

ON THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Interview #7

Thursday, April 14, 1983

MCCLURE: I think today we should cover the official history of the last five years of my term here, which includes two years with the Public Works Committee and three years again with the Labor Committee. The place to start is with the election of 1968, during which Wayne Morse was defeated, thus opening the line of succession to chairmanship of the Labor Committee to Ralph Yarborough, since Lister Hill had retired as of the end of '68. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, my colleague, Jack Forsythe, had determined by going to Oregon and looking at the polls, while pretending to be helping "dear Wayne" get elected, that he was doomed, and had made a pass through Texas on his way home and clinched his job as general counsel. What he did to me at that time I don't know, but I suspect he said that the new chairman should have his own man.

This whole situation fell into limbo from November 8, or whenever it was, till way into January, maybe the last week of January. No connection. I called Yarborough in Texas many times, never got a return call. I couldn't find out from his own people here what he intended to do because they didn't know. He, as you will see, was one of the most disorganized members of this body who ever came along. His own staff didn't know what was going on. So--how to put

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it--about Christmastime I decided that something had happened to me, I wasn't being dealt with, papers were going to have to be handled. Committee business is always very heavy in the first month, administratively speaking, and I was getting no response. So I went down the hall to my dear old friend Richard Royce, who was then staff director of the Public Works Committee, and with whom I had worked off and on for many years; we were personal friends also, outside the Senate.

The chairman of that committee was Jennings Randolph, who had been a member of the Labor Committee for ten years and with whom I had done a lot of work, on all sorts of things, and whom I considered a friend. I put it to Richard that I was being forced out down the hall and if he had a spot on his staff as a professional staff member I would love to take it. He then went to Senator Randolph and checked it out. It appeared there was a good likelihood that there would be something there, and I wouldn't have a gap in my retirement account, and that sort of thing. But I stayed on with the Labor Committee.

Senator Yarborough returned to town and wouldn't let me see him. I went over to his office a dozen

times, I called his AA, Gene Godley, a dozen times. Meanwhile, on another track, I had been mounting a lobby on my behalf, among all the lobbyists who had worked with me and who knew who I was and felt comfortable with me. I tried

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a side move to present to Ralph Yarborough a strong case on my behalf, and I had some various labor lobbyists and so on, I don't remember them now, and of many members of the committee, especially, oddly enough, Edward Kennedy, with whom I hadn't really been terribly close, though I certainly liked him. He was very strong. So were a number of others, including Republicans like Javits. Well, Yarborough was absolutely unmoveable. He always had been. He never listened to anything or anybody. He had his own voices that he followed, which made him an impossible conversationalist, just in a social sense: he never heard what you were saying because he wasn't listening. He was blurting and babbling. So all this effort that I cranked up was really not going to do any good. The last one I had planned was a visit by Mary Lasker, who was coming with Maurice Rosenblatt, both my old friends, who were going to really put it to him.

That very day, which I think was somewhere in the latter part of January, I had a stack of committee and subcommittee assignment papers, personnel changes, appointments to staff, a draft budget to take to the Rules Committee, all this stuff that you have to get together in the beginning, and he has to sign them all--and hopefully will read them before signing. And I finally got into his office. I fought my way right through secretaries, saying, "I have to see the senator. He's not going to look very good if we don't get these things done, now." Finally, Gene Godley, his AA, burst in--oh, I

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even called his son, Dick Yarborough, a badly crippled guy who had been his father's AA. He said, "I'm not going to do anything for you; it's a waste of time," which was true.

Anyway, Godley managed to get me into this *incredible* office. It was a small office, it wasn't the usual senator's office, it was about half the size of this room. The desk was a mountain of papers and books with slips in them, and in the corners were Texas newspapers piled up by the thousands, old newspapers which I suppose he intended to read someday, or had read and wanted to clip. It was unbelievable. You could hardly move in it. The phone rang and he had to scrape down among these

papers and find the thing. What an incredible interview! I'd say, "We've got some business, Senator." "Yeah, yeah," he would mumble. Then the phone rang. He said, "Oh, this is an important call to a judge in Texas, you'll have to wait outside." I think the whole thing from the time I got in the door till I left, and I left with him, was about ten minutes--five of which he was on the phone to Texas. I was waiting outside.

