

## PREFACE

The Senate Committee on Labor, Education, and Public Welfare was a catchall committee which handled legislation on health, education, labor, veterans' affairs, juvenile delinquency, problems of the aging, and sundry other subjects. For many years the Senate's conservative "Inner Club" looked upon the committee as a convenient place to assign and isolate their more liberal colleagues. The committee labored long each session only to see its handiwork stalled on the Senate floor or blocked in the House of Representatives. Yet, under the effective chairmanship of Lister Hill, and his successors Ralph Yarborough and Harrison Williams, the Labor Committee produced a series of landmark social legislation, much of which was enacted during the heyday of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

Stewart E. McClure served as the committee's chief clerk during this turning point era, from 1955 to 1969, and from 1971 to 1973. In these oral history interviews he recounts the committee's frustrations and its triumphs, and recalls its most significant members, such as Wayne Morse, John Kennedy, Joseph Clark, Jacob Javits, Barry Goldwater, and Everett Dirksen. As chief clerk he attended and took minutes for all executive sessions, scheduled hearings, oversaw the staff, assisted the chairman, drafted speeches, and served as an "idea man." One of his ideas was to link education to defense in the wake of the Soviet Sputnik scare, a proposal which resulted in the National Defense Education Act. McClure discusses both legislation and the legislative process, and the senators and staff who shaped American lawmaking from the 1950s to the 1970s. He also gives candid assessments of the internal politics and stresses of committee life during those years.

Born in Omaha, Nebraska on March 11, 1913, Stewart McClure attended Amherst and graduated from Columbia College and the Columbia School of Journalism. During World War II he served in the Army Air Corps in Britain, France, Belgium, and Germany. After the war he worked for the American League for a Free Palestine, the International Rescue Committee, and the National Committee for an Effective Congress. In 1949 he joined the staff of Senator Guy Gillette as administrative assistant. When Senator Gillette was defeated for reelection in 1954, McClure became chief clerk of the Labor Committee, at the time Lister Hill assumed the chairmanship. McClure remained with the Labor Committee until Senator Hill retired in 1968. After two years as a professional staff member of the Public Works Committee, McClure returned once more to the Labor Committee as chief clerk from 1971 until his retirement from the Senate in 1973.

"I regret to see Stewart McClure retire," former Senator Lister Hill wrote on that occasion. "He has been such a fine and able public servant. In fact, in all my forty-six years in the House and Senate I never knew a finer one. He is so able and could always write a splendid report on legislation, and he was a beautiful speech writer. He was not only a man of great ability but one of dedication and integrity."

## ON THE STAFF OF GUY GILLETTE

### Interview #1

Wednesday, December 8, 1982

**RITCHIE:** I know you were born in Omaha, Nebraska. I was wondering if you could tell me a little about your background and some of your early education.

**McCLURE:** Yes, briefly--that isn't what you're really interested in.

**RITCHIE:** Well, we'd like to know about your development, up to the days when you started working for the Senate.

**McCLURE:** All right. I was born on March 11, 1913 in Omaha, Nebraska. My father was the cashier of the United States National Bank, and later rose to be a vice president. My mother was a graduate of Wellesley, the first girl admitted to that great college from west of the Mississippi, in 1904. In fact, she was quite well prepared, but not well enough. She had to take a year's prep school to be admitted. But then she flew through with flying colors, and married my father in 1912. I was the first issue. My sister, Jane, was born four years later. So, I grew up in Omaha and went to public schools and to the public high school, Omaha Central High School, which was an extremely good school and still is rated among the top fifty in the country. Good faculty, an intelligently run school, and

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very good for college preparatory work. I had four years of Latin, and four years of math, three or four years of history, some French and Spanish, and biology, chemistry, and physics--it was a powerful dose, but it admitted me to Amherst College without any College Board or any other form of tests.

**RITCHIE:** I noticed that you went to Amherst and I was going to ask you what it was that drew you there.

**McCLURE:** Well, my mother had developed a great respect for it when she was going to Wellesley, and we knew a few graduates of Amherst living in Omaha. We were thinking of a small college, and a good one. God knows that it was good, and hard. Most of the guys were trained in prep schools, Groton, Exeter, Deerfield, and others. I came up against some pretty stiff competition. I mean, they could speak French, I could just read it. There was that difference in type of training. So I spent two and a half years there and ran out of money in early 1934. My father's health gave out and he was retired from the bank with no pension or anything. In those days bankers were a ruthless band of cutthroats. They spent their time foreclosing mortgages of farmers, mainly in Iowa and Nebraska. Well, our income dropped to nothing, practically, so I couldn't go on. It wasn't as expensive as today, but it

was more than we could afford.

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I worked a year in New York, in Macy's and as a runner for the Bankers Trust on Wall Street. Then in January 1934, I received a telegram from lawyers in Milwaukee saying that my last great aunt on my father's side had died, that I was the residuary legatee, and would I please acknowledge the wire and they would send me a check for four thousand dollars. This was 1934! That was a lot of money. Even today it's not to be sneezed at. So I marched into my boss in the bank and showed him the telegram. I said, "I'm going to catch the next subway to Columbia University, if you'll give me the afternoon off." He said, "Oh, go right ahead." I went up and enrolled in Kings College, now called Columbia College, from which I graduated in due course in 1936. Well, on the campus was the School of Journalism. A friend of mine from Amherst, who was by then a year ahead of me, had gone there and I had met the people and the professors and said, "Why not?" So I applied to the School of Journalism and managed to get a scholarship that paid the tuition. With my "millions" in the bank I wasn't under too great a stress at the time. In 1937 I graduated with the magnificent degree of a Master of Science in Journalism. How preposterous!

**RITCHIE:** Did they ever explain what the science of journalism was?

**McCLURE:** It's the most unscientific activity known to man. Then, after that, of course it was the middle of the 1937

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recession. I wrote all of the newspapers in the country and most of the magazines and never even got answers. There were no jobs. In fact, I never worked on a newspaper. I worked around the edges in public relations and press-release writing and all that stuff, but I never worked on a paper.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have any particular aspirations for journalism?

**McCLURE:** Well, yes, I was early on convinced that I would be a writer of some sort. My high school English teacher thought I had some talent. My mother was sure I had. I did well with words, and I thought this was a possibility. Sure, I had a desire to be a journalist, a newspaperman, but I never satisfied it. Then in the '30s in New York--which was a fun place to live, God knows--there were thousands of us poor kids from the West and Middle West. It was sort of a frontier for young people in those days. You couldn't find a job in Omaha of any kind, but there were jobs in New York, if not in the newspaper business.

I thrashed around in various jobs. One of the early ones was as a cruise director on a ship, the *Oriente* that sailed from New York to Havana and back every week. Well, that was a cushy job, of course, lots of fun. I had everything paid for, plus a small salary. I did that off and on, and with other companies, for about two years, until I realized that staying at sea was a form of

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addiction and one would never amount to anything--having a lot of fun on board and on shore--but it wasn't really any career, certainly not as a cruise director. So I went to work for Prentice-Hall, which was at that time a small publishing house mainly in tax publications, but they had a trade book section, too. I did proof-reading and editing and sales.

Then I fell in love and decided I needed more money than \$17.00 a week. I went to work for an insurance company, a dreadful job, the Home Insurance Company down on Johns Street. But I got \$25.00 a week there. I was being trained to be a special agent. I didn't know exactly what that was, but I spent nine months learning the insurance business. Hated it all. Learned it unwillingly. Then I was shipped after graduation to Philadelphia, and learned that the special agent, at least in that company, was the guy who kept the brokers happy so they'd throw the business to the company, which meant three martini lunches and golf. Well, I didn't mind the martinis, but I hated golf--I couldn't play it anyway. A month of that, and I decided "this is worse than being on a ship! I'm at a dead end forever here!"

Another break, a small inheritance, just enough to release me from there. I fled south and spent about six months in Cuba on a bicycle with the hope of writing a travel book about the interior, which nobody ever sees, and it's beautiful. I came back from that with tons of notes, and I was immediately diverted. A friend of mine

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was the daughter of one of the mistresses of Bernard Baruch. She used to see Baruch from time to time. She was a very good looking girl, an actress, and he had her serving more or less as his hostess. So she would meet all these great people at dinner, senators and theater people, and so-forth. He was looking around for a secretary, a male amanuensis, assistant, and somebody who could write. She proposed me, and I had a wonderful summer with Bernard Baruch. But we didn't hit it off.

**RITCHIE:** This was the summer of 1939?

**McCLURE:** The summer of '40. The fall of France had just occurred, and I remember Baruch saying:

"They'll not leave those Frenchmen the eyes with which to weep!" He had some English nobility refugees staying with him in his Fifth Avenue house. I did work with him on a paper which appeared in the Yale Review on mobilization. You may recall he was the head of the War Industries Board in World War I and he very much wanted to be named by [Franklin] Roosevelt to do the job in World War II, when it came. He never did, of course. Roosevelt was very leery of Bernard Baruch who was, after all, the principal agent of American finance capitalism. That's really what he was. Well, I learned a lot from him. Then a bright young man from Harvard, who was smarter than I, had written his thesis on "Bernard Baruch and the War Industries Board." Well, I hadn't

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written that, so I was let out, and the smart young guy got the job. I didn't regret it.

**RITCHIE:** Have you read the new biography that's out now?

**McCLURE:** No, I haven't.

**RITCHIE:** The Speculator.

**McCLURE:** Well, he was an extremely interesting man, able financier. He had a lot of qualities. Arrogant, of course, and self-centered, and so-forth. But anyway, I had this three month stint, which was fun. Then he thought, since he was getting rid of me, that he might find me a job. He called up Henry Luce. Well, Luce had just started a committee called something for Democracy, which seemed to me an unlikely committee for Mr. Luce to be running, but anyway, I checked in with them. I couldn't see myself functioning with that crowd. They were being put in there by business people to run a propagandea thing to cook us into the war. I wasn't opposed to that, but I didn't want to work for those people.

