

[From the Congressional Record—Appendix, Feb. 15, 1960]

THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF WASHINGTON, D.C., STARVES THE FINE ARTS AT THE VERY TIME THE SOVIET UNION IS SPENDING VAST SUMS TO PROVE AMERICANS ARE CULTURELESS BARBARIANS

(Extension of remarks of Hon. Harris B. McDowell, Jr., of Delaware, in the House of Representatives, Monday, February 15, 1960)

Mr. McDOWELL. Mr. Speaker, a distinguished citizen of Delaware, and one of the country's leading architects, Samuel E. Homsey, has written me to say that Communist countries are spending vast sums of propaganda to prove that Americans are cultureless barbarians.

It is important to note, in this connection, that a study made at my request by the Library of Congress shows that the municipal government of Washington, D.C., spends less money on the fine arts than any other major U.S. city. The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia seems content to let the Federal Government or private benefactors support the arts. Such a course would be unthinkable in any European capital city or, indeed, even in any large provincial city in Europe or the U.S.S.R.

The Library of Congress reported on the financial support given the fine arts by 38 U.S. cities: Baltimore, for instance, gives \$448,588; Philadelphia \$789,760; St. Louis, \$320,007; Los Angeles, \$196,998; Kansas City \$155,789; San Francisco \$817,256; and New York City \$4,718,824. The study showed Washington, D.C., which is considerably larger—and richer per capita—than San Francisco, gives only \$16,000 to the fine arts. This sum compares favorably only with the \$12,500 which Hagerstown, Md., gives to the fine arts.

In a provocative article entitled "In Culture, Is Washington a Hick Town?" by its distinguished music critic, Howard Taubman, the New York Times said on December 27, 1959:

"Compare Washington with a small capital like Brussels, which has opera, ballet, orchestra, theaters and a highly cultivated population, and the outcome is to our discredit. Compare Washington with a provincial town like Tiflis, more than a thousand miles from Moscow. The Soviet city beyond the Caucasus has an opera house, a ballet, four professional theaters, several children's theaters and a proud cultural tradition."

I have cosponsored with Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, of Minnesota, a bill to provide that 1 mill out of each \$1 of tax revenue of the government of the District of Columbia be set aside in a special fund to defray in part the expenses of the National Symphony Orchestra, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Washington Opera Society, and other nonprofit art and cultural programs of the Nation's Capital.

In introducing a companion measure to my bill in the Senate, which has been cosponsored in the House by our able colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. Thompson], and others, Senator Humphrey said:

"Throughout my service in the Senate, I have consistently supported measures to improve the city of Washington and to make it an even more beautiful and pleasant city in which to live. I shall continue to support such programs because I believe it is in the best interest not only of the city of Washington but the United States itself. After all, Washington is a picture window through which the people of other nations look and draw their judgments about America. Washington should represent the artistic and cultural aspirations of the American people. Unfortunately, all too little has been done to promote the arts in the Nation's Capital."

I include as part of my remarks the New York Times article entitled "In Culture, Is Washington a Hick Town?"

"IN CULTURE, IS WASHINGTON A HICK TOWN?—AS THE NATION'S CAPITAL AND A WORLD CAPITAL, WITH VISITORS FROM EVERY LAND, IT MUST, IT IS ARGUED, BECOME A SHOWPLACE OF THE BEST WE HAVE TO OFFER

(By Howard Taubman)

"WASHINGTON.—The indictment is often made: Washington is a hick town culturally. Residents of the Capital and its environs respond indignantly that this is a canard invented by supercilious New Yorkers and envious foreigners. They marshal evidence and arguments in defense. Their voices rise, their emotions become involved. Are they sensitive about the charge? You bet they are.