Then the bells rang for a vote in the Senate and he had to go over. So I said, "Well, I'm coming with you and we'll sign these things on the trolley if we need to, Senator, but you've got to do it." Then I said, "Now, please tell me what my own status is. Am I your staff director, or am I not?" He got very tense and began talking very fast: "Well-I-think-a-new-chairman-ought-to-have-his-

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own-man-and-I've-a-man-in-mind-and-you-just-do-whatever-you-want." I said, "What do you mean, 'whatever I want?' I want to be staff director, what are you suggesting?" He said, "Well, get somebody else to hire you, that's all." In other words, he didn't ever say "you're fired," or "you're through" or anything, it was just left floating. I understood very well what this meant--but I still had to have these damned things signed! So I rode over with him and went into the chamber (in those days you could) and got to his desk, and during the vote forced him to sign these papers, all except the budget which he didn't need to sign, and I left that with him. What an ungodly way to end a career with a committee! It was just so corny, so stupid, so disorganized. I thought, "My God, this man is going to fill the shoes left by Senator Lister Hill? Never, never, never."

RITCHIE: Had you thought that Yarborough was this disorganized when he was a member of the committee?

MCCLURE: Well, I had never been in his office--I mean his personal office--till that last day. I would have known for sure if I had. But in committee meetings, in conducting hearings--he was chairman of the Veterans' subcommittee and later the Labor subcommittee--he seemed to know what he was doing pretty much. He knew what he wanted. But he was a terrible babbler. He was a history buff in the first place; he claimed to know everything about the

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history of the United States and the world and everything else. That would be triggered by anything, some comment of a witness or another senator. He would say, "Well, don't forget that in 1812" which indicated a mind that fluttered about. He wasn't really focusing on what was ahead or what was in front of him. To that extent, I guess he did listen. He heard cues from other people from time to time. But in executive sessions he would bull his way through.

He had one bill that he was trying to pass, the Peacetime GI Bill. Fred Blackwell was acting as his staff man, one of the best lawyers we ever had up here, a very fine guy, and he kept Yarborough pretty straight. He fed him the right material at the right time. If anybody got that bill passed against the American Legion and the VFW and the DAV, and everybody else, Yarborough did it. He just drove everybody crazy with his monomania, and it worked. It became law. Of course, the statistics from Vietnam were beginning to come in heavier and heavier and heavier, and it was obvious that we had a major war going on and no legislation to deal with the postwar veterans thereof. His earlier bill had been designed for veterans of the Korean war and those currently being drafted for whatever purpose. Anyway, he did succeed in that, and I'm very glad he did.

His other monomania--well, you can't have two monomanias, can you?--but anyway his other mania was bilingual education. Of course,

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they have a lot of Mexicans in Texas, hundreds of thousands of them who can't learn English, or won't learn English, or don't learn English, and they were, even then in the '60s, beginning to have political weight in the southern part of his state. Yarborough had been elected with strong Hispanic support, and this was one of their goals, so he carried it for them. It became law--probably a very bad mistake when you think about it, but it seemed like a great idea at the time. There wasn't any real intellectual understanding of what it would mean if we had forty million Spanish-speaking citizens, who didn't speak English--what kind of a country would we have? Like Canada, perhaps. But that wasn't really given much thought at the time. It was whether it would cost too much, or how it would be administered, and that sort of questions. Well, it became law, and the Department of Education administers it.

Well, anyway, he accomplished those two things as a relatively--well not junior--but mid-range member of the committee. Be that as it may, when he became chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, which he inherited from Senator McNamara, who died, Yarborough had gone to Senator Hill and said, "I need my own man, gotta have my own man." Well, of course he did. So, through the labor unions, I'm not sure who or which, he secured the services of Robert O. Harris, who was then with the National Labor Relations Board. He was made counsel to the subcommittee on Labor. He was a brash,

loud-mouth New Yorker, very able, thick skin, tough New York type. He was then Yarborough's

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choice to replace me. How all this came about I have no idea, and I don't care, but the beginning of this exchange of Harris for McClure was one of the funniest scenes I've ever been through.

I came back from Yarborough's office--or from the floor--probably about three or four o'clock--and promptly called Maurice who had a meeting with Yarborough and Mrs. Lasker at five. I said, "Cancel it, don't waste your breath, stop it." That ended that. Then I called Dick Royce and said, "When can you take me on?" He said, "Well, whenever you're off your committee." I went back to my office and sat at my desk and told Marjorie, my secretary, what had gone on, which scared her to death because she had lost her protector. The door from the hearing room opened, in comes Bob Harris with a green sticker in his hand. And he said, "Here's your parking sticker. It's over in that lot by the Immigration Building [a Senate annex]. I'm taking over your space in the garage tomorrow morning." I said, "Thanks, Robert, I sure appreciate your courtesy." I said, "Is there anything else you need to know?" "Oh, no, that's all." I said, "What about the financing, the books, the voucher system, how we deal with" "Forget it," and off he went. God Almighty! He just wasn't interested in learning from me what he needed to know. I'm sure he found out in due course, but it seemed to me a little odd that he wouldn't want a bridge into the new job.