By good fortune, one evening I was going to the Tavern-on-the-Green with the young lady who had introduced me to Baruch. We stopped at Columbus Circle, which in those days was the Hyde Park Corner of New York. You had to have a ladder, a flag, and a permit, and they you got up and said whatever you wanted, anything: Fascists, Communists, Trotskyites, Socialists, anything, snake-oil

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salesmen. There were constant fights among the cliques that gathered around these ladders. Well, we were getting pretty fed up with all of this, when we heard a guy talking about the Bill of Rights of the Constitution. He was the only man in the whole place who was defending anything about the United

States. So we listened to him, and he was lucid, and made a good speech.

When he climbed on down I said: "Who are you? Where do you come from?" He said: "I'm a speaker for the New York City Coordinating Committee for Democratic Action." I had never heard of that. Then Jane said, "Well, why don't you find out more about it, Mac? Maybe there's something you can do there. Democratic action, that sounds good," So I said, "Where's your office?" He said, "It's on 43rd and Fifth Avenue. Go see the director of it, his name is Maurice Rosenblatt." I said, "All right, I will." That was a Saturday. So the next Monday I drifted in there. I don't think Maurice was too confident of me, at first. Here was this rather well-dressed guy who had this funny background, cruise director, and Baruch, and Amherst, and all sorts of things. But he checked me out and took me on for very little money as a research man.

This outfit had been created by about twenty-five neighborhood groups, which in turn had been stimulated into action by the Christian Front. This was a proto-fascist organization directed by Father Coughlin. They were anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi, and were

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brutal and vicious. Their job was to try to bring about a kind of pogrom in New York City, to take the streets away from the Jews, to control the streets, in fact. So these local groups had sprung up and were trying to combat this, at least to the extent of having a counter-speaker across the street or nearby or the next night. We proceeded to work there until the war.

We put out a newsletter covering this peculiar street activity that the newspapers really weren't paying any attention to. And the police had been pretty badly infiltrated. These mostly were Irish-Catholics. Hated Britain basically. They were really more anti-British than pro-Hitler, but the two came together as the war proceeded. The police wouldn't do anything, and [Mayor Fiorello] LaGuardia couldn't seem to control his own police in this respect. It was a vicious business. Each month the rallies got bigger. Finally they took over Madison Square Garden one night. They blended into the America First movement. They were the shock troops, really. I don't think the people running America First knew who their troops were. They were a bunch of filthy thugs.

Well, in due course I was drafted, and Maurice was, too, and that broke up the committee. We met again after the war. I returned from France with a French wife and two adopted children, looking for a job, of course. Ran into Maurice; he had a job with an outfit called the American League for a Free Palestine. Now this was an

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American organization answering to the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, which, without getting into the internal complexities of Zionism, was an off-shoot of the Revisionist Zionist group. They had a different view of what a home in Israel, or Palestine, should be from that of the official Zionists. They were much more activists, and they in effect were connected with the Irgun Zvai Leumi, the so-called terrorist group of which the current prime minister of Israel [Menachem Begin] was the head. I never met him. We were raising money, which would be shipped off to Europe, probably to buy arms, presumably to buy bandages and so-forth. It was a very exciting job.

I was the sort of public relations person, did pamphlets and speeches, including speeches for the honorary president, whose name was Guy M. Gillette, former senator from Iowa who'd been defeated in 1944 by Bourke Hickenlooper. Well, I didn't meet Gillette at the time, but I did a lot of speech work for him. So Israel became a country and the American League disbanded. I took a job with the International Rescue Committee for six months or so. Same kind of thing, fund-raising and letter writing and publicity.

But before that, after the closing of the American League, Maurice and I and a man named Harry Louis Selden, who had put a lot of money in the American League, decided that there were a number of men who were running for office who were good people and had helped the cause during the struggle for Israel's establishment.

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[Harry] Truman was going to lose, we knew that, [Thomas E.] Dewey was going to be president, and we had to have some strength in the Senate at least to hold back the tides of evil and reaction. So we cooked up a committee called the National Committee for an Effective Congress, which still exists. We didn't have much time; we got it set up in August; the election was in November. We managed to get James Roosevelt as chairman. Elliot Roosevelt helped pull some other people together.

We decided--there was an organizing committee--to support Guy Gillette, raise money for him, Paul Douglas, who was a professor at Chicago and was running for the Senate, Hubert Humphrey, who was then mayor of Minneapolis, Estes Kefauver, who was in the House and running for the Senate, Jim Murray in Montana, who was running again for the Senate, and lastly Matthew Neely in West Virginia. All of these people if they were in the Congress had been helpful to the cause of a free Palestine or Israel, and those who weren't members of Congress had been supportive in other ways, such as Humphrey and Douglas. Well, they all won, and so did Truman, of course. The greatest night of the political history of this century, I think, the election night of '48. We stayed up all night. Every one of our candidates came in. We'd been able to raise about \$50 or \$60 thousand in two months; in those days that was a hell of a lot of money. We'd spent a lot raising it, too. We had to, we didn't have time for careful mailings. We sent telegrams!

**RITCHIE:** Did you ever get any money from Baruch?

**McCLURE:** Didn't even ask him, I'm sure. No. No, you see, we used the American League lists and liberal lists of various sorts that we got a hold of. The National Committee for an Effective Congress was not disbanded, it just went into mothballs 'til the next election. But we'd seen what it could do, and with greater planning and more organization and stability and so-forth we could maybe become a permanent force or element in the political picture.

Well, I never had a chance to see that happen, because come May 14, 1949, Maurice called from Washington and said, "I'm down here and I've just been talking with Guy Gillette. It seems that when he was out of office between 1944 and 1948 Congress had passed a new Legislative Reorganization Act and created a job called an administrative assistant. Each senator is entitled to one. Well, Gillette doesn't know what to do with one, he's never needed one; he has a good executive secretary and a small staff. "But," Maurice said, "I've persuaded him he needs an idea man, and held like to talk to you about it." I thought, Jesus, I mean, really Don, it was unbelievable.

I had been in Washington once before and had been in a Senate office once before, in fact it was the office of Senator [Warren] Magnuson, I now recall, and had met his administrative assistant, a chap named Bill Golden, who preceded Mr. [Featherstone] Reid by some

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years I think. I had come out of there thinking "God, that guy must have the best job in the world." Beautiful big office. National issues, international issues, legislation, public matters. None of this commercial profit-making business. This, I thought, must be the greatest place to work in the world.

Here I was, May 15, 1949, in the office of Guy Gillette, which was just above the office that Magnuson had, 229 in the Russell Building, the Old Senate Office Building. Crystal chandelier, marble fireplace, a desk that seemed eight feet long, a view down the Hill to the National Gallery and Washington Monument. I had come down with my suitcase loaded with everything I had ever written, all kinds of stuff showing what I could do. This big, beautiful man stepped around the desk. He had white hair, huge hands. He was probably one of the best looking men who ever served in this body. He had a big head, broad mouth, carried himself like an admiral. He grabbed my hand. In the summer he always wore a white suit. In winter he wore blue. He had two suits, that's right, he had two suits. And he was often on the ten-best-dressed Americans list, because he looked so damn good in his clothes. I just thought, "My God, this is the most beautiful human being I've ever met."

He said, "Well, Mac, Maurice has been telling me about you, and I guess he's told you about this position as administrative assistant. What do you think?" I said, "Oh, I think it sounds absolutely



fabulous, Senator, I'd love to try it." He said, "Well, how soon can you come down?" I thought quickly and said, "Will two weeks be enough?" So back to New York to uproot the family and come down here, and I started.

I swear to you, no administrative assistant, and probably few other types of employees of this place, knew less than I about the Senate, how it worked, what committees did, what a senator's office did, about the mail and constituent problems. None of this had ever filtered through to me, oh, except in the civics books sense, of course. I knew about the two houses of Congress and that, but the actual functioning of it I really didn't know anything about, certainly nothing about parliamentary procedure or committee procedure, or anything. I was wet behind the ears. I used to say it took me six months to find the men's room, which wasn't quite true, but I really was useless to him. I didn't earn my pay. But he didn't know what he wanted me to do either, so I was sort of in a happy position of finding my way and learning as I went.

He had a small office, as everybody did in those days. The staff of a senator from Iowa in 1949 consisted of an executive secretary, four or five girls, and then me. Well, where to put me? The first place he put me (he was on the Senate Agriculture Committee) was in an anteroom of the Agriculture Committee, which was on the third floor just above us, on the courtside. The room angles around

the court and the far door opens into the Caucus Room; if you could open it (but you couldn't), you could hear what was going on through the door when there was a big hearing. The other door led into the committee room.

So I sat there reading the *Congressional Record*, and then I'd go over and sit on the floor. In those days they permitted staff to do that even if you had no business. I just absorbed it, sat there and listened to the debates and caught on more or less to what was happening and who was who and how it was done, and so-on. A marvelous learning experience. Part of my learning was in another direction. Sitting in this little anteroom were a couple of clerks and then there was a man who seemed to be on the phone all the time. During executive sessions he'd go in and then he'd come out and grab the phone. In due course, I found out that he was playing the commodity markets for the chairman, who was then Elmer Thomas from Oklahoma. The committee would decide to do something about wheat, held call the wheat pit. I think that all caught up with Elmer, I think [Mike] Monroney knocked him off in part because of these financial goings-on that had nothing to do with being a senator. Well, I learned about that kind of Senate business, too, very quickly. There wasn't as much of it, I must say, as people think,

but that was certainly a clear one.

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Then I was moved downstairs to a little cubicle just off the main entrance on the second floor, and was beginning to work up speeches. This was beautiful. I had a phone but no visitors, no interruptions. I could sit there and spin my speeches without being hampered by distractions. And Gillette began to develop some confidence in me and I began to feel I knew what it was all about, and would attend committee hearings and would begin to follow things.

He was on Rules and Agriculture. In due course in 1951 he moved from Agriculture to Foreign Relations, which was his true love. He had been a member of the Foreign Relations Committee in his first term. In fact, he had been rather an isolationist before the war, at least so categorized. I don't think that was it, I think he was more of an anti-imperialist than a pacifist. He'd been in the military, he'd been a captain of infantry in World War I, and held been in the Spanish-American War, though he never got to Cuba, and he once volunteered during the Boer War to go fight on the side of the Boers, but they wouldn't let him in. So he wasn't really a pacifist; he didn't like the British empire, or any empire. Plus the fact Iowa was very isolationist and felt the Europeans should stew in their own juice. Those things concurred with his own feelings, so he was rather isolationist--but he was never an America Firster, never got involved in any of that dubious footsy with the Germans and so-on, as happened here with [Burton] Wheeler, and [Gerald] Nye, and that crowd.

