

## THE NATIONAL DEFENSE EDUCATION ACT

### Interview #4

Friday, January 28, 1983

**MCCLURE:** Well, I'll introduce this by saying this is simply a story, a very embarrassing story about me and Senator Pell and Doc [Floyd M.] Riddick. It had to do with an education bill, the higher education bill, I think, in which Pell was greatly interested; in fact I think he was the manager of the thing. It had passed the Senate, passed the House, and we were to go to conference. One of my jobs was to hold the conference papers when they were delivered by the Senate page; if the Senate was to act first the papers came to me and I was supposed to carry them to the conference so the members could all sign their names at the end if they ever reached agreement.

The morning of the conference I called the girl out in the front office who handled this stuff, only to recall that she was no longer there, and nobody had any recollection of these papers. Nobody there had signed for them. Of course I found out who had, the girl who had left. I guess it was some form of revenge against me and [Harrison] Williams and the whole world, I don't know what she did with them, she'd thrown them away or burned them or something. But my God these were official texts of the language approved by both houses; you know what a conference paper looks like. It was about eleven o'clock and

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the conference was to begin at two. Well, I said, I'm going to have to throw myself on the mercies of the court. I didn't tell Pell, or anybody.

I went to see Doc Riddick. What do we do? He said, "I don't recall this kind of thing ever having happened before." I said, "I'm sure it hasn't, but here we are. We've got to have papers in three hours!" Well, he said, "We'll just have to open up and tell the House what's happened. They'll laugh at us and make us look like fools." I said, "No, Me, no one else." He called the House Parliamentarian and they reprinted the copies and got phoney signatures and stamps and so forth, so when we went into conference at two o'clock we had presumably the original text of the House action and the Senate action. Whew! I told Senator Pell afterwards about that; he couldn't believe it. I couldn't either, frankly. But can you imagine? What is a chief clerk for? He's the custodian of the documents; he's suppose to show up with the right papers. And they're gone!

**RITCHIE:** I have a feeling that Doc Riddick saved a lot of hides around here.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, he did, he saved senators, he saved lobbyists, he saved staff people, of course he did. I discovered over the years that the parliamentary rules of the Senate are made to be bent, and even broken on occasion, whenever it seemed absolutely essential.

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You could dispense with them; they're not Moses' tablet; they're not the Holy Bible. And a good parliamentarian knows how to bend them and turn them to deal with a given situation. He was one of the most subtle, clever, brilliant, charming guys I ever knew around here. There's nobody who didn't like Riddick. He just made himself so available, so amenable, so careful, helpful, and so on, which I think is what any staff guy should do, but he, I thought, was one of the greatest whom I knew.

**RITCHIE:** When you started working on educational issues with the committee back in the 1950s, what in general did you consider to be the major educational problems? What was it that you and the members of the committee were trying to address?

**MCCLURE:** Well it seems to me that the principal focus was upon two things--I'm leaving aside the special types of education, vocational, and GI, and all that sort of thing--but the biggest subjects were school construction, federal money for school construction, and teachers' salaries. That's what the NEA [National Education Association] wanted, and they were the most vocal lobby, of course, but so did the chief state school officers and most of the educational lobbys, higher, lower, middle, or whatever. They were emphasizing a subsidy for the public school systems of the country, which basically needed more buildings because we were in the baby boom of the postwar era, and higher teachers' salaries, because at the time teachers

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were very poorly paid. Garbage collectors, policeman, and so on were getting much more out of municipal and state budgets than were teachers, so they had a good case, from their own point of view and from the public point of view, too. You can't educate children with dumb teachers, and you can't hire teachers who are paid so low they either don't want to work or they could do something else and do so. That was the main thrust.

Elbert Thomas and Jim Murray and even Robert Taft over the period of the late '40s and early '50s were all pushing for some kind of general aid to public education. The Senate passed many bills, but

they all died in the House. The history of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare is replete with occasions in which the Senate would pass a great bill two to one, sixty to thirty, and it would never get out of committee in the House or, if it did, old Mr. /Howard W./ Smith of the Rules Committee would see that it never got to the floor. It was frightfully frustrating for everybody. I mean you went to bat, you fought your battles, you made your debate, you got on record, you voted, and then the damn thing became a nullity. Well, I think I've answered that question, those were the two main thrusts.

