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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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NEAR EAST

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE

December 22, 1966

Dr. Henry Blackburn
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Dr. Blackburn:

Thank you for your recent letter on the "Pray for Peace" postage cancellation. I hope you have received a satisfactory answer from the Postmaster General.

Undoubtedly many persons share your ideas. On this assumption, I contacted the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union to ask about what, if anything, is being done to challenge the constitutionality of the cancellation. I was somewhat surprised to be told that this specific question has not become an issue for the ACLU. At the suggestion of the Washington office, I am forwarding your letter to ACLU national headquarters in New York for comments on what is really a rather difficult question.

The sort of thing to which you object has roots deep in our history, and these roots are hard to pull out. One example is the annual "Pray for Peace" proclamation by the President at Christmastime. Another is "In God We Trust" motto on our coins. A third is the inclusion of the words "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, which you will recall was a bitterly fought issue just a few years ago.

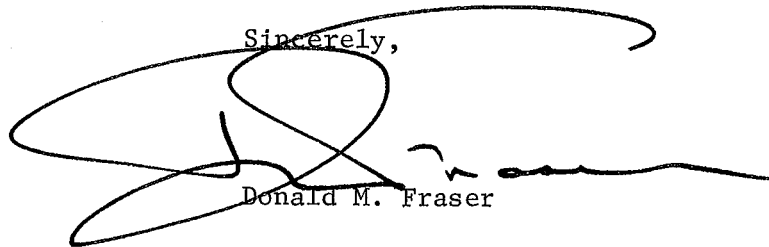
I'm quite familiar with the political heat that can be generated on subjects such as this. Most recently, of course, we have had the

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Congressional battle over the Dirksen Amendment to legalize prayers in schools. This is clearly unconstitutional, in my opinion, and I have opposed it. So have an increasing number of organizations and individuals. But, as a matter of practical politics, I can see little or no possibility that Congress will strike Section 259 of Title 39 of U. S. Code.

Best wishes to you and your family for a happy holiday season and a successful new year.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donald M. Fraser