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By the time we were in the war he had adjusted to it and decided that the thing to be doing was to set up a successor to the League of Nations, which had failed, to try and preserve peace once it had been regained. He was one of the early men working on what became the United Nations. I think the committee ultimately reported out something called the Connally Resolution, which was the basis on which Roosevelt proceeded to negotiate with the assurance the Senate would back him up. But in the process Gillette had resolutions of his own, I'm pretty sure, I wasn't here for it. But I do know he was very deeply involved there, and not just in the international organization part. Of course the war was on, he was involved in whatever the diplomatic and other types of relationships we had with our allies and neutrals, treaties, and so-forth. Anyway, he loved it and got great satisfaction from it, so he worked his way back onto it, though he was way down the bottom again.

**RITCHIE:** Do you know how he got onto the Palestine issue, by the way?

**McCLURE:** Yes, I do. We have to go back to wartime. I believe while he was still a member of the

Senate he was approached by the American representative for the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, a man named Peter Bergson, Palestine born. His father was Hillel Kook, the Rabbi of Jerusalem. Gillette had married a Jewish lady whose name was Rose; she was a school teacher. They had had no

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children, they adopted one. Probably through the fact that she was Jewish these people were able to arrange to meet him. I'm not sure that's true, but it seems likely. They were looking for a spokesman in Congress. They had several, of course. Well, Gillette was defeated in 1944. Truman made him head of the Surplus Property Board, which he stood for six months and then he saw it was going to be such a corrupt operation which he couldn't control. Divestment of surplus was a gigantic racket. So he quit after six months, before he was spattered with mud.

At that point, Bergson and his associates had formed the American League for a Free Palestine and asked him to be the head of it. He became its honorary president. He'd been involved with them and talking with them, and I think he'd even introduced resolutions while he was still a senator to do something about the refugees from Hitler; some of them had been able to get out of Europe and they were trying to get into the United States. While nobody knew too much about the murder camps, something was known, and he was busy trying to do something about that. Smuggling them out through Rumania, there were all kinds of stories about that period. But that's the way he got involved. When he went on the Foreign Relations Committee, every member had a subcommittee and he ended up with the Near East Subcommittee, which included everything from the east end of the Mediterranean to India. Near East and South Asia, I think it was called. So that was again a linkage with Israel and other countries.

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But in the process of shifting he did lose out on ever becoming chairman of Rules, which was a much smaller committee. There were only four Democrats I think. Carl Hayden was chairman and he went on to be chairman of Appropriations, anyway Gillette would have probably inherited it early on, or within a couple of years. But while he was on the Rules Committee-I'd like to put in here, if you ever have anything to do with the printing of the biographies of senators I urge that their committee assignments be indicated. What do senators do? They don't just get elected and then retire. There's not a thing in those paragraphs [in the *Biographical Directory*] that tell what committees the man was on, and subcommittees, nothing about his performance, or even his duties, whether he performed them or not. I do urge that; it annoyed me for years.

But in his service on the Rules Committee he was named chairman of the worst subcommittee you can be on in this place, Privileges and Elections. Well, there are no privileges, plenty of headaches. This was in the early days of the rise of Joseph McCarthy. There was an election in Maryland in 1950. John Marshall Butler was seeking to unseat Millard Tydings, which he did, in one of the dirtier campaigns of recent memory. You may recall it involved a composite photograph of Earl Browder, head of the Communist party, presumably shaking hands with Tydings, who had never seen him. But this photograph was splattered into the rural districts and was very damaging to Tydings. He raised hell after his defeat. The Privileges and

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Elections Subcommittee was called into investigate the election. Butler finally was seated; he was a drip. Tydings, whatever you think of his politics, was a man of great parts--old line, old Senate bull, a man of enormous breadth of knowledge and experience, and here was this twerp. It happens so often. Joe McCarthy replaced Robert La Follette! And that undertaker from Nebraska, [Kenneth] Wherry replaced George Norris. Really, you can't do worse. They not only knock off a great man but put in a zero.

Anyway, there were other campaigns that the subcommittee looked into, and it occurred to members that there isn't any set of rules of what is good, fair campaigning, what should be outlawed or frowned upon. They set about to try and develop a statutory code of ethics for campaigning. There was a draft or two sent around, but when the older boys in the Senate heard about this, they said, no way, you can't legislate this kind of thing, and further more the implication could be that those of us who were elected before the code had used unfair tactics to get here. On the basis of that, Gillette said, "Well, let's do it the American way, have a private committee do it." I was assigned to draft a code of practices, and I consulted with a lot of people on this, and we worked up a code.

Meanwhile, Harry Louis Selden, who had been so effective in setting up both the American League for a Free Palestine and the National Committee for an Effective Congress, went to work and pulled

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together an eminent list of sponsors for this committee, which was called the Fair Campaign Practices Committee. They adopted the code as theirs and went into business and I think did a magnificent job. I think really other than the type of television ads that we're worrying about now, national campaigns are so much cleaner than they were in the '50s and even early '60s. This was a self-policing thing. The committee had no power, it couldn't charge anybody with anything or investigate them. It just was there, and if a candidate thought he was being treated unfairly he could complain. The committee would

then refer his complaint to his opponent, and say "work it out." And frequently the candidate didn't even know what was happening and apologized and stopped it. In the few cases where there was a dispute, the American Arbitration Association would send in arbitrators, preferably before election day, and they'd make a judgment. So it did, I think, materially improve the climate of campaigns for the House and Senate. Every ex-president became a member of the committee, [Dwight] Eisenhower, Truman, [Lyndon] Johnson. So that was an offshoot of Gillette's enterprise, and it still exists in a moribund state. I'm the executive director, and it's not now financially able to do anything.

At the height of McCarthy's shennanigans, in 1952 and '53 and '54, Senator William Benton of Connecticut introduced a resolution to expel McCarthy from the Senate. It was a poorly done operation, because instead of getting the Senate to approve the resolution right

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away, at least to start the investigation, it was automatically referred to Rules and then to Gillette's subcommittee. So here was Gillette alone, with a couple of subcommittee members, appearing to be persecuting this great anti-Communist leader, and boy, McCarthy took every advantage he could. He'd shoot off telegrams to Gillette, which he would send to the papers long before, accusing him of working for the Democratic National Committee and all sorts of stuff like that. We finally couldn't get the investigation off the ground, nobody wanted to touch it. Gillette was paralyzed. The subcommittee didn't know how to proceed. They didn't have any money, they didn't have any staff. They didn't have anything except this damn resolution on which a hearing was held. It was done bass ackward, I would say, the whole thing.

To get out of this, Hayden, then still Rules chairman, moved in the Senate to discharge the resolution from the committee. Well, of course he got an almost unanimous vote to not do that, which was in effect a bass ackward way of authorizing the committee to proceed. You can see it could have all been done much more simply, as they did in the case of [Thomas] Dodd and other cases since. The Senate gave prior approval to proceed and the investigation went ahead. Well, once that was done we did hire investigators and they did dig up a tremendous lot of stuff, which was later turned over to the Watkins committee, and in due course Mr. McCarthy was censured, and then drank himself to death. But he was finished once the Senate decided

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to take steps they should have taken two years before and slapped him down. He was through, and he knew it, and the whole thing just disappeared. His minions, most of them, were defeated--his pals [Herman] Welker and [James] Kem and the goons who had come in in '46.

But I'm afraid that the hangover of this McCarthy affair had a very serious effect on Gillette's attempted reelection in '54. It's always hard to determine what is the main factor--he was old, in his '70s. His opponent was a nobody named Thomas Martin, a House member who spent two years in Iowa campaigning, and never was in his House seat. And Iowa is basically Republican, used to be and still is. Plus the fact that the Democratic party's strength mainly lies in the river cities, Burlington and Davenport and Dubuque, Sioux City and Council Bluffs. They're mostly Irish-Catholic, the bulk of them, and McCarthy's impact on those voters was quite substantial. Some of the good fathers were supporting him, too, so the flock would go along. We had terrific defections, which was enough to defeat us, by about 35,000 votes. It was a terrible time. I had never been through a campaign before, actually. I had a lot to do with it, so I felt responsible, and we lost.

I'll never forget the morning after. When we knew we were beaten we had all gotten drunk, the whole staff. I staggered in at nine in the morning with a hell of a hangover. We had an office in a little building in Cherokee, his home town, high ceilings, on the

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third floor. I had to climb up, panting. I was sitting at my desk and in came Gillette. He walked right by me into his office and slammed the door, with a look of utter despondency and despair on his face. It was awful! Well, he got over it, and so did I, but it was a bad morning. So I jumped in my car and drove all the way back to Washington without a stop.

Later, since he had not been in the Senate long enough to develop any decent retirement, he came back. Olin Johnston of South Carolina, who was chairman of Civil Service and Post Office, hired him as a counsel for one of the subcommittees. Then Olin also moved him to a subcommittee on Judiciary, where he stayed about eight years after his defeat and built up his retirement. Then he went back to Cherokee, where he had a farm. Then not too many years later he had a stroke. He was about 87, so it was some years later. Anyway, he went into a nursing home, paralyzed on his left side. He was a lefty--he wrote with his left hand. And at 87 he trained himself to write with his right hand. It's interesting that the script was identical, exactly the same. I don't know what that says, but he had trained his left lobe to run his right hand so he could write a few notes.

The last letter I had from him was an absolutely extraordinary document. He must have had his left paw on the page, he was writing in bed. It starts out "Dear Mac," and then there's a full line, and

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then it begins to get shorter and shorter as it goes down and around, and it ends up down at the bottom

with two words. This curious shape. I showed it to a professor of psychology who was interested in brain damage and he was fascinated with it, he'd never seen anything like it. It hadn't either. He lived about five years more, but he was bed-ridden.

**RITCHIE:** He died at 94.

**McCLURE:** Yes. Lovely, lovely man. I just adored him.

**RITCHIE:** He's always been a puzzle to me, in looking over political history. In the New Deal accounts Gillette is portrayed as an anti-Roosevelt conservative Democrat from Iowa who was always voting against things like the NRA, and the AAA, and the Supreme Court packing fight. He's thrown in with the isolationists and all that. And then the Gillette who you read about in the 1940s and '50s is fighting McCarthy and he's on the internationalists' side. It's almost as if there are two different senators.