**RITCHIE:** School construction seems like apple pie, I can't understand why it received so much opposition. Even the Eisenhower

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administration supported it and sponsored it. Why was there such fierce opposition in the House to federal money for school construction?

**MCCLURE:** I'm not sure that I can answer that. All I know, as I said in an earlier session, is that the Chamber of Commerce of the United States had as one of its major objectives to prevent any federal money going to education, except in specific cases like vocational education and the GI Bill and one or two other things like impacted areas. But beyond that they clung to some mythical constitutional principle: the last thing that could happen in the United States was for the federal hand to be laid on local education, which belongs to the hands of the school boards and local council of education or whatever they're called--which, of course, are all controlled by the Chamber of Commerce. In the real world the business community dominates the school boards in every damn town in the country.

Now what all this was supposed to prevent or forestall I never could figure out, but it was a religious faith. They'd get white and scream and wave their hands in the air about the *horrible* prospects of this vicious, cold hand of federal bureaucracy being laid upon these pristine, splendid local schools that knew better than anyone what needed to be done, and so forth and so forth. A lot of it had to do with taxes, because obviously, as we know, if you start a big federal aid program it's going to grow and expand and cost billions

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and, therefore, the Chamber of Commerce members are going to have to kick in taxes. I guess that

was their basic objection, just another federal program. But anyway, that included school construction, which God knows all the trade unions were for because it had jobs involved, it included teachers' salaries because the business community seemed to believe that the kinds of teachers that were selected under local control would be under their control, wouldn't teach hideous doctrines of a subversive or even critical nature of our unbelievably beautiful system in which everything is perfect. I don't know, it's a real mythology, but it was real and senators and congressmen had to deal with it.

As I said earlier, in the last session, the three "Rs" according to the Chamber of Commerce were not reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic; they were Reds, race, and religion. They marched these issues forward at any time whenever whichever one seemed appropriate. And in the House it was terribly effective. You had the famous Powell amendment, for example. He wasn't working for the Chamber of Commerce, of course, but somebody would provoke him into offering an anti-discrimination amendment and the whole thing would just die, particularly since he was the chairman of the committee at one point. So you just went in this terribly stupid circle, around and around, everybody would get up and yell about the need for more schools and better teachers' salaries, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, but don't forget the Reds, and the Catholics want special treatment, and

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all those blacks that might be treated equally. In that kind a miasma of propaganda you couldn't get anywhere.

**RITCHIE:** A real stalemate developed between the House and the Senate in '55, '56, and '57, that finally seems to have been broken by an outside force when the Soviets sent up . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Sputnik, that's right.

**RITCHIE:** And shortly after Sputnik went up you wrote a memorandum\* to Senator Hill saying, essentially, this is the opportunity.

**MCCLURE:** That's right.

**RITCHIE:** Did this come as a revelation to you, that education could be tied in with defense or had you been considering . . . .

**MCCLURE:** No, no, no. I have been looking through old memoranda and ones written earlier, much earlier, to Gillette or somebody, and probably Hill in '55 or '56. No, we'd had hearings or had touched

on this subject of Soviet scientific advances in public hearings and various other ways for quite a long time. It was not a new concept. There were articles in the papers and the magazines, of course. The immense effort in terms of budget and so forth that the Soviet Union was making on education in science and technology,

\*see appendix

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mathematics, the hard subjects, where we were flapping around with social sciences and soft stuff like that, and abandoning any focus really on biology or physics or chemistry or mathematics or anything difficult. The permissive age did not begin in the '70s, it started way back with out glorious local school boards smiling.

Yes, I think if there was one thing I ever did in my work on the Hill, my work for my whole career, it was to focus Lister Hill's attention on the opportunity which Sputnik, this Russian satellite, gave al I of us who were struggling, and had been for decades, to establish a federal program of monetary aid to public education, and private, too, in some instances. And I'm really very proud of that. Of course, someone else could have come along with the same idea, and probably did a week later, but I was first.