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So I picked up my papers and marched down to the Public Works Committee, where I was assigned as a professional staff member at a considerable cut in pay, of course, because I had to fit into their structure. But it was a job, and a good job, and a lovely chairman, and a fine staff. I had never been a professional staff member technically, though I had done a lot of it when I was first staff director of Labor. I had handled a lot of bills, but I hadn't done any of that for a long time. I was given two major domains--well, really three, but two were very close. One was the EDA, Economic Development Act, and related to that the Appalachian Commission, and the several regional commissions set up under EDA, which were supposed to parallel it and do for the various parts of the country where they were established much of what the Appalachian Commission was doing. The other domain was disaster relief. Fortunately, I didn't know anything about either of them, so I came in without any prejudices or any preconceptions, and learned from the ground up.

The man who was the greatest assistance to me was really a wonderful guy named Barry Meyer, who was then the general counsel of that committee. He took me in tow and briefed me on the situation and got all the documents I needed, the basic laws and all that sort of thing; told me whom to take what to and where to go. It was wonderful, saved me months of struggling by myself. He was my guide and mentor for two or three months there until I got my own footing.

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Then, of course, the problem of space: where do you put a new man? Ah, God, well, the first place where I was put was up on the sixth floor in an office so crowded that I shared a desk with one of the secretaries--she on one side and I on the other. Her name was Cecily Corcoran, Tommy Corcoran's daughter, a sweetheart of a girl. This was the Subcommittee on Pollution--Senator [Edmund] Muskie was chairman and the staff man was Leon Billings of Montana, a huge, loud, foul-mouthed, lovely guy. His father had been a Wobblie. He was a radical. He never hid his feelings. Oh, the girls just would go blue; his language was unbelievable. If there was any way of avoiding a swear word he would use it twice. Every four letter word and several even longer ones, all day long, on the phone, to everybody but senators. He was just a pistol. Later, when Muskie became Secretary of State, Leon went down with him as his AA. I thought, "My God, what must be going on on the seventh floor!" Hah! (This is a diversion, but I went to see Leon last fall when he was directing the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. I went to offer him my services, and I asked him, "Leon, what happened when you were down at the State Department? How did you deal with all those striped-pants and cookie-pushers and all the other types that are supposed to be there?" "Well," he said, "one of them would come up with some friggin' stupid idea, and I'd just tell him to shove it.")

Well, anyway, I spent several months in this tiny office, the noisiest place, with Leon bellowing at the *New York Times* and so on,

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and then they found me a less-cluttered spot back in the main committee room. In this job, the chairman of the Economic Development subcommittee was Joe Montoya of New Mexico, and the chairman of the Disaster Relief Subcommittee was Birch Bayh of Indiana. Montoya was very difficult to work with; you never could figure out what he wanted--I don't know that he knew himself--but he listened carefully. He'd say, "Well, now what does Jennings want?" And then held do it; he was a very loyal follower of the chairman and kept his skirts clean. In that job I did quite a bit of traveling. Each of these

regional commissions was supposed to have a little oversight by Congress, once a year or so, and we'd hold a hearing in the principal city in the region. Senator Montoya would go and the senators from the state would be invited, and two or three staff people, and then we'd invite the local regional people and the state people, and so forth, and make a record of what was going on. One of them was in southwestern Missouri in the Ozark Regional Commission. Senator [Thomas] Eagleton came, and I think [Stuart] Symington put out a statement.

Another one was in what's called the "Four Corners," which is the area involving northwest New Mexico, northeast Arizona, southwest Colorado, and southeast Utah. We had two hearings in that region. One in Albuquerque, Senator Montoya's hometown. He was quite deeply involved in real estate, even while being in the Senate, and insisted that we stay at a particular hotel in the center of the city, which

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he said, and we were told, was the first Hilton in the country; that was where the chain had originated. It turned out that Senator Montoya owned a big share of the stock. So here was some Senate business he was throwing to the hotel. Well, the rooms were crumby and old, and the food was abominable, but we stuck it out in deference to our chairman. Then we went to Utah, to Provo, lovely town, with a huge steel mill, one of the few in the mountain states.

In that particular venture, Senator [Robert] Dole, who was a Republican member of the committee, stayed in the motel where the staff was. We didn't have a Hilton in Provo and were able to get away with a lower check, too--because, you know, per them never covered your real expenses. You paid half and the Senate paid the other half. At least that was the way it used to be. Trips were very costly for staff. Those trips were sometimes quite fun. We went up to Santa Fe from Albuquerque, which was a nice old thing to see. So we did a lot of traveling, more than I had done on the Labor Committee in a long time.

