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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Memorial Program for United States Congressman Frank Fellows

Date: August 27, 1951

Recording number: Reel-to-reel Tape 13, part 1

Length of recording: 12:35

[transcript begins]

BILL MINCHER: Congressman Fellows served his state and the nation well during his 10 years of representing Maine in the Congress of the United States. His sudden death was a shock to all who knew him. Taken suddenly ill on Saturday night, Fellows was rushed to the Bangor hospital where his name was placed on the danger list. He rallied this morning and doctors were encouraged at the change in his condition. Dr. H.C. Scribner said today that Fellows was in good spirits this morning and was laughing and joking with relatives and hospital officials. At noon, however, his condition became worse.

Dr. Scribner said that Fellows was ill for only five minutes before his death and that all possible help was given him to try to save his life. A member of a family long-prominent in Maine politics, the Congressman first was elected to Congress in 1940 as a successor to the now Senator Owen Brewster of Dexter.

WLBZ telephoned Congressman Robert Hale of Portland and recorded his remarks as he spoke today in tribute to his fellow Congressman.

HALE: We spoke on the same platform in Rockland last Wednesday and I had no inkling that anything was wrong with him. His speech on that occasion was largely and quite characteristically devoted to praise of his colleagues. My associations with Frank Fellows have been close, ever since I came back from World War I to find him Clerk of the United States Court here in Portland. We saw each other frequently as brother attorneys and the long period when he practiced law in Bangor and I in Portland. When I went to Washington in 1943, I join him there as my senior, found him there as my senior by two years. Since that time our contacts have been almost daily. I can truthfully report but in these nine years nothing is ever marred our personal relationship, which has been as cordial as it could possibly be. Frank Fellows was a remarkable character, a wonderful friend, delightful companion, an able legislator, a man whose wit and geniality made him a favorite of a wide circle of friends, both in and out of Washington and indeed all over the country where he was in wide demand as a platform speaker. His political philosophy was Downeast Republican in the best sense of the term. He was a formidable debater. I can recall many of his speeches. The displaced persons legislation will long be a monument to his memory. The death of Frank Fellows is a great grief to me.

MINCHER: In Portland, News Director Tom Wade of the Maine Broadcasting System contacted a number of public officials of whom he speaks now.

WADE: Representative Fellows, as third ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, had the respect and friendship of countless colleagues, was a vigorous opponent of the New Deal and Fair Deal. Fellows was warmly praised during the 80th Congress for his chairmanship of a subcommittee which put through the original Displaced Persons Law. Although he spoke infrequently on the House floor, he was among the few members who could count on the rapt and undivided attention of the entire chamber, whether they agreed with him or not. Members always listened when he spoke. His final remarks in the House were in support of a bill to return the oil-rich tidelands to the control of the states. In recent months, Fellows evidenced great concern with the state of the nation's morals and world unrest. In radio broadcasts for Maine voters, he frequently complained that the nation was fast losing its grip on the basic principles on which it was founded. He often said people used to look to God for help but that now they look to the federal government. He called Korea a symbol of heartbreak and said the United Nations had proven little more effective than a college debating society. He opposed much of the administration's foreign policy and any measure that smacked of socialism.

Senator Margaret Chase [break in audio] ... Pratt of Pennsylvania said Fellows was a tower of strength on the Judiciary Committee. He said the nation has lost a great statesman and that his personal loss was overwhelming.

Senator Margaret Chase Smith announced Mr. Fellows' death on the Senate floor saying the nation can ill afford to lose his patriotic service in these critical times. She recalled his frequent references to boyhood days in Bucksport and said he was always obsessed of a deep loyalty to Maine which he maintained throughout his outstanding service in Congress. She called him one of the outstanding legal minds in the state and said he won the wholesome respect of all those with whom he came in contact by his candor and powerful manner of expression. The Senate then adopted a resolution expressing its profound sorrow and Mrs. Smith and Senator Brewster were named to represent the Senate at the funeral. The House will not be in session again until September 12th at which time it will follow custom and adjourn out of respect for Mr. Fellows.

MINCHER: As Tom Wade said, Senator Margaret Chase Smith made a statement from the Senate floor this afternoon upon hearing of Congressman Fellows' death. By telephone, she repeated the statement which was recorded here at WLBZ. Senator Smith.