Senator Hill had an executive secretary named John Campbell, who handled the traffic, the messages, the letters, the mail, and so forth, as distinct from legislative work or even administrative work. He was sort of the controller of the movement of traffic in Hill's office, appointments, and so forth. He was a dear man and a friend of mine, and I cooked up this memorandum, which I gave you the other day. Bill Reidy, who was our health man at that time, wrote on the top of it, "Great idea," or something. So it had the support of the staff. Forsythe read it, Blackwell read it, Reidy read it. I was not acting solely alone, not wishing to be undercut later. I

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marched over the Hill's office, which was then still in the old Russell Building, and I took John Campbell aside and I said, "This is something that Senator Hill has got to see *first*."

Hill was in Europe at the time, I think he was in Berlin when the damn satellite was shot up, so the

impact on him must have been even stronger than it was here. I said, "John, I want this put on the top of the spike, all the yellow telephone messages and this that and the other can be underneath. I want him, when he comes in here tomorrow morning, to see this *first*." He read it and said, "You're right, this is very important. This must be called to his attention immediately." And, boy, it worked, because within ten minutes after he was in the office, the staff had a call, "Come on over here. Got you're memorandum, St'rt, let's see what we can do." It worked. And he then set us to business.

We were--Bill Reidy, Jack Forsythe, Fred Blackwell, and I--to pull together from every place we could find it, information, guidance, suggestions, thoughts, on what we should do as a federal government, what the Senate should do as a federal government, what the Senate should do and the House, to meet the Soviet challenge in education. Lyndon Johnson was running hearings in his preparedness committee on what became NASA, the whole outer space business, but we were burrowing into the understructure, the educational necessities of science, and so on. Well, we fanned out, we had innumerable

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conferences with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dale Wolfle then was the director of it, brilliant guy. We worked with the American Chemical Society, the physics people, the engineers, the foreign language people. We got into audio-visual programs. We talked with people really all over the country, and in depth here with their lobbyists and their organizations.

By the middle of December, which was three or four weeks later, we had listed all the things that various groups and individuals had told us needed to be done. Now some of them were not legislatively feasible and they never appeared in any bill, but some of them were not only feasible but tremendously essential. The only time I recall that staff working in unison, contributing honestly, openly, with no backbiting and backstabbing and all the rest of the stuff that goes on here, as we all know--it worked.

By January we had a bill, and to make it even better, almost unbelievably fortuitous, in the House committee was Carl Elliott, of Alabama who was chairman of the subcommittee on education! He was thinking in the same lines and as soon as he saw what we were up to he joined forces. So we had a preconference conference all the time, on the phone every day, back and forth, his guys working with us. Then there was a meeting in Alabama, which I couldn't get to, but Bill Reidy and Forsythe went down to it, and so did Carl Elliott. And they drafted the National Defense Education Act in Montgomery,

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Alabama, the essentials of it based on all this talking and research we'd done. It was not an egg hatched out of my head, or anybody else's. It was a collection of proposals from all sorts of people. Well, then of course, we had to negotiate it into legislative language and cover all bases a dozen times. Then we started public hearings. I'm not sure of the dates, but I think it was early February. We printed a huge hearing, about two or three inches thick, called Science and Education. I pulled those hearings together; well, that was my job. Oh, we had some great witnesses, Lee DuBridge and Edward Teller and, well they were all in this . . . .

**RITCHIE:** Admiral Rickover testified.

**MCCLURE:** Well, I'm not sure, but anyway we got the cream of the brains of this country, so that when we went on the floor we could say, "Well, now, does the senator mean that he challenges the distinguished leader of the National Council on Science, Detlev Bronk, who says . . . ." We hammered them into the ground. And, of course, if anybody brought up socialism or something like that, the dreadful spectre of socialism, we had Edward Teller and the Hydrogen Bomb to clobber them with! Well, hearings, as you well know, really can shape the form of anything. You get the right witnesses and ask the right questions and they give the right answers, your opposition is slaughtered before they can open their trap. That's one of the

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tactical secrets of functioning on this Hill. Well, I really pulled together an incredible array of talent, of not only Ph.D.'s but Nobel Prize winners and so forth. And, of course, the press was paying a great deal of attention to this. We were getting headlines every day, and all of that has an impact, too.