Well, we extended the EDA for a year during my time there, and the Appalachian Regional Commission authority. My own judgment of these economic development regions was that they were an absolute *fraud* that did nothing. I don't know how you develop an area with government money if there is no private money doing it anyway. You just can't invent an economy in a place that doesn't have anything.

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Four Corners is a desert. There's some water and an electric power station and so forth, but there's just nothing to develop. You can't grow anything on the sand.

I finally discovered after observing these various places and reading all the literature that they put out that the reason they existed was that Jennings Randolph, early on as a member of the Public Works Committee, had decided to leave as one of his grand landmarks an Appalachian Regional Commission, and had recruited the support of senators from all the states where the Appalachian region reaches, which is from Alabama up to southern New York. In fact, southern New York was added to it while I was there at the instance of Robert Kennedy, then a senator from New York, because they found a few hills in southwestern New York that resembled Appalachia, and it got into the Act. But it came only to sixteen or eighteen senators, well, maybe a few more: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York--well, say twenty. You don't pass laws with twenty senators. Somebody cooked up the idea to create these regional commissions which would be patterned after the Appalachian Commission, until they got enough senators to get a majority to pass the Appalachian bill. Ah, what fun. It was logrolling at its best. They had quite an elaborate administrative structure, and a national man and a state man, and staffs, and publications. They'd have hearings themselves and generate a lot of noise. I don't think any of

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them did anything. I think Reagan is trying to kill them, and I hope he does, because they're just totally wasted. When Nixon came in he turned them into political ballparks and put his campaign pals in charge of them as various regional commissions.

RITCHIE: Was there any oversight on any of these oversight trips?

MCCLURE: Well, we had hearings. What do you do? You can't go out and look at numbers. Sure, we looked at the land, but there isn't much you can do. You get the local people to tell you what their problems are and what they're doing about them, and so forth and so on.

The maddest experience I had involved a former member of the Public Works Committee, Fred Harris of Oklahoma, who was running desperately for reelection. He got Richard Royce to send me with him, though he was no longer a member of the committee, to a hearing in some back lands of Oklahoma, just to be there, so that Fred Harris could say, "And I have here the staff director of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee," or whatever he called it. Oh, boy, he was another sort of a Yarborough type. Big, noisy, splashy kind of guy. Styled himself a Populist, you remember, and he was married to a

lovely Indian woman. I remember I was supposed to meet him at Dulles Airport at six o'clock; I forgot about rush hour traffic and left here about four, and found myself, after going along the

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shoulder of 495 [Capital Beltway] to the Dulles road, going 85 miles an hour to the Dulles road. I made it. We flew to Tulsa where they had in those days an extremely attractive new airport building, very good looking, one of the few where you really like to be.

I watched Harris perform the next morning at eight o'clock. He was on the phone to his office dictating a press release about the hearing he was going to have in this little town, so his office here could get it out to the papers in Oklahoma in time to appear the next morning. Oh, he was organized in that sense, at least in terms of press coverage. Then we got in a big Cadillac and shot across the countryside to some awful little place. It was right beside the Kerr Canal. Senator Bob Kerr had had built a river to Tulsa; it's a concrete trench about a hundred yards wide, straight through the mesquite, the desert. Ocean-going liners and tankers can go to Tulsa, Oklahoma, as a result! Because when Kerr had been chairman of Public Works, that's what he had done with the money, I don't know how many hundreds of millions. There were no boats in the canal, I never saw anything happening there. But there it was. Well, that's a long aside. We can terminate the EDA--and I hope it is.

The Appalachian Commission seems to have had a far greater success, and the main thing it did was build highways east-west, because the mountains run north-south and the valleys run north-south, and lots of people in West Virginia and other such states never knew what

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was over the mountain. So the Appalachian Regional Commission, using federal highway money, of course, but with their own planning, put quite a few major roads across the mountains, and that was an enormous contribution to the growth of the whole economy and then to the society of all these little isolated places. The people could go from one to the next. But otherwise I don't think it's accomplished a great deal. It's produced a few health centers. Well, it's a federal subsidy to an undeveloped and probably undevelopable part of the world, except for coal mining, chemicals, glass-making, and a few things like that.

