

In its February 1, 1940 issue the editor of *The Planters' Press* had quite a lot to say about Louisiana politics, especially about Senator Allen Ellender.

“From Washington, D. C., comes word that Senator Allen J. Ellender has again taken to the floor of the Senate to defend the corrupt political machine, no win power in Louisiana, and to denounce the press of our state. We would like to remind the Senator that if he and others high in office in our state had been so concerned for the welfare of Louisiana the task of uprooting vice, graft and stealing would not have fallen almost entirely on the shoulders of the press.”
If the Senator is such a true patriot, why did he remain in Louisiana after Congress convened, and where he could have been assuming the duties of his office, in the service of our people, instead of taking part in a campaign designed to keep the machine in office?’

“We have heretofore touched on some of the antics and tactics of the Senator, as well as his senior colleague, Senator John H. Overton, during this campaign, but we felt that in fairness to the press, which has carried on unceasingly the fight for clean, honest and decent government in Louisiana, that we could not let Ellender’s remarks on the Senate floor go unanswered.”

“We would remind Mr. Ellender that his remarks in the Senate cannot be made the basis of any court case that might make the Senator liable, but they can be refuted by a free, untrammelled press.”

“What we would like to know is whether the Senator really believes that the present state machine can do no wrong? Why does he criticize fearless federal officials who sincerely make an effort to insure honest elections in this campaign? Is he afraid, or are his machine friends afraid, to have the pitiless light of free publicity turned on in this state?”

“If they are afraid there must be something to hide, at least something of which they are ashamed. If not, then they should be the first to offer their cooperation which has not been tendered, or given weak-heartedly in those cases where offered, to date.”

“Louisiana needs a clean government, economically operated. If the people who feel this way do not resent the continued remarks of Senator Ellender, then we are badly fooled.”

Politics as usual

Written by Ann Middleton

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Allen Ellender was a U. S. Senator from Houma, Louisiana. He was a Democrat, politically allied with Huey P. Long. He served in the Senate from 1937 until his death in 1972.

To discover more about where Bossier Parish stood politically in the past, visit the Bossier Parish Library Historical Center.

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