of an embargo upon the importation of Canadian cattle infected with this dread disease.

But then you have the cry it's money down the rathole in Europe. Let's look at the picture calmly and logically and look at it as it really is. You know, at heart, I am an isolationist.

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I'd love to go back to my boyhood days in Great Falls because in those days before the first World War the two oceans were really barriers and the sky above was free. But I'm not living in 1918. I'm not living in 1932. I'm living in the year of our Lord, 1952, and I must face up to my responsibilities and I will shoulder them no matter what the cost to me personally. Did you read last month of that jet plane that flew to northern Ireland, to Newfoundland and back in eight hours? Did you read last week of that flight of forty-four American jet fighters which refueled in midair from Travis Air Force Base to Honolulu, 2600 miles, in four hours and ten minutes? Doesn't that mean something to you? Doesn't that indicate that the days of isolationism are gone and gone forever. We can't live alone and like it. I don't think we can live alone and live because we are engaged in a terrible struggle at the present time, a struggle in which all of the people of the non-Communist world are involved and what they can do in these flights, think of what they'll be able to do next week, next month, and next year.

Now, as far as western Europe is concerned, we have spent a great deal of money there. I came back to my district when the Marshall plan was proposed and I told the people in Montana just what it entailed. I said it would take four years to complete. It will cost the American people between 15 and 16 billion dollars and it may succeed. I couldn't tell them it would succeed because I didn't know. Nobody knew. But I said if we don't go in there every one of those countries is going to become Communist dominated in no time at all. I went back to Congress and I voted for the

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Marshall Plan, and you have spent $11\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars but you saved all of western Europe from going to Communism. I visited western Europe right after the war, and I saw the Norwegians, the Danes, the Dutch, the Belgians, the French, the Italians, the Greeks and the Turks, and I saw the feeling of defeatism among them all because they had been bombed out and ruined out and their industries had been destroyed. A few years later I saw the feeling of neutralism come up in certain countries, but in the past two years I have seen the feeling of hope and of strength come to the fore. Why? Because under the American program arms had been shipped to them. They had some planes; they had some tanks and half-tracks; they had guns and they had cats. They had some of their industries going. They had something with which they could fight if they had to and, when you think that we're putting money into western Europe to primarily help the western Europeans, think again. We're doing all of these things primarily in the interests of and for the security of the United States of America which must always come first. That's the thing. Remember those planes? Don't lose sight of the fact of how the earth has shrunk; of how time and space both have been conquered and how the earth is still shrinking and shrinking. We're neighbors, one with another, in this world whether we like it or not, and the leader of the non-Communist nations of the world, whether we like it or not, is our own country. We can't shirk that responsibility if we are going to stop the threat of Communist aggression, and I think we Americans, even though we don't like it, are aware of the problems

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which confront us today and are aware of the responsibilities which are ours and may well be ours for years to come. We are doing these things in our own self-interest because the Communist aim, I repeat, is world domination, world conquest, and world slavery. If they can take it piecemeal, they will do it as they have tried to do already. But they can wait a long time. We Americans have to realize that we have something here far more precious than any other country in the world has had the opportunity to enjoy. Just the fact that Democrats and Republicans can hold political meetings such as this; the fact that we can go to the church of our choice; read the papers of our choice; say what we like; the fact that we can vote, secretly and as our conscience dictates. Those facts are something worth remembering all the time because they embody in themselves the principles of freedom. They were handed to most of us. Somebody had to fight and die, work and suffer that we could have these things which we enjoy today, and I think we ought to recognize how precious they are because there are people in the Iron Curtain countries today who would lay down their lives gladly if they thought their children could just have one of these freedoms which we enjoy---the right to vote, to vote secretly and as our conscience dictates. That's important, and I hope Americans as a whole will realize how fortunate and how lucky a people we are. Those things are worth paying for because those freedoms can't be measured by a dollar sign. Those things are worth fighting for and, if need be, they are worth dying for. And I want to tell you people that, as far

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as I am concerned, I will never bow down to Communist domination because I want to live as a free man and a free American, and I know the American people want to live the same way.

Thank you very much.