The other subcommittee dealt with disaster relief. Birch Bayh, for some years as a member of the

subcommittee, had been pushing for a national disaster relief administration, so that when a tornado hit, or a hurricane swept ashore, or a tidal wave hit Hawaii, or an earthquake occurred someplace, the federal machinery was prepared to go instantly into action to contain the damage, and to restore the property, and to assist the victims. But when I started working with this there was no such institution. What happened was that a disaster would occur and the members of Congress from the affected area would plead with the Public Works committees on each side to pass a special bill. One of the first was the Galveston Flood in 1900, I believe, which just left the whole area paralyzed. Water swept way inland and wiped out the port. I've forgotten the details. But it was a vicious flood, caused by a hurricane. So

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that's the way it had been going for years. Particularly on the House side, members of the House Public Works Committee built up quite a nice little book full of favors granted to other members, to whom they could turn in their hour of need. It was a very inefficient but politically understandable set-up. And that's what Birch Bayh kept running into each time. He'd get it through the Senate fairly well, or normally not even that, because there was a lot of resistance here, too, but it was that traditional way of dealing with it.

Well, then came--and I was just starting work on this--a *glorious* hurricane, Camille, in the spring of 1969. From Alabama to Texas the entire Gulf coast was just destroyed. Immense winds and immense tidal waves that swept inland for miles, upturned the whole seabed, destroyed shrimp and oyster beds, and flattened vast areas. Well, we decided that this was the time to strike and have national hearings by the Public Works Committee in Mississippi, which was at the heart of it, where the eye had passed through. So we engaged the services of a public relations expert, a newspaper man, Hal Tufty, to handle the press. Muskie, who was then revving up his presidential candidacy, was very eager to be seen on TV there. There were stories coming from Mississippi about the discriminatory manner in which the government of Mississippi had dealt with the black victims of the storm. There were thousands, of course. They were the last to get help, or never got any, and were shunted about. Anyway, this was

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still in the '60s, so we had a pretty strong Civil Rights sentiment in the country. All in all it had the

makings of a bomb.

We went down and took over a motel, which was half destroyed. The lobby smelled strongly of seaweed, but their rooms were all right, and so was the large dining room which we turned into a hearing room. Couldn't find anything else in the whole area; they were all knocked down. We had television and radio from all over the country. And we had a helicopter, which I guess the National Guard provided, to take everybody to see the damage from the air, the press especially, and cameramen, and senators, and so forth. Oh, we ran a real show. The governor, whose name escapes my mind, a famous southern governor appeared and charges were laid against him and he defended himself.

RITCHIE: Was that John Bell Williams?

MCCLURE: Yes, it was John Bell Williams. Well, be that as it may, we had a grand show down there. That gave us some momentum behind Bayh's legislation. We had locked in, in the process, if you will, the chairman of the House Rules Committee, from Mississippi, whose name will come to me in a minute.

RITCHIE: Was that William Colmer?

MCCLURE: Colmer, of course. We also had concluded and written a report to the committee that the federal government's response was

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utterly inadequate. People had to go from one town to another to find health assistance or food or income support or help in repairing damage. There were a dozen different offices and they were all in different places. Agriculture--a lot of government agencies were involved, but none of them coordinated. This was an accurate account and it was a very strong case for a national program. But the crowning stroke of luck was a tornado that hit Lubbock, Texas about June. Lubbock was the home town of the then chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

RITCHIE: George Mahon.

MCCLURE: Mahon. Next to the chairman of the Rules Committee probably the most powerful man in the House, outside the speaker. So I told Dick Royce, "I gotta go. Send me to Lubbock." Everybody concurred that this was a good idea and I went out and checked with his hometown office,

of course, and then found exactly the same thing there. Offices all over town, private agencies disconnected, too, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, everybody doing fine work but unconnected. You could have truckloads of second-hand clothing and no place to hand them out. Again we had a case in point with pictures and documentation. So this gave us great hope. By then we had word from the House Public Works Committee that they were getting an awful lot of pressure from Colmer and Mahon and others to start doing something about a national program.

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We were further along than they were by a long way. There had been many hearings before I got there. Anyway, we wrote a damn good bill, which is now law. I think it's ensconced in the Emergency Management Administration, in HUD. And now, if there's a flood or any other kind of natural disaster, a central office opens immediately in the principal city, with a branch from Small Business, Agriculture, Commerce, HEW, and so on. People come in and just go around as on a shopping tour, and are taken care of progressively by each bureau. It worked. You don't hear any more complaints, people screaming because they're not being helped. They're being helped, and it's to Birch Bayh's eternal honor that this came about, because held been plugging for it for a long, long time.

RITCHIE: Take a bill like the Disaster Relief Act of 1970, how much of something like that is the senator and how much of it is the staff? Do you work together?