**RITCHIE:** Even the Time/Life publications gave you good press in those days.

**MCCLURE:** Did they? Well, that's unusual. Anyway, I'm very proud of all of that because it worked, and it was my idea that started it. Not my idea in the sense of the legislation, but to do something and to grab this opportunity which would never come again, when the public was all upset and people were fretting in the streets about "oh, my God, we're behind," and all that stuff. So it was, as the Latin's used to say, *carpe diem*, "seize the day," and we did, and we did. I hate to brag about myself, but it is really one thing I'm very proud of. And then we had a bill, and then we had a law, and then we had a

program, and then we began teaching people science and math and languages all over the country. It was a grand achievement, I think. Now we'll tune off Stewart McClure!

**RITCHIE:** It seems like you offered Senator Hill the perfect solution. He had been unable to touch educational matters because of the race issue. You were able to pin it to the defense issue . . . .

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**MCCLURE:** Exactly right.

**RITCHIE:** Which was sacrosanct.

**MCCLURE:** I invented that God-awful title: the National Defense Education Act. If there are any words less compatible, really, intellectually, in terms of what is the purpose of education--it's not to defend the country; it's to defend the mind and develop the human spirit, not to build cannons and battleships. It was a horrible title, but it worked. It worked. How could you attack it?

**RITCHIE:** The big bone of contention between the House and the Senate got down to whether or not to make it scholarships or loans . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Oh, that was another clever, clever ploy. That was done on the House side. They narrowed the issue. There were millions of dollars for all kinds of other things, but Carl Elliott and his guys narrowed the issue to whether we should have the federal government hand out scholarships or loans. And they took the defeat, of course. The House denounced scholarships, it was a waste of money and socialism and all of that. And the minute the damn scholarship issue was done for, dead, the bill swooped through. I don't think anybody had read any other title in it. Oh, that was clever stuff. Carl Elliott was a brilliant strategist, as good as Lister Hill in his way, in different houses.

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**RITCHIE:** The irony is that now so many of those loans haven't been paid back, so they really turned out to be scholarships after all.

**MCCLURE:** De facto scholarships--which I think we all suspected they would be. Well there was a



funny--well, not so funny, it was a very serious development in the midst of this. We were meeting over in one of those Appropriations rooms in the Capitol. The ranking minority member was Smith of New Jersey.

**RITCHIE:** H. Alexander Smith.

**MCCLURE:** H. Alexander. I've mentioned him before, a very nice guy. The next ranking behind him was Goldwater. Smith had announced that he was not going to run again, so the small Republican staff was worried about retaining their jobs, and there were two principal ones on that side: there was Roy James, the minority staff director as he called himself, and Mike Bernstein. Well, Bernstein was a frothing-at-the-mouth anti-Communist, red-baiting guy with a history of denouncing his best friends to the FBI, a real vicious guy, but extremely brilliant and on the surface a very pleasant chap. Certainly he knew everything that had ever been written.

Roy James was a bit more of an operator, elbowing himself around and conning people with charm and that sort of thing. Well, God damn it, we were just about to report this beautiful National Defense bill

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to full committee, having been through every subject there was, when Roy James leaned over to Alexander Smith and suggested a loyalty oath for professors who received money from this program, thinking by doing so that he would, as we used to say, ace himself in with Mr. Goldwater, who was sitting there, too. It didn't work, but the damn thing went into the bill. You know, at the end of a long session you've got everything wrapped up and he ranking minority man says "I think we ought to provide so-and-so." Well, Senator Hill gave three thoughts to it and said OK. "We get rid of it later," he told me, but we never did. God, the House embraced it as if it was the greatest thing since custard pie, and we had to take it in conference, it was in our bill--this stupid, irrelevant, nongermane amendment, cooked up by this guy who wanted to persuade Goldwater that he was as anti-Communist as anybody else. Goldwater fired him immediately when he took over.