**McCLURE:** Two different epochs, too; two different periods.

**RITCHIE:** Well, what type of person was he really? What motivated Gillette, the farmer turned politician?

**McCLURE:** He didn't just turn politician. While he was a farmer he was county attorney in Cherokee County, too. County meant

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prosecuting attorney--minor infractions of the law. I don't think he handled murder cases or anything exciting. Then he was in the state senate for a long time, and came to the House with Roosevelt in '32. He was in the House for four years. He retained his farm and hired a man to run it for him. Well, he didn't go to college. He got a law degree from Drake and practiced law in Cherokee, while farming. He was a great singer, he loved to sing, and he ran the church choir, and he taught Sunday school. I don't know what denomination, I never bothered to find out. He didn't wear it around on his sleeve; he was no prayer breakfast politician.

He was a great lover of literature and poetry and history, a great reader of everything, and remembered it. He was something like Truman in that respect, he had a great knowledge of American history, the Constitution, and important Supreme Court decisions affecting the constitution, and so-on. I know nothing about his parents. His brother, Claude, became an admiral, and ended up running the Navy yard up in Bath, Maine, building war ships. They were very close, in fact, Gillette was on the Naval Affairs Committee in the House, at some point.

**RITCHIE:** I don't know whether you've seen this cartoon, but I came across it in the files. It was done, I think, for his 1944 reelection campaign. The Democrats had a cartoonist on staff who used to make things up for weekly newspapers.

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**McCLURE:** Yes. It says Naval Affairs Committee, that's right. Councils on post-war legislation, peace organization. Well, they've got all that. That ought to in your record somehow. Well, he was an extremely generous man, warm hearted and he loved all kinds of people. He never said anything against anybody, even people he couldn't stand. He just didn't do it, because in the first place he knew that being a senator anything he said would get back to the man he said it about anyway. Even to me, I could tell what he thought, but he never said anything, except once. We were riding over on the train to the Capitol, and John Foster Dulles--who had been appointed by Dewey to replace [Robert] Wagner--came aboard the train and sat ahead of us. Gillette turned to me and said: "That man will never make a senator." Which was true, in fact he was defeated by [Herbert] Lehman.

Bringing up Dulles reminds me of a story when Gillette was on Foreign Relations. Dulles came before them as the Secretary of State designated by Dwight Eisenhower for his confirmation hearing in the Caucus Room. I asked Gillette if he wanted any documents or anything to use, and he said, "No, I've got all that." So I went up to watch this, and the senators were as usual humble and polite and asked the leading questions that he could answer beautifully. All of the, Democrats and Republicans, it was sickening! Till they came to Gillette. The senator had collected statements Dulles had made during the '52 campaign, accusing the Democrats of being soft on Communism, and allowing the Russians to run away with the world, the

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usual stuff. He collected all these, really vicious stuff, it wasn't quite McCarthyism but was a gentlemanly form of it. So he read these to Dulles and said, "Did you make this statement? Do you ascribe to this position?" What could Dulles say? Obviously he had. Well, this went on for quite a long time.

Then Gillette referred to Dulles' opening statement, which was all about international peace and order, his usual church speech, and read some of that, and said, "Now, you are going to be Secretary of State; of course you will be confirmed by the Senate. How do you reconcile this type of vicious campaign statement with these hightoned principled remarks of your opening statement? How as Secretary of State are you going to live with both these positions?" And Dulles said: "Senator, I'm a lawyer, and as a lawyer I represent my client. During the campaign the Republican party was my client. Today, Dwight D. Eisenhower is my client." Oh, Gillette never forgave him for that. And it really made



a big hit with the senators who had not dared open their traps, and the papers played it up, too. He was the only senator who could challenge him! Oh, well, so it goes.

He was very courageous. He was a man of very high principle. I've heard him say, "Oh, I'm going to resign if they do that. I just will not serve here if this is what's going to happen." Frequently--he scared me to death! He probably even meant it, too. He was a

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very sensitive man, too, I don't mean in the sense of being prickly or being fearsome of people saying nasty things about him, but he was very sensitive to other people's feelings and needs. A very gentle man. If he ever wanted to fire me he never let me know, and so I managed to stay on. He never fired anybody. Oh, what else to say? I think it will come out more in our talking. I've tried to give you a thumbnail sketch of a very complex man.

**RITCHIE:** He was defeated in 1944 by Bourke Hickenlooper.

**McCLURE:** That's correct.

**RITCHIE:** Then they wound up serving together on the Foreign Relations Committee.

**McCLURE:** Yes. Traveled at one time to India together.

**RITCHIE:** Oh, they did?

**McCLURE:** Yes. Well, not together but in separate airplanes. But they were there together.

**RITCHIE:** Was there any friction between them as a result of that '44 election?

**McCLURE:** If there was, they didn't show it. Senators didn't used to show things like that. Whatever they felt about "my able and distinguished friend," it was always "my able and distinguished

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friend."Whether Hickenlooper felt bad about it, there he was, a United States senator again, after a brief interlude. I don't think so.

**RITCHIE:** How did Gillette fit into the Senate structure? Those were the days of the "Inner Club" and

the Southern senators who really ran the show for a long time.

**McCLURE:** Indeed they did.

**RITCHIE:** He had sort of an independent reputation. Did he fit in or was he an outsider?

**McCLURE:** Well, I'll tell you the story he told me of his early days in the Senate. At that time in 1937 there was what was called the "Cherokee Strip" in the Senate. There were so many Democrats that some of them had to sit on the Republican side of the aisle in the back row. He was sitting behind Hiram Johnson of California, Republican, and they got to be deskmates, you know, as those things happen. Gillette came one day with some notes; he was obviously preparing to make a statement on something. Johnson saw this and turned around and said: "Senator, I'll tell you when to speak. This is not the time." All right said Senator Gillette. He was then 54-yearsold, he was no child. But Hiram was an old bull and Gillette knew who he was. So, a month or so later a farm bill, an appropriations bill dealing with farmers, was coming up, and Johnson turned around

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and said, "Now, this is the one you speak on. Prepare yourself to speak on this amendment. This will be your maiden speech." Which, of course, was exactly right and appropriate for a senator from Iowa, and that's the way he started.

But he had already been taken in, in a sense, under the wing of the Old Boys. Harry Byrd and he were very close friends--personally, I don't mean politically. He didn't get along with [Pat] McCarran or [Kenneth] McKeller particularly well, but [Richard] Russell, [Lister] Hill, the Old Boys, [Pat] Harrison, of course that's before the war, [Alben] Barkley. (Barkley asked him to be his campaign manager in '52.) They all were very close friends with him and he was a member of the "Club," he certainly was, without having really the seniority that most of them had. He had a total in both terms of only fourteen years, '36 to '44, '49 to '54.

Well, of course his voting record is not that of a New Deal Democrat, no doubt about that. Nor was the state of Iowa a strong Democratic, liberal community. He represented his people, and I think his thinking reflected them and he agreed with them, by and large. If he felt they were off-base, he went ahead anyway. He wasn't stopped by unpopularity, either here or in his state. But by and large he was a senator from Iowa and there was no point in pretending he was from Illinois or New York or Indiana or Michigan or someplace else.

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He supported the New Deal in the House, I think. I'm not sure about voting against the NRA or AAA, I don't know that; you say he did, he may have. But his real break with Roosevelt came over the Court. This is where his constitutional religion, so to speak, was involved. He just thought it was an unholy act. While he recognized that [Burton] Wheeler was using this issue as a presidential gambit, and that many of those who were fighting it were not completely in favor of the Court or the Constitution or anything, it was a political war--the first time they had a chance to beat this "fiend" Roosevelt. But he didn't go along with that. He went along for his own reasons and didn't join that cabal at all. But he was strong on the subject. Then, thereafter, I think he felt that Roosevelt could abuse his powers if he wasn't checked by the Senate. In many cases I think his votes reflected that. He was fearful of the Imperial White House before anybody felt there was anything like that.

On the other hand, he got along well with Roosevelt. Senator [Jennings] Randolph told me a story, which I asked him to put in his statement to the Senate after Gillette died. It's in the Record, I won't bother going into it. But he went down to the White House at Randolph's suggestion to head up a whole delegation of people who were worried about their little airports which were being wiped out in the war effort just as they were getting started. Roosevelt listened to them and turned it around. So, I mean he didn't have any war with Roosevelt. I don't think he voted for him every time.

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**RITCHIE:** I know he refused to go to the Democratic convention in 1944 because he didn't believe any one should have four terms.

**McCLURE:** Well, that's another one of his constitutional stands, traditional, and again his worrying about Roosevelt becoming a king. I didn't remember that he didn't go to that. You know more about it than I.

**RITCHIE:** You also mentioned before when the Committee for Effective Congress had their first slate of candidates, all of them were pretty liberal Democrats, with the exception of Gillette, who was much more conservative than the rest of them.

**McCLURE:** That's right.

**RITCHIE:** How did he get along with those liberal Democrats from the "Class of '48," people like Estes Kefauver, Paul Douglas, Hubert Humphrey and others?

**McCLURE:** Well, he didn't have a chance much to get along, because he came right back into the "Club," in his old shoes. His friends were Hayden and Russell and Barkley. I don't think he developed any close relationships with any of those, except for Murray, who had been here a long time, and

Neely, who had been around for God knows how long. They knew each other from the time back. I think he liked Humphrey, I think he thought he was a fool when he started out, but he did learn fast. He and Kefauver worked together on efforts to

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get a resolution through on the effort to get an Atlantic Union, but I don't know that that made them very close. They were just close on that issue. About Douglas, I don't think I ever heard him say anything.

But when Eisenhower had been in a while, the Tidelands Oil business was cooking. You may recall that issue, it was a big thing in the early part of the Eisenhower administration. It looked like a pay-off to the oil companies, a proposal to hand over to the states most of the off-shore land under water, which meant that the oil companies would more easily control the state legislature, the Texas Railroad Commission and so on. They would then have control over these vast subsurface oil deposits off the coast. Gillette was a strong conservationist and he didn't like the big oil companies. They were not nice to farmers either, as you recall. For many reasons he was hostile to monopoly, he would have been--if they had been around--to multinational corporations and oligopolies and whatnot.