MCCLURE: Oh, yes.

RITCHIE: Does he come to you and say, "I want you to do X, Y, and Z?"

MCCLURE: No, I worked with his AA, a very fine guy named Clark Norton, now with the Library of Congress. He had lived with this all

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his time in the Senate. While I was doing the technical staff work, he was the idea man, and had already covered this ground a dozen times.

RITCHIE: Well, what exactly were your responsibilities doing the technical staff work?

MCCLURE: Well, you draft legislation. You draft reports. You draft statements for your chairman. You draft floor statements. You have to work up the conference papers, when it reaches that stage, which is a special kind of form. I don't mean you're left without the right to express ideas, but I mean the real ideas weren't mine. They were coming out of Bayh's own experience and Clark Norton's experience, and other people around him. It wasn't anything new, it was all there, but it never had been put together in a way that would make it move.

RITCHIE: The staff does all the groundwork, but when it gets down to it, it's the senator who has to ask the questions at the hearings and who has to get up on the floor and give the speeches, and do the negotiating in conference. What kind of educating process goes on between the staff and the senator to make sure the senator knows what he's talking about?

MCCLURE: Well, if he's a good senator and wants to perform well, you give him a briefing paper in which you will set out the

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issues and the types of questions that will probably be asked, and proposed answers. By then, if you're reaching the floor, there's the committee report, that spells it all out, and how it changes the existing law. You know, there is a standard boiler-plate that goes in the report. But they're hard to do and you have to deal with the legislative counsel because you're changing an existing law and you have to be careful you're not doing something you don't want to do, or undoing something that's been done. Well, I suppose the educational part of it, if you will, comes also by the senator listening to the witnesses, which he does--we hope--and he usually does. He has the printed submitted statements of the witnesses. Then groups will come to see him, interested lobbies and government people, in his office. You, the staff man, would probably be there and learn, too, at the same time what their problems are.

It's a curious thing that you should ask me this question about this particular bill, because a scene took place on the Senate floor which I wish never to have repeated--well, two things. First in the full committee meeting. Chairman Randolph called an executive meeting of the full committee to receive the report from Senator Bayh about this bill and to obtain the support of the committee to report it. Senator Bayh was called upon by the chairman. By then we'd had some amendments offered from inside the committee, and outside. These had to be discussed and accepted or rejected, too, before they reported the bill. About ten minutes after held begun his

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presentation, Senator Bayh said, "Mr. Chairman, I'm going to have to be excused. My constitutional amendment is coming up in executive session in the Judiciary Committee this afternoon and I must be there. I'll just ask Stewart McClure to carry on." Well, it's one thing to explain legislation, and even to explain amendments, but it's another thing to find yourself calling for a vote, which I was doing! I would say to Senator Randolph, "Mr. Chairman, can we have a vote on this amendment?" I mean, I had to, nobody else was doing it! Well, I'd been around long enough to know how to do it, and to sound like a senator if I had to, but it was terrible. That was a terrible thing for Bayh to do at the last minute. Held worked his ass off for years. I guess he had sufficient confidence in me that I could do it, but I thought it was a disgusting failure of a senator to perform his proper duty.

But the worst was yet to come. I don't know, it was as if having gotten the thing written and approved by the subcommittee, he thought that that was all I had to do. We were just beginning, of course. We still had to go through the Senate and the conference with a very tough House committee. Well, among the amendments that had been offered to the committee, which I had read to them, were five amendments from Senator Yarborough, who had some eager staff man. One amendment, in effect, made the provisions retroactive to 1967. Well, the committee rejected most of them; they were really wild. I think we took one just to be nice, but it dealt

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with a substantial problem. But this one was just too much. So, knowing Yarborough, I thought, "he's going to offer this on the floor and we've got to be ready for him." There were other senators' amendments; I don't remember what the committee did with them. Some of them were good amendments; one could always improve a bill, there's no question about that. So our great day comes and the bill is up in the Senate. I write Bayh his opening statement and I round up Senator Randolph and Senator Dole and all the others I can find to make little supporting statements. All that part goes very smoothly.

Then the time for amendments to be offered came and Senator Yarborough offered his amendments. The amendment reaching back to 1967 sparked Senator Allott, who probably didn't like Yarborough anyway (they both served on the Labor Committee together). He challenged it and said he was going to filibuster the whole proposition if this amendment was ever accepted. Well, I looked around for Senator Bayh. He had been in the earlier part of the debate. I was sitting at his desk--it was the majority leader's desk, you know they turn it over to the manager of the bill. Senator Bayh had disappeared. He's over in a corner sitting with his hand over his mouth chatting with some Republican

senator. I've got to stay where I am, I have all the paper, and if somebody comes up and asks what's in Section 2 I have to be able to show him, so I'm paralyzed. And here are these two senators chewing his bill to death and he isn't even listening!