But this damn thing remained in the act and it caused a tremendous furor. You may remember, Harvard and Yale and Columbia, the faculty, the deans, everybody was just screaming. "What do you mean? This is an imputation that half of us are working for the Soviet Union and, therefore, can't have a subsidy from the federal government." Well, Jack Kennedy, who was on the committee at the time--or maybe Ted Sorenson, I don't know who--spotted this as a wonderful way to identify Kennedy with the academic community. He had written a book and so forth, but still there was some question:

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Is Jack really sound on important things? So he came charging in in the next session, after the bill had been enacted, with an amendment to scratch this loyalty oath business, and we had people from Yale and Harvard and Columbia and Princeton and California coming in and testifying to these indignities. Why are we trying to imitate the Soviet Union by requiring loyalty oaths?

This will give another little insight into Lister Hill. The committee was still dominated by liberal Democrats and in due course we approved this amendment, which would have struck down this stupid proposal by Mr. Smith. Kennedy was in a hurry to get a headline, I guess, and he insisted on a vote and reporting the bill the same day as it was reported from the subcommittee. He'd done no testing of the floor. He had no idea of what the reception might be. He hadn't called up Bobby Baker, or done any of those preliminary things. Senator Hill said, "Jack, I think we're moving a little too fast here. Can't you wait until tomorrow?" "No, Mr. Chairman, I want an action right now." The press was outside the door, I suppose.

Well, it got to the floor and was recommitted. It was a huge vote to kick it back into committee, with some amendments to the amendment, and then after a number of maneuvers on the floor and checking out with everybody and counting where the runners were on the bases, and so on, we re-reported it and it became law ultimately--which was a great coup for Kennedy in his campaign to be

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president. This must have been '59. He got accolades in all the academic press and started to be treated seriously by professors who might otherwise have thought he was a fly-by-night playboy. It was a very interesting business. When the meeting ended, when we reported the thing the first time, I was sitting beside Senator Hill taking notes, and he always talked with his hand over his mouth, and he said, "Stewart, this will be recommitted." Which he didn't like, because he was chairman of the committee and no chairman likes to have the whole Senate rise up and overthrow him, which happened then. But there was a momentum that he couldn't stop. Fascinating business.

**RITCHIE:** What was the role of the Eisenhower administration during all of this? Were they opposing the act?

**MCCLURE:** I wouldn't say that, no. I think what went on downtown was they knew we were talking to all these people. This is an echo-box, this city, and they found out very quickly that Senate Labor Committee staff was going to the Chemical Society and the Association of Advancement of Sciences. Well, we were talking to the government people, too, of course, National Science Foundation and I don't know what all. So they, HEW at that time, Department of Education as it's now called, but then it was part of HEW, set to work to find out what we were finding out, and they came up with an alternative bill which was very similar, because they talked to the

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same people. So by the time the hearings began there had not only been Senator Hill's bill, but Senator Smith's bill, he being the ranking Republican. There were things in their bill that we took, and we blended the two, really.

It was a very cooperative operation. They knew they had to move. They had to do something, and we gave them a great opportunity to appear as holy and righteous and forthright and farseeing as we were. And then, of course, this guy Fred Heckinger [*New York Times* educational editor] gives the Eisenhower administration credit for the bill! You have that letter I received from him.\* Anyway, that's unimportant. Yes, we worked very closely, with no real problem, once the principle of the thing was decided upon. We fought about scholarships and how much for this, and that, and the other, but I don't recall any basic strife.

In other words, to repeat myself, this was the end of opposition to federal aid to education, by both the Democrats and Republicans. Thereafter, as this committee history shows, we passed anything you could think of. Senator Morse became chairman of the education subcommittee and we passed that tremendous bill, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. They had these "entitlement" programs, which everybody is moaning about today, for disadvantaged school districts, for poor children. It was a stupendous bill. Then

\*see appendix

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there were others, higher education bills and bilingual education bills. Well, they're all listed, I'm not

going to try to remember them.