When the liberals started an effort to stop this tidelands giveaway, as they called it, oddly enough the principal leader of it was Lister Hill. But he stayed in the background and arranged to have Herbert Lehman as the front spokesman for the group. Ultimately there were about twenty-five senators, all Democrats, who would meet once a week over here in a hotel on the Plaza, where the SEC is now. They'd meet one night a week and discuss strategy and lay out

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action they wanted taken. Lehman's administrative assistant, [Julius] Edelstein, was the secretary to the senators and the chairman of the administrative assistant group, which met the next night, when we got our assignments. It worked well.

We had really the first liberal caucus ever formed. It was easy because it was on a single issue. It broke up later when they tried to keep it on with other issues, but it worked and we also ran the first liberal filibuster. Lister Hill taught them how to do that, you know, watch the floor, have somebody present, this, that, and the other thing, until the proponents had to give in and draw back to the three mile limit, except in the case of Louisiana and Texas, which under certain historical arrangements had always had a twelve mile limit. Control of the outer continental shelf went to the federal government. The royalties and rents paid by oil drilling companies go to the treasury, and they're way over a billion or more now,

I'm sure, I don't know how many billion. A big piece of change, and growing surely.

The way it was done was that Lister Hill introduced what was called the "Oil for Education" amendment. The idea was that these revenues would be allocated to federal aid to education, because we couldn't get a bill for federal aid to education. The Chamber of Commerce was the main opposition to it, and they would raise either the Communist issue, the religious issue, or the race issue. The

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"three Rs": reds, religion, and race. They just played it like an organ, and some group would break away on each of those. But the thought was that this "Oil for Education" amendment wouldn't be a tax on people, it would come out of segregated funds. Anyway, that provided a way to recruit the lobbying efforts of all sorts of groups who didn't give a damn about oil one way or the other: unions, educational groups, all kinds of public interest groups. They were helpful to us in drumming up other support from other senators other than this group of twenty-five which wasn't enough to win. So we won a half battle and the other guys lost a half battle.

It was a great fight, and Gillette was very active in that, and encouraged me to be active. In fact, I handled much of the newspaper publicity and public releases and stuff like that. The press was either bought or blind, because when the bill got to the floor even the *New York Times* didn't have a word about it, and the big debate had begun. So we cooked up a telegram for Gillette and Douglas and [Clinton] Anderson, I think, and sent it to Arthur Krock, inquiring if this wasn't part of all of the news that's fit to print. From then on the *Times* covered it. But in a lot of the states the papers didn't cover it. The wire services paid no attention to it. It was as if there was a plot to suppress any mention of it. Maybe it was just regarded as too technical and difficult a subject. In any event, people weren't aware of what was going on. So we cooked up a f I ank attack. We found a recording shop down here that made discs

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for very little money, and we got some union to pay the cost. (Radio stations were obliged to offer a certain amount of public interest time in those days--I'm not sure they will any more.) We'd record speeches of our senators, and then mail them to the radio stations. These were punchy, short speeches that told the people what was going on. And people began to write their paper asking "why don't you print something about this?" And in due course we forced the whole thing open. Well, of course, it got more interesting, too, as time went on. A filibuster guarantees page one anywhere, but we had done a good job of bypassing this silence blanket. Gillette was very hot on that one.

In fact, even before then he was hot on the natural gas bill that Bob Kerr had come forth with, to deregulate gas, in effect, and make millions for companies like Kerr-McGee and others. Just a blatant grab. Gillette was horrified. This was another Elmer Thomas kind of thing to him, using your public office to line your pocket, which was utterly obnoxious and sickening to him. Well, he took on-one of the first who ever dared--this oil senator from Oklahoma. Bob Kerr was a powerful man, big guy with a huge voice, and utterly unprincipled in debate. He used to just destroy senators. Kerr used to bait poor Homer Capehart of Indiana till he collapsed in incoherence. Anything could go. Misrepresentation and lies and phoney facts and bullying. He broke in when Gillette first opened his mouth. Gillette had been there longer than Kerr and said, "I'll be

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happy to yield when I finish my remarks, senator," politely. Kerr kept coming in every ten minutes, trying to make the Record all mixed up, you know. "Will the senator yield? Will the senator yield?" Of course, Gillette had to stop and get rid of him. Well, he finished his speech, he was absolutely furious, because you just don't do that kind of thing, unless you are being a jackal. So on things like that he was as liberal as you could find. On anything to do with conservation--he would have been a tremendous environmentalist, if there had been an environmental movement he would have been in the thick of it, no question about it. He was also the first consumerist up here.

**RITCHIE:** In what way?

**McCLURE:** He introduced a resolution as early as '53 or so to create a committee on consumer interests, which died in the Rules Committee. It was much too early on to try that. Then we tried to get other committees to set up subcommittees on consumer interests. Charlie Tobey of . . .

**RITCHIE:** New Hampshire.

**McCLURE:** . . . New Hampshire, who was chairman of Commerce, did set up one. Actually it was a good place for it. In fact, Magnuson made a great thing out of it later. But Tobey, a Republican, set up the only one back in the 83rd Congress. Anyway, then while he was

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still on the Agriculture Committee, Gillette was made chairman of a subcommittee on the utilization of farm crops, which was, I believe, a recreation of something that had existed under his chairmanship during the war. At that time he went to work to see, since there was a shortage of petroleum and rubber, especially rubber, if this could be made from alcohol, chemically made from alcohol made from

corn; now we've got gasahol. This was an attempt way, way back in the early '40s to use large supplies of wheat and corn, and maybe soybeans, I don't know if they work or not, to produce industrial alcohol fuel.

So he had this subcommittee reestablished when he came back to the Senate. He changed its purpose, its purpose then became to study the famous gap between what the farmer receives and what the consumer pays. Where does all that money go? We still are trying to find out. Packaging, shipment, and advertising, and processing, and so-forth. He ran a hell of a series of hearings on that, front page all over the place. Witnesses coming in with a tag taken off the A & P shelf at the moment the clerk was putting a higher price on the same goods, which was very dramatic stuff. We belabored the meat packing industry, which was a very popular thing to do with our beef producers, who were always getting screwed by the packing plants. And tried to find out how much it cost to make a leg of lamb, or a pork chop. Their bookkeeping was so muddled, and purposely so, and still

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is--you can't find out anything, where the costs of production and processing really are.

That's what led him into this further concern with the general consumer problem, which he was very naive about, as we all were at the time. He didn't really know what he was getting into. There was, for example, a large cartel headed by Brazil which ran the coffee prices up very high. The subcommittee went into that quite deeply with lots of headlines and publicity, and made certain Brazilians very angry.

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End of Interview #1

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**THE SENATE IN THE 1950s**  
**Interview #2**  
**Thursday, December 16, 1982**

**RITCHIE:** I'd like to start today by asked if you could describe what a senator's office was like in the early 1950s. How did Senator Gillette's office function? I know it had a relatively small staff.

**MCCLURE:** Relatively small is right. When I came aboard there was an executive secretary, Cy Farr; there was a case worker, an older lady, Betsy Lou Ross; and some secretaries, Dorothy Dalton, Eva Charlton, Chickie Chaikin, and Rose Ann Cosgrove. Some were temporaries. And Mark Gillette, the son, came in and out when he wasn't in school. But basically it was a very small group.

He was in 229 in the now Russell Building, on the west end, with a lovely view of the monument and the mall and all that. He had a glorious old fashioned office, as I have said, with a grand chandelier, marble fire place, big desk, easy chairs. It was a most comfortable kind of a room, high ceiling, big windows. The next room was a reception room, which speaks for itself. The back end of that they had partitioned off with a bookcase. Near the window Cy Farr had his desk. I guess there were a couple of girls out there in the front room. The other room was for the other typists and the case worker, and ultimately me, though at first I didn't sit there.

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The mail was consistent, except when there was a push by some lobbying group that would pile up thousands of duplicate letters that you didn't pay any attention to, except the volume of them. A great deal of case work, of course, all the veterans and social security people, the same thing that goes on today. I was amazed at that. I didn't realize how important senators were in handling personal cases for all kinds of people. Of course, businessmen, farmers, anybody who had business with the government had learned to go through a senator or a congressman's office for help. It expedites responses, for example, and clarifies mix-ups and errors and so on. Cy Farr ran the office. He had been with the senator before, and he was the expert on Iowa politics. Held been the campaign director three times, and knew every county leader and all the Democratic machinery in the state, plus a few people in all the organizations and so forth.

There was no legislative assistant. No office had one by that name in those days. Since the legislative load was no where near what it is today, a senator could pretty much handle it himself, at least the parts that he was greatly interested in, such as his committee work and major bills that he was going to have to take a stand on. He drafted the responses to inquiries about what his position would be on such-and-such an issue. There were no position papers produced by anybody. And he was able--the state wasn't terribly populous of course--to keep a personal correspondence going himself with several



thousands of people over the year. He dictated the

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the letters and he signed them. And if there were multiple responses required we of course used the mimeograph machine.

As time went on and I found my feet I became in effect the administrative assistant. I didn't administer anything, although that was the title. It being a new kind of job, many senators didn't know what to do with administrative assistants exactly. Some of them made their political guys from the state the top man, who came in with him with the election. That still occurs, I'm sure. Some of them were research and speech-writing guys, mostly like I was. Some actually administered the offices in the larger states. When they had larger numbers of staff they had to have somebody really actively operating as an administrator. Well, Cy Farr did the same for that little group we had.

Of course, committee work came first, and he was on Agriculture, and Rules, and Foreign Relations, and also he was on Small Business. The latter was a special committee formed about 1950, which had no legislative power but did a lot of investigating, held numerous hearings. He had a subcommittee there I believe. Anyway, that was his committee structure. On the Foreign Relations Committee he was chairman of the subcommittee on the Middle East, Near East, and South Asia. On Agriculture he had his subcommittee on the utilization of farm crops, which I have talked about. Naturally he served

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on other subcommittees in the various committees, of which he was not chairman.