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Well, it really got completely out of hand. Other senators spoke. There isn't anybody to call for a vote. The manager of the bill has disappeared, and the presiding officer is looking around for somebody to recognize. Meanwhile, Allott is yelling and Yarborough is resisting. So I said, "Well, I'm going to have to do this myself." So I went up to Senator Allott and I said, "Sir, if I can get Senator Yarborough to amend his amendment to bring it back within the last three or four years, would you object to it?" He said, "Of course not. Go ahead, see if you can." I went back to the desk and drafted an amendment to the Yarborough amendment, a substitute for it. Took it over to him. He was still hollering, and he took time for a breath, and I said, "Sir, I think I have something worked out with Senator Allott that will take the bulk of what you want to do of a retroactive character." He read it through and said, "Yeah, that's fine. That's fine." So he then said something like, "Mr. President, I offer an amendment as a substitute for mine." Still no Bayh. I finally got up and went over and said, "Senator, you've got to come back to your desk and call for a vote on the amendment. The whole Senate's waiting." "Oh, yes," he said, "Ok." Came back.

I thought that was the crumbiest performance. Maybe it happens at other times for other people, but I had never seen that, having always worked with men who were completely on top of things: Lister Hill, or Wayne Morse, or Jack Javits, or Joseph Clark, any of them. They know what they're doing, they know where they're supposed to be,

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they're there all the time, and they perform. But here was the manager of the bill diddling around in the back of the chamber. He was running for president, too, and maybe he had some deal he was working out, I don't know, but it certainly left me feeling like I'd been betrayed. You don't do that to a staff man, who has only so much authority. I overstepped it greatly by going around maneuvering. You've probably heard other such cases, but I never had that happen before.

RITCHIE: That's interesting because it does seem to clash with the public image that Bayh had of

being a very effective senator for many years.

MCCLURE: Well, he may have been very effective, but he was not present in these two instances, so his effect was diminished. But it didn't hurt the bill; it all went through, swoosh. They had a tough conference and came out with a good bill. He was good in conference. He stayed. Because I let it be known to his man, "I'm not going to go to that conference if I have to deal alone with the House. He learned of my dismay. Never referred to it, of course, but he was there during the conference. I think he finally realized, "My God, I'm going to be very famous if this bill becomes law, it's a great law. I better do something about it." It was a strange thing. Well, that takes us through most of the Public Works Committee, unless you want to ask some other questions.

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RITCHIE: Having spent most of your career up to that point with the Labor Committee, how would you compare the Public Works Committee to the Labor Committee? Did it function basically the same? Did you find it a different atmosphere?

MCCLURE: Well, of course it was different. There were different people. But after all committees operate the same all over the Hill. You've got to do certain things by law and custom. You have hearings, you have meetings, you have staff meetings, you do research, you write papers, and so forth, wherever you are. The principal difference from the Labor Committee was that the chairman of the Public Works Committee had a much firmer control of his own committee than Lister Hill had, because of the vast multiplication of subcommittees and the staff which the subcommittee chairmen were empowered to employ, though they had to have it approved by the chairman--their budget was still controlled by the chairman. We controlled all the money, in other words, and in effect allocated it to the subcommittees for salaries and supplies.

In the Public Works Committee, Richard Royce--and therefore Senator Randolph--hired everybody, except the minority, naturally. So he was more a staff director than I, in that sense. Furthermore, he was much more deeply into the substance of every bill than I had been as the staff director in the Labor Committee. He sat in on the staff meetings, and he had ideas, and he had amendments, and he

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wrestled with the subject matter, and he presented the bills frequently--that's probably why Senator Randolph had acceded to Bayh's request, because Dick Royce frequently was the man who presented the bill to the full committee, not the subcommittee chairman or staff. That was a considerable difference, though he did not present the Disaster Relief Bill to the Committee!

RITCHIE: How did it feel for you, having been a staff director for all those years, to now be working underneath a staff director?

MCCLURE: Oh, that didn't make any difference. I mean, Dick was a grand man and still is, and we were pals and friends for years. His orders were my desire. It didn't make any difference, none at all. The staff, all of them, were very nice people. I had no problem about that. I did think, and this is ultimately where I made the great mistake, that this was a rather confining zone for me, dealing with these two major subjects, both of which were then done in my two years there. We extended the EDA and we'd created the Disaster Relief Act. Well, what was I going to do from then on that would be of any interest to me? Since they had very good people in the Pollution subcommittee and others, there didn't seem to be--unless there was a new legislative program invented or proposed--there wasn't going to be anything much for me to do there, which led me to seek to return to the Labor Committee.