**RITCHIE:** There does seem to be a pause. You got the momentum going for the NDEA, which passed in '58 and was increased in '59, '60. But when Kennedy came into the presidency, at the same time Morse became chairman of the education subcommittee, proposed his own education bill, but it didn't get passed while he was president.

**MCCLURE:** No, nothing passed while he was president.

**RITCHIE:** It's not till after his death. So it sounds like the opposition was still pretty strong.

**MCCLURE:** It wasn't based on the old bugaboos, though. It was based on the Old Bulls of the House and Senate not wanting to give that young whippersnapper in the White House the time of day. It was political, personal, it might even have been regional--the New England accent, "Cuber," and that sort of thing. But Kennedy was not liked on the Hill and he never really worked at being a member of the Senate. He was always off somewhere. Well, he was ill quite a bit of the time. He didn't really appear to senators to be serious. This is my own feeling, as I watched them for many years. He just didn't have the time to bother with Railroad Retirement, or the trivial things. And from '56 on he was running for president,

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there 's no doubt of that. That's just about the time I joined the committee, so when I first watched Kennedy I saw him not being a senator, but being a candidate. Well, everybody else saw that, too.

And then he won, thank God. Postponed Nixon for a few years. But he couldn't get anything done up here. Nothing. Well, of course, they passed appropriation bills, but none of his program went anywhere. We didn't do a damn thing during the years of the Kennedy presidency. Then Lyndon, of course, replaced him and came in like a tiger, and everything that had been dormant and stuck in conference or committee went woosoosh, like a great reverse whirlpool spinning it out. We passed everything within the next year or two.

**RITCHIE:** One of the big stumbling blocks in the Kennedy years was the whole parochial school issue, who do you give aid to and are religious schools entitled. Did you have a lot of lobbying on that issues?

**MCCLURE:** Always. That was one of the three Rs, religion, which stopped most aid to education

bills, which we avoided with the NDEA-although it was brought up. I can't remember, I read the minutes the other day, and just at the end of reporting the bill, NDEA, some Republicans raised this question, "Isn't some of this money going to go to parochial schools?" And Senator Murray said to him, "How can you live with yourself for raising that issue at this time?" It's in

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the committee minutes. "How can you live with yourself?" And the guy subsided. I've forgotten who it was, [George] Bender or [Gordon] Allott, some Republican. He was just embarrassed out of proceeding with that ancient wheeze about parochial schools. But it's always been a factor here, of course. There are powerful Protestant organizations that find under the corner of the rug a slight suspicion that some parochial kid is going to get two cents of free lunch or something. Well, it's here, but I think we've evaded it.

**RITCHIE:** Of course, Kennedy was in a funny position in the sense that he was Catholic and he had to promise that he wouldn't do anything that would look like a favor to the church, so he rather pointedly opposed giving money to parochial schools.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, he did. I think he had to, politically speaking. For that time in history he had to. Now Reagan can come along a few years later with this business about tax breaks for kids who go to private schools, and nobody gets terribly frenetic about it. Or if they do it doesn't stop anything from happening.

**RITCHIE:** It seems to me that when the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act came along it's stroke of genius was that it gave the money to needy students rather than to the school districts.

**MCCLURE:** That's right.

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**RITCHIE:** So that way it could go to parochial school students.

**MCCLURE:** Of course. Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Who came up with that strategy? It seems as if that's as much of a break-through as the defense connection.

**MCCLURE:** Well, I'm going to share credit on this one with Charlie Lee. Have ever heard of Charles Lee?

**RITCHIE:** No.

**MCCLURE:** He was a brilliant guy. Charlie Lee was appointed as the professional staff man on the educational subcommittee, coming from Morse's own staff. He was a rotund, slightly effeminate, hilariously witty man who had read everything there ever was and could quote it all. "As Carlisle said," or Shakespeare, or Moliere. Wonderful guy and a superb parallel with Morse, who was just as bright but in a different way. They made a great team. Charlie Lee was just a superb person to work with.

