

Ella Grasso

April 12, 1972

If you look at my district you'll get some idea of what my problem is. I try to schedule visits in each one of the 47 towns at least twice every year--47 towns. Each town is an entity and believes it is number one, so you can't slough off any of them as a community. I try to attend at least one event in each of the towns--as many low key things as I can, to let them know that I'm around and that I care. Next weekend I'm not scheduled for Saturday. They are doing "Fiddler on the Roof" in _____ and "My Fair Lady" in _____, so I may just get my husband and go to one of those shows. And that's the story of my life. I love it and it's exciting.

I can only schedule so many town visits in a day. After awhile you hear so many problems you begin to meet yourself coming the other way. You can get dehumanized. I don't know about other congressmen but we have a case load in this office that is unbelievable. (Do you generate them with your visits?) Perhaps it's because I'm so visible. I was well known even before I became a Congressman. (Then she went into detail, about how many cases she had picked up in one weekend at home.) She has a free phone--people call--but most don't know about it--even most sophisticated.

New Britain, 75,000 "They think they are the only town. It's a very ethnic town. For example, it has a large Polish community. I

remember when I was first running, I got very nervous and I thought I need a Polish person to help me. The only congressman of polish descent I knew was Danny Rostenkowski. So Danny came, and in Enfield he was all right, but in New Britain it was awful. I said to him, I'm not going to ask you to come again. Danny didn't speak Polish! We went into a bank and all the tellers spoke polish and nothing but polish. It was that way all the way down the street. Luckily, Father _____ was with us and could interpret. He would introduce me and then introduce Danny Rostenkowski to these polish people. Danny was amazed. I said where the hell do you come from? Don't the poles in Chicago speak polish? He said no. For the Poles in New Britain, it's wonderful, it helps them. But the town itself is just isolated enough, so that they haven't gotten out into the mainstream."

"There are so many social events in New Britain that I could spend 7 days a week all year going to them and still never hit them all. The day Ed Muskie came to speak to the Jackson Day Dinner, I went to four testimonials before the dinner. They have dinners from Friday through Sunday--dinners, dinners, dinners. Where I come from, we are socialbe, but we don't have anything like that kind of social whirl."