Foreign Relations at that time, and I suppose it's still the same, used its subcommittees really as consultative bodies; they had no legislative power or even jurisdiction, they had regional jurisdiction. They were used for consulting with the State Department generally, sometimes with other agencies, sometimes even with public organizations and private citizens. But I think Gillette found the system quite frustrating; in particular the case of the Near East subcommittee. During the time the CIA managed to get rid of Mossadegh in Iran, there was a great deal of shennanigans and mysterious business that the public couldn't find out about. We could read the papers but we never were getting anything publicly honest from the Department of State or the CIA or the oil companies. Gentlemen from the State Department would come up and ask for an executive session, which in those days meant a closed session. They'd tell the senators a great deal, no doubt, but after that the members were paralyzed; they couldn't speak without violating or revealing classified material. It was maddening, because senators knew what was going on or thought they did but couldn't talk about it, except to each other. Gillette never would tell me either. He'd just say, "No, I'm under an embargo, and we just have to go along this

way." The senators' staff was never permitted in those meetings. Pat Holt

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was in, of course, because he was on the committee staff, but senators' staff, never.

Nowadays, of course, with everything open, presumably, and every senator having a staff member through the Gravel resolution, there's not so much secrecy, really. I don't think they can control it in the way they used to. Of course, the Rules Committee had no secrets. They had executive sessions, but members' staff were permitted. Some of the matters were quite politically sensitive, but they didn't involve foreign policy or the safety of the Nation, Heaven knows. So I went to all the hearings, any meeting at which Gillette was either chairing or serving, and I went to all executive sessions that I was permitted to. It was a wonderful learning process. The ultimate being a conference with the House, which was the next-to-last stage in the great legislative process. Certainly no matter what the subject is, it's great theater. In fact, I regard the whole Senate as a theater and all the sub-plots, and side-play, and incidental music that goes on in the committees and hearings and press conferences and so on, is all very dramatic, I found. Wonderful theater and a wonderful cast of characters that changed in part every day. The steadies being the elected officials, staff, and press, with the public, the lobbyists, the visitors, the witnesses, and the tourists running in and out. You know what it's like, it's a great Grand Central Station milling through here, in the summer especially.

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Well, back to Gillette's office. We at some point decided we should put out a newsletter, a weekly four or five page newsletter to the papers and to the radio stations. Gillette, like all good politicians, was highly sensitive to changes in public opinion, and he wanted to stir up comment; through the use of a newsletter he could get people to respond to something he wrote--or I wrote for him. Well, that was quite a chore, because what I did was track everything he did and relate it to everything that seemed to be of importance to the people of the state and sometimes to the Nation as a whole. It was used. We'd appear especially in the little weekly papers who have no money for syndicated columnists; this was free and they would print his little picture, which he sent along. We had a masthead that they could use, which got to be a kind of logo all around the state. Dozens of them would print this. Then the radio stations would use parts of it when they wanted to. It was quite successful, I think. Didn't guarantee his reelection, but it certainly kept the people aware of what he was doing, and to some degree what was happening that was not to be found necessarily in the public press or the other media.

Also we developed, after the Senate had created this studio over in the Capitol for radio and then TV,

a weekly radio program, fifteen minutes I think, and then later television. That was more rare. This was just the beginning of TV, really; it was not as developed anywhere near as it is now. But if he had an important statement

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that he wanted immediate attention given to, and didn't want screened through editors and so forth, he would use the TV. Not too often, but once or twice a year. When he announced he was going to run again, that was obviously an occasion, but there were others involving treaties and things of public concern.

Of course there were a constant stream of Iowans coming through, whom he always wanted to greet, naturally. They often just wanted to drop in and say hello. Sometimes they had a problem they wanted solved, or an issue they wanted to discuss. Plus the usual stream of lobbyists and the press. We had some pretty good papers in Iowa at the time, the *Des Moines Register* especially. Not all of them had staff people here; they used stringers. And the A.P., U.P., I.N.S., at that time there were three press services. You never saw the TV commentators in those days. Radio types, sure, lots of radio reporters would come by.

We also had a press release system which was handed out here, and mailed sometimes to papers in the state--usually too late by the time it got there to be newsworthy. We had an old mimeograph machine down in the basement, which we all used. We would line up and run a hundred off, collate them, and staple them, and take them over to the gallery.

That reminds me, once I was assigned a major speech by the senator. He'd been talking in general, this was probably in '51, '52,

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about the inability really to describe to the American people what we were doing in the world. We had NATO, we had SEATO, we had the OAS, we were involved in numerous treaties and security arrangements with all kinds of countries, so he assigned me to find out from the State Department, as well as my own reading, three things: what are deemed to be America's vital interests in the world, where are they? Two, what measures have we taken, or will we take, should trouble arise, to defend these vital interests, as distinct from just interests that we have with every country; not military measures in the sense of preparedness, but what strategic arrangements are we involved in; that's the treaties and the executive agreements of all sorts. And of course, third, what resources do we have to fulfill our commitments, not just military but manpower, and economic resources, and available raw materials,

and everything that would go into a massive military, or defense build-up.

So I worked months on the damn thing. It was a very good thing for me; it was discipline, and I learned about what we were involved in. I really didn't know, or know enough about it. Anyway, after a period we had a huge, big speech, a good hour-and-a-half Senate speech, with maps and charts and everything. Well, he liked it, and we chose a quiet afternoon, had it all prepared in advance, of course. Well, I was so busy pulling together the last minute ravelings that any major undertaking required, I forgot to have the girl carry the text of the speech over to the press gallery. Well, you

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know while the guys in the gallery listen with some attention to a speech, they'd much prefer to have a written, printed text from which they can draw their own quotations. It wasn't till he was about half way through it that a word came from the gallery: "Where the hell is the text?" Hah! Well, we got a few over in time. They were sitting down at the mimeograph machine. Nobody had gone to get them! God, what a sensation that was. Course, it was such a learned and long piece it had no real news value anyway, although a new guy from the *New York Times* came around and said, "I'm keeping this as a reference work. I've got to cover all this stuff." And I guess it had some academic impact and so forth. But that dreadful last minute gaffe--I never let that happen again.

**RITCHIE:** There was no official press secretary in the office, did you . . . .

**McCLURE:** No, I was that, too. Anything with words I did. That was my strong point, I guess.

**RITCHIE:** Was the senator more oriented, would you say, toward the Iowa press than say trying to get national press, in the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times* or the wire services?

**McCLURE:** It depended on the subject. On foreign policy he wanted as much national coverage as he could get, in the New York and Washington papers, because he was trying to make an impact on the

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whole of public opinion. But for farm matters and various state concerns, he actively sought Iowa press attention.

**RITCHIE:** Did a senator in those days do more of his own press work than they do now? Was he

more the person who would actually deal with reporters?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, yes. Oh, absolutely. Well, I would take care of a routine visit of course, but if they wanted a statement from him, he'd have them in his office. And he'd have a press conference once in a while, when some subject came up that was worth having it about. Usually things growing out of disputes in the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections over Joseph McCarthy and other sundry cases we handled. He was very good on his feet and spoke beautifully of course, and fielded questions with aplomb, I would say. I saw him get his foot in the pail one or two or three times, and I helped him out of it, but that happens to everybody. Misquoted, or used the wrong number, or something.

**RITCHIE:** What was the pace of life like in a Senate office in those days? Was it a busy, hectic schedule?

**McCLURE:** No. It would be at times, of course, especially if your man was doing something big or important or time-consuming. In the years before I came to the Senate and for several years afterward the day the Senate went out of session they might as well have closed

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the office, except as a mail drop and a phone answering service. Nothing! For months you didn't have a damn thing to do. Of course, I did do a lot of reading and preparing of material for the next session, and I think that went on in all offices, too, I'm sure it did. But generally speaking lobbying stopped, newspaper men didn't bother, there wasn't any news to get, and the senator wasn't in town. He headed for Cherokee. He did a tour of the state, or he maybe went abroad on a trip someplace. He loved his home town and his farm. He would just go back and become a farmer for three or four months.

But the Senate was totally dead. The sessions ended in August or early September. Once in a while as when the Korean War began they ran on later, very rarely. There just wasn't the volume of business there is now--the pressure of extending laws all the time, the reauthorizing programs all the time. There was new legislation, of course, but it seems to me that the volume just multiplied geometrically as time went on.

**RITCHIE:** The Senate staff as a whole was much smaller. Did you get to deal with the staff members of other senators and committees?

**McCLURE:** I tried to know every administrative assistant personally. I made it a point. There were 96 when I started, and then Alaska and Hawaii joined the Union and there were 100. I think I knew them all, and sometimes more; I mean their executive

secretaries, or a girl in the office. I tried to have an access to every office and every committee to the degree I needed it. I hadn't much to do with several committees because we weren't involved in any way by them. We didn't have big military installations, so I didn't pay much attention to Armed Services. But Commerce, Labor, Public Works, Agriculture, of course, not Interior much, we don't have national parks or anything like that that would involve Interior. Then, of course, the Finance Committee, everyone had to keep his eye on that. I got to know the key people I think in all committees.

**RITCHIE:** I also noticed in the Secretary's Report that every once in a while Mark Gillette's name would appear, and Rose Gillette was also on the staff for a while.

**McCLURE:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** What did they do on the staff? And was it common for senators' wives and children to work in their offices?

**McCLURE:** It wasn't common, but it occurred. John Sparkman's wife used to be around the office a great deal. And there may have been others I didn't know about. Well, they pitched in and did jobs that needed to be done that might not have been done so quickly if we'd depended on this small staff. Mark could be a runner, and he could type a bit, and be generally useful. Mrs. Gillette knew large

numbers of people in Iowa herself, so she was a good person to have when a delegation was coming in. She knew the wives.

Well, they may have needed to supplement their income, too. The pay wasn't very good, you know, for a long, long time. Senators' pay was miserable, and therefore, everybody else's was. Of course, he had a little income from his farm; I didn't know how much. But he was not wealthy by any means. I told you the story about him being on the best-dressed list in America for two suits. What a farce! They lived in an apartment here, usually, and drove a big, big car, because traveling across the wide open spaces of Iowa you've got to have a big Chrysler or big Buick or something. I drove all those roads during the campaign, and I was glad to have a nice, big bus to move. He never went less than 80 when he could get on the open road. "Come on, Mac, step on it! We've got to get going!"