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RITCHIE: Before we go back to the Labor Committee, I wanted to ask you whether you could characterize Jennings Randolph as a chairman, by comparison say to Lister Hill as a chairman?

MCCLURE: Well, it's absurd to make comparisons. They each had their own personality and style. Randolph is a very open, warm, friendly man, who wants to be loved, and who is. It's not just that he wants the ego rubbed; he is loved by everybody, and goes out of his way to be courteous and almost effusive with everybody, staff and witnesses and members and so on. It's just much more a--how shall I say it--popular approach than Lister Hill, who was after all an aristocrat. He never insulted anybody and he was extremely courteous, I don't mean that, but he was not open and hail-fellow-well-met, except for brief instances, but it wasn't his style. He'd do it once in a while. But Senator Randolph was just a darling human being and certainly no fool. He knew most of what's going on. He could run again next year and be elected, I'm sure, and be just as good six years from now as he is today. I'm sorry he didn't decide to run.

RITCHIE: He has this image of being a very genial sort, but then you indicate that he was a very powerful chairman.

MCCLURE: Yes, but it was all done with a soft glove. Nobody ever was pushed around. If he had to be negative to someone the other didn't even know what was happening to him: "I'm afraid, Bill, that the way things are today I don't know that I'm going to be able

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to go along with you. Now don't think I won't support you in everything else you're doing but . . . You know, that sort of thing. The man who's being said "no" to doesn't even realize it in effect until it's all over. Randolph is extremely conscious of his rights as a senator, however. I once was with him when we approached those elevators in the Dirksen Building which are marked "Senators Only." I stopped before I went into the little foyer there and said, "Senator, I'll meet you downstairs." He said, "Oh, well, there's no one around, come on." If there had been another senator there, he wouldn't have done that. Punctilious to the tips of his fingers about senatorial prerogatives and rights.

Of course he gets angry, everyone does, but the more angry he is the cooler and polite he is. You just think, "Oh, how am I ever going to deal with this man?" Because if you've done something wrong, as I did sometimes, and he was angry about it--ooof. He was exercising all his forces to control his otherwise natural desire to bap you in the head and shout at you. Never did, but you could see that the hackles had risen, there was a slight coloring in the forehead, and you'd better perform quickly and properly if you're going to get around it. He was a very strict man. And after you'd been with him a while you knew that and you just avoided raising such situations.

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This was not in the Public Works Committee, but this was the first time I ran into the famous Randolph temper, which most people don't know he has because it's invisible unless you know what's going on. In this case, there was a hearing before Senator John Kennedy's subcommittee on Labor on minimum wage. One of the witnesses was a former admiral who represented the hotel association, I believe. Senator Randolph was running for reelection. He'd been in for two years finishing off a term, Matt Neely's term, and was running again. This was '60. He was at the Labor subcommittee hearing and a phone call came, which I got for him. He said, "I'm going to have to go, I'll tell you where I'll be. This is the number. Call me when the admiral comes up to testify." "Yes, sir," I said.

Well, we had another hearing going on that same afternoon, that happened to be in the Public Works

Committee hearing room, and I left the Labor hearing and went down to see how that was going, and got back after the admiral had appeared. I had thought he was quite a ways down the list, but Kennedy had jumped over some people who weren't there or something, and put him on. So I called the number that Randolph had given me and told him what happened. He said very sternly, "Stewart, I wanted very much to hear him!" I said, "Well, I fumbled it, Senator, I was out of the room and he came up before I knew it." He said, "Well, you find him in the building and bring him to my office." Imagine! But I did. The admiral was getting into his limousine. I didn't even know what he looked like, but I took

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somebody who did and we ran down and grabbed him. Took him up to Randolph's office, where of course, he had a much better hearing than he would have had in a public meeting. It turned out that the hotel association was giving Randolph a considerable contribution for his reelection. No wonder I was in deep trouble! Well, I wrote a note of apology, no explanation, just said "I flubbed it, I'm terribly sorry. I hope the meeting with the admiral was satisfactory." Well, he then told me later that it was fine and to forget about it. But, boy, he was most unhappy, and justifiably so.

RITCHIE: You'll be interested to know that Senator Randolph is just beginning a long oral history project with some interviewers from West Virginia.

MCCLURE: Oh, my God, that will be wonderful reading, wonderful. He's been here since 1933 with some years out. He's a remarkable man.

End of Interview #7
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