SMITH: Mr. President, it is with deep regret that I announce the death of the Representative from the Third Congressional District of the State of Maine, the Honorable Frank Fellows of Bangor. His untimely passing comes as a shock to his colleagues and friends and is a deep loss not only to Congress and to the people of Maine, but to the entire nation. Frank Fellows was one of the outstanding legal minds in the state of Maine. He distinguished himself as an outstanding lawyer in the state of Maine and later as a brilliant member of the Committee on the Judiciary in the United States House of Representatives. His judicial mind and [?] nature were among his outstanding characteristics. He won the wholesome respect of all those with whom he came in contact by his candor and powerful manner of expression. Frank Fellows was always possessed of a deep loyalty to his state of Maine. I recall how he frequently spoke with great pride of his school days in Bucksport. He maintained that loyalty throughout his outstanding service in the Congress of the United States for the past 10 years. Frank Fellows was all

these things, but more than that, he was a real American whose patriotic service our nation can ill afford to lose in these critical times.

MINCHER: Frank Fellows, as a speaker was a delight to all who heard him. A master of oratory, he delivered his ringing well-rounded phrases like those of yesteryear and as a storyteller he had no equal. As Senator Smith just said, Fellows loved his native state of Maine. Here now is an excerpt from a recent speech he made.

VOICE OF FELLOWS: To those of us firmly bound by memory to this garden spot of the Creator, it indeed appears that here He shows us what is what and convinces all that who is who does not count. We like to think that all people native to Maine assume the qualities of its landscape and many a visitor from distant places beguiled by our scenery and betrayed by their love of nature, human and otherwise, returns year after year to finally become completely enslaved.

MINCHER: And in another part of his talk on the same day, Frank Fellows said

FELLOWS: Appreciation of the smack and tang of elemental things, the rectitude and patience of the cliff, the goodwill of the rain that loves all leaves, the friendly welcome of the wayside well, the courage of the bird that dares the sea, the gladness of the wind that shakes the clone, the pity of the snow that hides all scars, the secrecy of streams that make their way under the mountain, mountain to the rifted rock, the tolerance and equity of light that gives as freely to the shrinking flower as to the great oak flaring to the wind, has encouraged development of the traits of character that endear their processors to those summer visitors who come to marvel that Downeasters remain, now as always, like the pines on their hills: rugged, clean, undaunted, and in their faith, evergreen.

MINCHER: In a telephone conversation with WLBZ, Congressman Charles Nelson expressed shock at the death of Frank Fellows and said, we quote, "Frank Fellows was one of the grandest men in the Congress and could always be depended upon for absolute integrity and legislative forbearance. Many in the house looked to congressman Fellows for guidance," unquote. Senator Owen Brewster could not be reached, as he said to be out of the country, but from Augusta, Governor Frederick G. Payne of Maine issued the following statement.

PAYNE: The people of Maine are deeply shocked at the untimely passing of Congressman Frank Fellows of the Third District. Frank was loved and respected by thousands of people, not only in the district he served, but throughout the entire state and nation. His loyalty and devotion to our nation and its people endeared him to all. I feel a great personal loss in his passing, for he has been a very close and real friend for many years. His statesmanship and outstanding ability as an orator made him a valuable member of the Congress of the United States. The nation, as well as the state, will grieve his death.

MINCHER: A practicing lawyer with his brother, the Honorable Raymond Fellows, Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, Frank Fellows had a law office in Bangor since he was admitted to the Maine Bar in 1911. He had never been an aspirant for public office until 1940. In that year, he was elected to succeed Owen Brewster, now a United States Senator from Maine. Since that first term in Congress, Mr. Fellows had been reelected successively and was serving his fifth term at the time of his death today.

Congressman Fellows was something of a philosopher, too, especially in regard to the state of Maine. Here are more of his words.

FELLOWS: The type of individual who fells virgin trees and builds and sails ships is the one needed today to furnish inspirational leadership to a country many of whose citizens have been too long or too far from the wonder of God's handiwork. The rugged honesty that alone ensured long life in communities so small that each inhabitant knew every other is sadly needed in places of power.

MINCHER: Yes, Maine surely lost one of its finest citizens today. As State Senator Freeman L. White of Bangor said this afternoon, this district will have a difficult time to replace a man so outstanding in public service.

ANNOUNCER: WLBZ, Bangor.

[transcript ends]

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