**RITCHIE:** Was he more likely to drive back and forth to Iowa?

**McCLURE:** Yes, oh, yes. They drove all the time. Well, I guess if he went out for a speech or something he flew, but if it was between sessions, sure, and even for a long vacation time. They sometimes had recesses around Easter and so on.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned about the campaign. What did you do during the '54 campaign? And was it usual for the Washington staff to get involved in the home state campaign?

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**McCLURE:** Oh, it certainly was usual.

**RITCHIE:** The executive secretary had been his campaign director.

**MCCLURE:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Was everybody else involved?

**MCCLURE:** The whole gang went out. Well, no, not the whole gang. Two girls, Chickie and Rose Ann, and Cy and I. What did I do? It was a mad scramble, because he told me when I was hired that he didn't intend to run again and I should not feel any constraints. If I thought he should do something that was worth doing, that fitted in with his thinking, I should propose it, even though it might have ramifications in Iowa that were not particularly conducive to support in the coming election. So he was involved in the Atlantic Union committee, and in this consumer thing, which few in Iowa could understand very well, I'm afraid, and involving himself in various investigations and studies, and actions on the floor, amendments and bills and so forth, which, had he been scrupulously examining the horizon for six years or five or four hence, he might not have done.

Well, come January of '54, he said, "Mac, I'm going to run again." Jeez! "Fix up a TV appearance over in the studio for tomorrow afternoon. I've prepared a little statement here. You want

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to look at it?" So that was it. Off we went, with really only nine months to do it in. No campaign organization, no real firm alliances except through the party, that were pro forma in many cases. He

didn't know a lot of the county chairmen because he hadn't been around the state a lot as much as he had in the past. No campaign literature, nothing, not even enough photographs. I whipped together a brochure with a beautiful picture of him and had a nice printing job done, several thousand printed. Then the campaign pictures. Then we began slowly lining up campaign trips to hit all the major towns, and the major organizations that might be meeting when he could get out there, and press conferences, radio and TV appearances, and the whole business of traveling.

Fortunately, a young man showed up, after we got to Iowa, after the session, I guess this would probably be September, who had a private plane. He said, "I want to help you senator, but I haven't got any money. What I'll do is fly you to all your speaking engagements." Gillette said, "That will be marvelous, but I will pay for the gas." OK, so that's the way we did it. It was a great boon, because driving 150 or so miles in time to get someplace for lunch and back again in the late afternoon was a grind. And then he lost all that time on the road, he couldn't be doing anything except sitting. So we used that plane a lot. We hit all the places, and the party performed. I mean they got crowds out and luncheons together at the Kiwanis Club and church meetings and all the usual

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places where candidates meet voters. I handled all the press releases, and we had one a day--had to--either asserting something or challenging something that had been said by somebody else, rebutting. It wasn't unlike any other campaign.

We raised a good deal of money for Iowa. I've forgotten now how much. One contribution that kicked back very hard came from the United Automobile Workers. They had a policy in those days, I think the amount was a thousand dollars. They sent us a list of one thousand members of the U.A.W. who each had given a dollar. But they unfortunately sent it through what was called Solidarity House, which was union headquarters in Detroit. Well, Solidarity, you'll recall, sounds sort of left wing; "Solidarity Forever," was a revolutionary song of the '20s, I guess. Well, the Republican press hit on that: "Gillette Gets Thousand Dollars From Solidarity House." No mention of the U.A.W.; it sounded like some socialist plot. They hit us hard with that. Of course, rebuttals and explanations never catch up. And they did it just over the weekend as the campaign was coming to a close.

Several unions gave about a thousand dollars each, the Railroad Brotherhoods here in Washington, but it took them almost to the end of the campaign to get the check to us. We'd committed ourselves on several TV shows and desperately needed the money. It finally came through. The Steel Workers; at that time the Packing House workers

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had been infiltrated by the Communists and they were a hot potato to handle. The members weren't Communist, but the union leaders were. We had to be very careful not to be endorsed in any way by them because the McCarthy spirit was very widespread in the Middle West, as we found to our unhappiness on election day.

One of the last days of the campaign we were driving back from someplace, Omaha I guess (we'd been down to do a TV program beamed into Council Bluffs and southwest Iowa from the Omaha station), when Rose Gillette said, "Guy, how's it going to go?" He said, "Well, I'm going to win by 35,000 or lose by 35,000." He lost by 35,000. Anyway, we got back in the office, and he said, "Mac, we've got a lot of this money left here, I want to send it back, proportionately." I never heard of such a thing. We spent, it must have been two or three days, we spent a lot of time divvying it up. I don't remember what it was, several thousand dollars, and we returned it in proportion with the contribution, and off it went. He ended up with no campaign contributions to be worrying about afterward. A man of great probity. Gestures like that were never publicized. Nobody knew it except those who got their checks back. But he knew it.

**RITCHIE:** You've attributed a lot of his defeat to McCarthy.

**McCLURE:** Not a lot. But it was a key point.

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**RITCHIE:** The fact that he was the chairman of the subcommittee that was dealing with McCarthy's involvement in the Tydings-Butler race. What were Gillette's own feelings about McCarthy and the whole anti-Communist movement?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, well, Gillette despised him, because not only didn't he like McCarthy's political methods but because he was an absolute stinker as a senator. Everybody says what a nice guy he was and a big back slapper and so forth, but his treatment of other senators was just vicious. He would send off a telegram to the press and then release it to Gillette ten hours after it had been distributed, blasting him for working in cahoots with the Democratic National Committee and that sort of thing, and then come bursting up on the floor, all hail-fellow-well-met. Gillette would never shake his hand.

After that instance I think I mentioned, when Carl Hayden had to move to discharge the Rules Committee of the Benton Resolution on McCarthy, and the Senate promptly refused to do it, therefore

giving the investigation a backward way of proceeding legally, McCarthy came over and tried to throw his arm around Gillette's shoulders, saying "No hard feelings, Guy." Well, Guy had them, he had plenty of hard feelings. He loathed him. Gillette refused even to turn his head. Furthermore, held never had to deal with such a brute around here, you know, such a crude, loud, and unscrupulous slimy character.

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Senators weren't like that when he started out here; they were gentlemen. And this was no gentleman.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that the whole gentleman's club approach to other senators, not attacking each other personally all the rest of it, actually allowed someone like McCarthy to get away with as much as he did?

**MCCLURE:** I hadn't thought of it in exactly those terms.

**RITCHIE:** People like Gillette seemed to refrain from attacking him.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, they just turned their back on him. The only time I ever heard a really personal crack at McCarthy was by Senator William Fulbright. It was just at the time when the senator from Vermont . . .

**RITCHIE:** Ralph Flanders.

**MCCLURE:** Flanders and Fulbright had resolutions of condemnation before the Senate, and McCarthy rose and made some slashing attack on Herbert Lehman, I've forgotten just what it was, it's in the *Congressional Record* I know, and then left the floor. Fulbright got up and said, "I'm sorry the senator has left the floor, because we have just

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had a demonstration of what these resolutions are all about!" He drew the lesson for everybody there; we didn't need it, but he did it.

**RITCHIE:** Well, the Senate certainly took its time in acting.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, it took forever and ever. They were scared of him. He let word out that he was

having all senators' staffs investigated for secret Communist leanings, that sort of stuff. The place was awful; suspicion and almost terror was reigning around here. Here had a gang of goons doing his gumshoeing all over the place, stopping at nothing, stealing documents and breaking in doors and anything they could think of. It was just awful.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned earlier that there was a story about a woman who suspected a break-in. What was the story behind that?

**MCCLURE:** Well, it was during the Butler investigation, the Maryland election. Grace Johnson was the clerk of the Rules Committee and an old pro, had been here many years, knew her job. One night she was working late, seven o'clock I think; she locked the door and was typing or whatever, when she heard a rattling at the door. Someone was trying to break in. So she called the Capitol Police, who took their time coming. They came and there wasn't anybody there of course. So she asked the policeman to get her some supper, which he did, and she spent the night. And a couple of times

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there were attempts to get in. She would turn on the light and begin typing and pick up the phone, and it would stop. But whoever it was was trying to get hold of the documents involving this case in Maryland. No other thing would have been worth trying to steal. Plus minutes of the executive meetings and anything else, I suppose, that he could lay his hands on. But he didn't get in; she was a brave girl.

**RITCHIE:** So Gillette's last act as a senator was to vote for McCarthy's censure.

**MCCLURE:** That's right, and that may be the time to more or less wrap up my time with Senator Gillette. The very fact that the Senate had to return for a special session to deal with the Watkins Committee resolution on McCarthy provided something that I'd otherwise not have had: access to all senators' offices, because I too had been unseated and would not have a job after January 3 of the coming year.

It was during that time that I made many efforts in trying to see various senators, but the successful one was Lister Hill, who was inheriting the chairmanship of the Senate Labor Committee. The ranking Democrat in the 83rd Congress was James Murray of Montana, who was also the ranking Democrat on Interior. He had been running in that same '54 election, and had promised his people in Montana that he would take chairmanship of the Interior Committee, which would

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handle more matters of importance to Montana than does the Labor Committee. So that meant Senator Hill, who stood second behind Murray, inherited the chairmanship. Held been on the committee from the beginning, I think from the beginning, I think since he came to the Senate in '38, but had not yet reached the top.

Well, he had no staff member on the committee. Senators didn't in those days. The chairman had his own man, of course, or two, and the minority member had his one or two staff, and then there were a few professionals who stayed around all the time. So it was obvious that he needed a staff director, or chief clerk as the technical title is, and cast about. I know for sure that most of the weight that determined him to select me came from his administrative assistant, Charles Brewton. Charlie and I worked together during that Tidelands battle. He had more or less been the back-behind-the-scenes organizer of the caucus and the inventory of the oil-for-education amendment, which I think I told you was used as a device to forestall complete loss of the Continental Shelf. I had done much of the public relations and speech work and radio connections and so on for that group. Charlie had been impressed with the job, and we'd won, in a sense. While I had not met Senator Hill in any formal way, I'd been around him a bit during all that struggle, and he had enormous respect for Guy Gillette, too, who of course was very strong in my corner. So on Christmas Eve Charlie got a phone call from Montgomery, Alabama: "Tell Stewart to show up on

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January 1st, or whatever day he's free." Wow, it was a great day, a great Christmas!