One night, sometime probably in '62, I had bought a bottle of Irish whiskey called "Kennedy," which by the way is very good. Charlie liked to sip a bit at the end of the day, as did I, so I brought this pint of "Kennedy" Irish whiskey into his office and we just sat around chewing the fat, as goes on every day up here. We had just gotten through, I think, a session on the federal impacted

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aid program, which we won't discuss at this point, you know what it is. There has always been a lot of opposition from every administration but the Congress has always refused to cut it back. Well, it helps pay the taxes in fifty percent of the school districts in the United States!

I don't know whether it was Charlie or I who broached the subject, could have been either of us, so let's just say that *we* agreed that the principle of federal impact was a damn good idea, and so was the GI Bill, which was an entitlement program. If you served in the armed forces you are entitled to federal aid for your education. We connected the two concepts. A child going to a poor school in a poor district should be considered suffering a national impact caused by the failure of the whole society to upgrade his disadvantaged area. It could be argued that capitalism as practiced here was not working very well in many school districts, with the result that poor children generally received poor education. We thought that poor children living in disadvantaged areas should be entitled, as were veterans, to special attention and assistance to help them climb out of the hole in which they had been placed by the entire society.

With those two concepts, we put it together and went to see Morse. He thought it was great. It became

Title 1 of ESEA, and then I think there is another Title 7, which I think has the same idea, where you're entitled if you're in a social posture, socially,

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economically, or whatever, to public assistance, federal aid, just because you're there and you can't get out of it. That's where you live. If you're a child and can't go to school somewhere else, you've got to go there and the school's lousy. Anyway, that was the concept. I don't know who thought of it, but we both did, put it together drinking "Kennedy" whiskey. Hilarious.

Well, of course, then Charlie did what we all used to do, he checked with all the educational groups and many others. By then concern with education was much broader than just the NEA, or the Chief State School Officers. Everybody was involved, especially after the NDEA, I think. American attention focused very strongly on what was happening in our schools and why the kids couldn't read or do arithmetic. All of this combined to help produce votes to pass legislation. I'm just astounded at what happened really in ten years. What did we omit? I don't know. Requiring Greek and Latin, I guess; we didn't do that. But it really was enormous; I guess the office of Education must have tripled its staff and budget or more.

It was mainly due to Lyndon's cracking the whip that we got this legislation through. I think the ground was ready and the populace was prepared, but the Congress was not, until Lyndon, using the Kennedy martyrdom, so to speak, raised the torch and cracked the whip and made the phone calls. God, those were some years! Well, everybody, even the most conservative senators, were just swept off their

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feet. They couldn't combat this thing. I think we did a lot of foolish things, too, of course, but the momentum was just tremendous; until Vietnam swallowed us in a God-awful disaster.

Speaking of Morse and Kennedy, I heard Morse make a phone call to President Kennedy in early '63, I guess. We were over in S-114, one of the Appropriations Committee hearing rooms, which has a telephone booth in it, quite unusual, not just a phone, it's in a booth. We were in conference with the House on a higher education bill. Morse was chairman of the Senate conferees, and we came to a deadlock on some issue which involved whether the administration favored going this way or that. The

bill was more or less hanging on what position the administration really had; there was conflicting evidence. So, Morse said, "Well, hell, I'll just call up Jack." I think he said, "Mac, get me the White House," which I did.

Then he got on the horn and I backed off, but I could hear what was going on. He got hold of Kennedy very quickly, and said, "Jack, we're in a bind up here." He told him the situation, the House thinks that you want this, and we think that you want that. We've got to know which it is so that I can report back to the conferees and we can move the bill out. I don't know what Kennedy told him and I've forgotten what even ensued in the bill, but what I do remember was Morse saying, "Well, Jack, since I've got you on the phone, I want to tell you that you better get the hell out of Vietnam. You're

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going down in a pit there. Get out of it!" He's shouting this into the phone, and Kennedy is shouting something back. It never came to any conclusion, but to use this opportunity! "You better get the hell out of Vietnam. You're going down in a pit," or abyss, or somewhere, where we went.

**RITCHIE:** I was going to ask you about Morse. He took over from James Murray, whom you said was not really in control toward the end.

