Federal Aid to School Construction:

Our Committee unanimously agreed that its last meeting and specifically instructed the staff of the Committee to prepare and submit to us by Tuesday of this week a school construction bill which would:

Combine the Cooper and McClellan bills amended in the following respects and only in the following respects:

(a) Limit its operation to two years;  
(b) Authorize an appropriation of $250,000,000 for each year; and  
(c) Remove any reference either pro or con to "equal but separate" facilities.

Last night, you were sent a "Confidential Committee Print" of the bill we are to be asked to act on tomorrow morning. This bill does not carry out the specific instructions given the staff by the Committee. It restricts construction of school facilities to those "urgently needed because of overcrowding". It even goes so far as to strike out on Page 20 of the print the phrase which would permit "where the need for school facilities is occasioned by seriously unsafe or unhealthful conditions, the altering, remodeling or improvement of existing facilities". In addition, it requires States to submit plans showing "steps taken toward modifying restrictive debt or tax limits . . .".

I cannot understand the failure of the Committee staff to follow the instructions of the Senators on the Committee to prepare the bill we asked for. Whether or not it was so intended, should we get into involved discussions of the Committee print which has been given us, it may well delay action until it is far too late to expect consideration of the bill by the full Senate. Therefore, and in order to avoid prolonged discussion of the print given us, I would suggest that we formally move that the Committee report to the Senate not later than Friday, July 2, the Cooper bill, S. 2601, amended solely in those three respects (2-year time limit, $250,000,000 a year authorization, no reference pro or con to the question of separate facilities).
I hope the motion to report this bill favorably will be defeated by Republican votes in the Committee. In that case, I propose to vote "present".

This health reinsurance bill is not being urged upon us by any group I know of other than the Administration. If it were to become law, and its provisions were widely invoked, the results could be pretty bad, especially because of the powers of life and death over participating health insurance companies which would be vested in the Secretary. However, all the testimony indicates that almost no use will be made of the law and, since the Blue Cross people have testified that the measure might be of some assistance to them, I do not intend to actively oppose the measure. In fact, I would probably vote for it on the floor of the Senate. In Committee, I shall only vote "present".

This course of action occurs to me as desirable not only because of the substantive material in this bill but also because of the political implications should it be defeated by Democratic votes. There is no question in my mind but that if this were to occur, the President and Mrs. Hobby would be on television throughout the campaign talking about the great health insurance measure they had proposed but which Democrats had defeated. They would use and misuse such a vote to urge the election of a Republican Congress. On the other hand, because the American Medical Association is opposed to the bill and State medical associations are becoming quite vocal, and active in their opposition, it is my belief that in all probability the measure would be killed in the Senate by Republican votes (if the Republican leadership allowed it to be brought up at all). In any case, it has obviously no chance of passing through both the Senate and the House in this session.

For all of these reasons, it appears to me that it would be highly unwise for us to put the Administration in a position to say that S. 3114 was defeated either in Committee or on the Senate floor by Democratic votes.