The Honorable Herbert Lehman  
United States Senator,  
Washington, D. C.  

SUBJECT: Official Government-Business Telegrams  

Dear Senator:  

Your attention is invited to the following provision of law relating to official Government-business telegrams:  

"There shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate charges on official Government business paid and collect telegrams when so designated in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the Committee to Audit and Control the Contingent Expenses of the Senate."  

The Committee on Rules and Administration has succeeded to the functions, powers, and duties of the former Committee to Audit and Control the Contingent Expenses of the Senate, and the Committee herewith invites your attention to the following rules and regulations prescribed by the former Committee to Audit and Control the Contingent Expenses of the Senate which rules and regulations with minor changes continue in effect:  

1. Personal telegrams, the subject matter of which relates to the private business of the sender cannot be sent by Senators and charged as official Government-business telegrams.  

2. Congratulatory telegrams cannot be sent by Senators and charged as official Government-business telegrams.  

3. Telegrams of condolence cannot be sent by Senators and charged as official Government-business telegrams.  

4. "Book" telegrams, including form telegrams in reply to letters from constituents regarding current legislation and acknowledging the receipt of daily mail, shall not exceed 25 words; they must be sent at night letter Government rates, and they are subject to the following limitations:  

150 such telegrams per calendar month may be sent by each Senator from any State which has a population of three million or less.
300 such telegrams per calendar month may be sent by each Senator from any State which has a population of more than three million and less than six million.

450 such telegrams per calendar month may be sent by each Senator from any State which has a population of six million or more.

Charges on such telegrams sent by individual Senators which violate these conditions or are sent in excess of the limitations herein imposed as to number shall not be paid as official Government-business telegrams.

5. Official Government-business telegrams sent by members of the staff of individual Senators, and by clerks of Standing or Special Committees, in order to be approved for payment must carry a signature title, namely, "John Doe, Secretary, Senator Blank," or "John Doe, Clerk, Committee on Blank."

6. Prior to the 80th Congress, the rules governing the use of official telegrams prohibited the sending of speeches to newspapers and radio stations by official wire. Since the rule was changed some Senators have made it a practice of sending verbatim copies of their remarks in the Senate to all newspapers and radio stations in their States. The cost of telegraphing one speech has often exceeded $1,000. Before considering action to again prohibit such use of official telegrams the Committee deems it advisable to bring the matter to the attention of Senators in the hope that the practice may be curtailed sufficiently to prevent the need for changing the rules.

The Committee further invites your attention to the fact that "day letter" and "night letter" telegram rates are considerably under the rate for regular telegrams and the Committee suggests that whenever possible telegrams be marked "day letter" or "night letter" inasmuch as such a practice will result in considerable saving to the Senate.

The total cost of telegrams paid from the Contingent Fund of the Senate amounted to $183,368 in 1941, $277,938 in 1945 and $343,130 in 1948.

Sincerely yours,

Carl Hayden, Chairman
Committee on Rules and Administration.