**MCCLURE:** Well, he was senile.

**RITCHIE:** What kind of impact did Morse have as chairman of the education subcommittee?

**MCCLURE:** Well, I think I've just said it. He put through more God damn bills than we every put through in history on education.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think it was Morse and his own drive rather than . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Yes, yes, yes, yes. Indefatigable, present at every meeting, present at all times from beginning to end, pushing, pressing, demanding, insisting, oh, yes, no question about it. There were on that committee, at the time I was there, three senators for whom I have unlimited regard as legislators and as people: Lister Hill, Jacob Javits, and Wayne Morse. They were a fantastic team. When they got together on something, nobody could stop them. Unlikely

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melange as it may sound, this wild man from Oregon, a conservative from Alabama, and a Jewish boy from New York. But they were so brilliant and so aware of what the needs of the country are and were. When they started clicking together you couldn't stop them. It was wonderful.

**RITCHIE:** I always thought of Morse as something of an outsider in the Senate. How did he work when it really came down to business?

**MCCLURE:** He was no outsider.

**RITCHIE:** No?

**MCCLURE:** That was part of the game. Oh, he made great shows of it, of course, and conducted filibusters and feuds with other senators, but when it came down to getting a bill passed he was as smooth and slick and clever an operator as could be found. He could always find the reason why some senator should vote for this or that, what appealed to that senator. Oh, yes, he was extremely good. But, sure, his public image was this cantankerous guy who was always in a fight with somebody, raising hell, and quitting his party. Oh, no, when it came down to knitting the cloth he knew all about it.

**RITCHIE:** What type of a person was he to work for?

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**MCCLURE:** Terrific. Never better. Honest to God. I have worked with many senators, and closely with several, but none of them was as easy to move as Morse. Of course, that was because he trusted me. I wasn't going to give him some kooky idea that would blow up in his face. I was thinking the other day of an instance in some education hearing, it had to do with some Catholic issues. I don't know whether we had a Bishop or a Monsignor before us who was fulminating about something; anyway it appeared to me an opportunity to turn the thing around. I leaned forward--I was sitting behind Morse--and said, "Why don't you ask him this?" He said, "Right, I will." Bam! And it just blew the whole thing out of the room. I'm not taking credit for this; the credit goes to Morse to see instantly the potential political implications and possibilities in a whisper in his ear. Well, you know, I've whispered in many senators' ears, but most of the time they stop and think about it and call in another staff guy or don't do anything. Obviously they're not going to listen to everything you say, but your job is to provide ideas, and Morse was just wonderful. He turned around and said, "Boy, we got him that time!" He was terrific to work for.

**RITCHIE:** Well, he was willing to stick his neck on the line on controversial issues.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, he was absolutely fearless. He didn't really give too much attention to the effect upon his future of the actions he

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was taking. He was so impulsive, but not really impulsive in an impassioned way; he was impulsive with his mind and if he thought this was a good thing to do, the hell with the consequences, he did it. Not always, but generally speaking he didn't give a hoot about the consequences, which is, of course, what defeated him finally. You have to pay attention to the consequences. Oh, I loved Wayne Morse. He was really a superb guy.

**RITCHIE:** We've covered pretty much what I had in mind.

**MCCLURE:** Well, that's good, it shows we're thinking alike!

**RITCHIE:** Next time I'd like to talk about the '60s in general, and Johnson and the Great Society, and all the programs that were coming out.

**MCCLURE:** That committee was really overwhelmed. No wonder our staff grew to be a hundred and fourteen. You couldn't possibly have dealt with it with the fourteen people we started with. So it wasn't just Senate expansionism--it is that too--but there were such pressures from the administration to enact such enormous programs, you had to have experts who knew something about the subjects. We couldn't know everything. And it was better to have them on board and under your payroll, than to be depending on lobbyists who were answering to someone else. I think it explains the expansion of staff all over the Hill in the Johnson period. You just simply had

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to have people who knew the facts and background of all these new subjects we were plunging into. I think now they're less useful. The Great Society is dead and the War on Poverty is ended. God knows, we're having a war against the poor rather than in behalf of them.

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End of Interview #4

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