STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON THE SENATE FLOOR REGARDING DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HEADQUARTERS FOR NATIONAL SOCIETY OF SONS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION, MARCH 17, 1958.

MR. PRESIDENT:

The purpose of H.R. 9271, which now is on the calendar, is to permit the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution to occupy the residence at 2412 Massachusetts Avenue as the national headquarters of the society. The society was given a charter by act of Congress 51 years ago to have it headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is a leading, patriotic organization, nonprofit, nonsectarian, and nonpolitical. It is devoted to the support of the Constitution of the United States. It teaches the history of the founding of the Nations. It inculcates and stimulates love of our country and the flag and loyalty to our Government. This the society does by giving cash prizes and medals to students for good citizenship, as judged by teachers and student bodies. Cash prizes are given to student winners of historical orations in State and National contests. The local societies give medals to the outstanding members of the local ROTC. The local societies urge the teaching of American history in schools and colleges, and some of them give scholarships.

The adult population is influenced patriotically by the holding of commemorative exercises on the birthdays of patriots and on the anniversaries of the 4th of July, Constitution Day, and Flag Day. Annually, the Governor of each State is requested to issue a proclamation for the observance of Constitution Day within his State.

None of this work with the schools and the public is done by or from the national headquarters. Instead, it is done by the local societies. The national headquarters is used to house a voluminous library which the national society's genealogist uses to verify and confirm the applications made for membership. It is used to house the records of membership. The membership is made up of distinguished leaders in the Senate and House of Representatives, governors of States, and leaders in the professions, education, and business.
When the present owner of 2412 Massachusetts Avenue applied for a variation in the zoning, to permit occupancy by the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, a few citizens in that part of the city objected, on the grounds of noise and increase of traffic. The building is to be used as the residence of the national executive secretary. In the building during the day, there will be, also, the genealogist, two secretaries, and the telephone operator. Of these five persons, the executive secretary, only, uses an automobile. Twice a year there will be a trustees' meeting. Conventions are held in hotels in cities throughout the United States. So in the headquarters building there will be very little noise, and the traffic will be very light, when compared with traffic in the same block going to the Mexican delegation offices and to and from the huge Canadian office building. In the block immediately to the west there are two large apartment houses, the Japanese and Indian Embassies are between them; and there are also the Spanish Embassy commercial attaché offices. In the block to the east there are the embassies of Denmark, Ecuador, China, and Korea; also a private school, and the Fellowship House, Inc., offices. This side of Massachusetts Avenue is not in the restricted residential A zone but is in the third category of residential zone known as BR, which permits row houses and community or apartment houses.

The building at 2412 Massachusetts Avenue contains 10 rooms and servants' quarters. Its size is suitable and ample for the home of the national society. It has a plain and dignified appearance. There is no need or desire to change the external appearance of the building, and there is little need for change inside. The use of the headquarters is of a quiet, conservative, and residential character. Many residents of the neighborhood have written, to the Board of Zoning Adjustment, letters favoring the society's occupancy. The adjacent owners on each side of the building welcome the society there, so they have stated in letters.

The President of the Board of District Commissioners for the District of Columbia has written to the chairmen of the District of Columbia Committees of
the Senate and the House of Representatives, letters in which he states that the occupancy of the building by the Sons of the American Revolution will have no adverse effect on the neighboring property and that "they (the Commissioners) do not offer objection to passage of the bill."

Mr. President, the bill was supposed to be reached during call of the calendar today. However, the distinguished junior Senator from Virginia promised a resident of the District of Columbia that he would object. That resident stated that the headquarters could secure a building for possibly $60,000 or thereabouts.

Mr. President, the Senator from Virginia informs me that he was under the impression that the headquarters to be obtained would be used by the local chapter in the District of Columbia; he did not know it would be used by the national headquarters. However, since he promised to object to consideration of the bill during the call of the calendar today, he has requested that the bill not be considered today.

Out of courtesy to the Senator from Virginia, I shall not attempt to have the bill considered today. But I desire to give notice that tomorrow I expect to ask that the bill be acted on by the Senate. There is a time limit in connection with this matter, inasmuch as the national headquarters has sold the building it formerly occupied, and it is necessary that arrangements be made promptly to obtain another building for the national headquarters.

I may say that, as a result of the proposed exchange, the national organization will be able to accumulate a reserve of approximately $100,000, which is badly needed for its work.

I am very anxious to have the bill passed, and to have the national headquarters accommodated in this manner. I am quite confident the Congress will act wisely in this connection.

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