So then I became Senator Hill's chief clerk. I was first given the title of staff director. Well, the staff of the committee at the time was as small as the staff of an office at the time, this was 1955. We had fourteen people on the staff, four of them on the minority side and ten on the majority side. There were three majority professionals. I considered myself one, because somebody had to handle a lot of legislation if the other two gentlemen couldn't. Jack Forsythe was the general counsel, and William Reidy was the health man, and all the other legislation we divvied up among us. Jack was good on labor matters and had had experience with the House Committee on education matters. Those were the three big fields, but we had veterans' legislation, juvenile delinquency, arts and humanities, mine safety, an unbelievable list of stuff under the rubric of public welfare. God, if they couldn't think of where else to send it they sent it to the Labor Committee! The Committee was I think then thirteen, we had a one-vote majority, seven to six. One of the minority was a liberal Republican, [Irving] Ives.

Ives left, retired I guess. He was very ill and died shortly thereafter; very nice man. So on liberal-conservative splits we would lose [Strom] Thurmond, who was then technically a Democrat, and pick

up Ives, and sometimes a moderate like H. Alexander Smith,

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though he was a professional Republican, God knows, an Eisenhower supporter and finance chairman in New Jersey, I think, but a decent old man. We had some incredible people on that committee at various times. And it was great theater. Paul Douglas was aboard. [Hubert] Humphrey had gotten off, unfortunately, just before I came on. I would have loved to have worked with Humphrey. [Wayne] Morse was on the committee; later on [Joseph] Clark, [Jennings] Randolph, [Walter] Mondale, well the list is quite considerable.

**RITCHIE:** John Kennedy was on the committee, too.

**MCCLURE:** Jack Kennedy was there. He was the last Democrat, well, Thurmond was a so-called Democrat. Yes, Jack was the chairman of the Railroad Retirement Subcommittee--and hated it. What is there to do there? Well, he probably wished he still had it when he took on the Labor Subcommittee with Landrum-Griffin a few years later, which was a real buzz-saw. Out of which he made some capital, I think, but it was a tough one. Yes, we had quite a committee. Oh, we had Matt Neely of West Virginia.

**RITCHIE:** You had Barry Goldwater.

**MCCLURE:** No, not quite that early, I think. I'll have to look at the list. It changed every two years to some degree. Douglas left and went to Finance, which was very sad. He was an extremely able senator and we needed him because of his broad economic

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background. A lot of the material we were dealing with affected economics and nobody really was as qualified to deal with it as he was. And then Thurmond left us, unfortunately, in due course, and became a Republican.

But to go back to the staff, when Thurmond was assigned he was given the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee. And he stormed right in to Senator Hill and said, "I gotta have staff!" This was the first break-through. Other senators had mumbled and muttered, but nobody had gotten anything yet. Well, Senator Hill knew he had to keep Thurmond more or less happy, if he could, because he was going to

be a key figure at times. So he gave in and we hired a chap from South Carolina, named Fred Blackwell. I don't think Thurmond knew what he was getting, because he called up a law firm in Columbia and they'd recommended Blackwell. We were wondering who he'd be, because he'd be sitting with us and working on the staff. So Jack Forsythe and I took him to lunch over at Mike Palm's the first day, and his first question was, "How's the minimum wage law doing?" Hah! It was up that year for extension or an increase, from a dollar to a dollar and a quarter, I think. That was his first interest! Well, he did his job for Thurmond, and damn well, he was a good lawyer. But his politics were as far removed from those of Thurmond as mine.

He was a fine addition to the staff. It was he who cooked up the "Peacetime G.I. Bill" as it was called. He got Thurmond to

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introduce it, which was pretty strange. It never went anywhere while Thurmond was there, but [Ralph] Yarborough then came in and made it his major political action up here, and ultimately succeeded. He hammered and hammered and hammered, and finally it went through, especially as the Vietnam casualty lists began coming in. Well, that's another long story.

But we did expand, and then once or twice we took on consultants, either lent to us by the Labor Department or paid for by the committee, on technical things. One guy came I think from the Labor Department, his question was the economic impact of increasing the wage and how much unemployment would increase, and how many small businesses would be driven to the wall, and all that Republican questioning that was going on. He'd been down in the Department for years and knew all the figures and could get more if we needed them. So it stayed pretty tight for many years. We had the offices where the present parliamentarian sits.

**RITCHIE:** In the Capitol Building?

**MCCLURE:** In the Capitol, which was very nice. Five seconds and you were on the floor, if you had to be. I had an office with no window, it was the second one in. But that was all right, I had a separate door I could escape through. The committee room was a handsome room, with the usual chandelier and fireplace. And then a third room, which is where the Executive clerk now sits, was in the back

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where there was one window near the ceiling looking out on a court, or an inset from the West Front, a pretty gloomy place, too. But so central and easy to operate from. The Secretary of the Senate and the Library of the Senate and everything was right near by. Well, you work over there, you know how convenient it is.

**RITCHIE:** Was there a hearing room nearby?

**MCCLURE:** We had the Old Supreme Court Chamber.

**RITCHIE:** Was that permanently assigned to you?

**MCCLURE:** Yes. What a room! Not the way it looks now. This was before they restored it. It had been the Senate till they build the new Senate wing.

**RITCHIE:** In 1859.

**MCCLURE:** Right, and then it was the Supreme Court, until they built the new Court building.

**RITCHIE:** In 1935.

**MCCLURE:** The Court was first below, in that beautiful room just beneath the old Senate chamber. They then used the upstairs room, on the second floor until '35. It was at Lister Hill's instance that an effort to turn it into what it had originally been was made by John Stennis, who was then chairman of the Legislative Appropriations

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Subcommittee. He was proposing to restore it into what it had been when the Supreme Court sat there. I went to Lister Hill and said something to the effect that "I think that's a bad mistake. The Supreme Court isn't in very good order at this moment in the South, and furthermore that's where the Senate met, and where Henry Clay and Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun, and John Randolph, and Stephen Douglas and all the great senators of the early nineteenth century made their great speeches." Well, he thought I was right and went to Stennis and they revised the scheme to go back and make the chamber into what it had been and what it is today. Boy, it is beautiful! I stopped in there just a day or two ago.

It wasn't as beautiful as that when we had it, but it was great. Except it was drafty. Lister Hill didn't like cold drafts and there was something coming out of the ceiling, I think it was the air conditioning. "Stewart will you get this place warmed up!" What could I do? We'd have an engineer up and he'd

tinker, but it never worked. But it was a good hearing room because it had a long dais, where the nine justices had sat, and it had a back room behind where we finally set up a couple of staff people, because we had no more office space. That's where we put Fred Blackwell and his secretary. But in that old room we had all our hearings and all our executive sessions. Once in a while it would be taken away from us for an official banquet given by the president of the Senate or the Foreign Relations Committee or something.

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**RITCHIE:** So the staff members in those days worked for everyone? They didn't divide it up so that one staff member worked for each subcommittee? Or how did they divide it up?

**MCCLURE:** Well, in effect, both. We had a subcommittee on health which Bill Reidy handled as the staff man. We had a subcommittee on labor but we didn't have a staff man for it, except from time to time a consultant. Forsythe handled that. We had a subcommittee on education, which he also handled. We had a subcommittee on veteran's affairs, which prior to Fred I had handled. Railroad retirement, and one or two little special ones, juvenile delinquency, and arts, which I would handle. For a long time there wasn't much to it really; there were a few hearings and then the bills would die. Well, we got a juvenile delinquency bill finally, and many, many years later the arts and humanities legislation.

**RITCHIE:** How would the members of the committee, particularly the subcommittee chairmen, make use of the permanent staff?

**MCCLURE:** Well, the chairman of the education subcommittee was Senator Murray, and he was, I'm afraid, in his dotage about the time I met him. Lovely gentleman, but he was quite senile. He had perfect memory of everything that took place under Franklin D. Roosevelt, but not as much more recent. His son, Charlie Murray, who was on his personal staff as administrative assistant, really was the senator, in effect, for the last several years. Bill Reidy had

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worked for Senator Murray, so Murray had both his son and Bill as well as Forsythe to deal with if he had to put his mind to doing something in the Education Subcommittee. And the other chairmen would just--I'd show up if it was my domain, and say, "Here I am senator, anything you want done, let me know." And that's the way it would work. Nobody insisted on having his own staff man. Later on they did, God knows, as the ballooning began. When I left there were a hundred and fourteen!



**RITCHIE:** I also noticed in the directories they did list the minority counsel for that committee, whereas a lot of other committees didn't list any minority staff people. And the minority in some committees didn't get staff assistance until the 1970s.

**MCCLURE:** I know. We always had them.

**RITCHIE:** Was it exclusive that the minority staff worked for the minority and the rest of the staff worked for the majority?

**MCCLURE:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** And there was no cross-over?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, there could be, of course, if there were senators from both sides working on a common project. Sure there would be collaboration. The minority had a staff room up on the third floor of the Senate wing, beautiful big room. There were four of them, the

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general counsel, the minority staff director, and two girls. Then when the Democrats were in the minority--before my time fortunately, and after--we, the Democrats went upstairs and cut back to four. But there was just one such occurrence in the 83rd. During the time I was on the committee we were never in the minority. I wouldn't allow it!

**RITCHIE:** In 1955 Senator Hill made the Salk vaccine one of his big issues.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, he did.

**RITCHIE:** Free vaccines to all children, and the Eisenhower administration said no, that would be "socialized medicine" . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Oveta Culp Hobby didn't like it. We burned her.

**RITCHIE:** Well, how did he mobilize the staff for a big issue like that?

**MCCLURE:** Bill Reidy.

**RITCHIE:** It would just be one person?

**MCCLURE:** Well, he handled the substance. I managed the hearings, in a technical, physical pulling together. I think Bill chose most of the witnesses, and so did the senator. He knew whom he wanted. Lister Hill loved doctors, and he loved to have a witness

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whom he could call "Doctor." There were always doctors in the audience and on the witness list.

**RITCHIE:** So part of your job was getting the witnesses together?

**MCCLURE:** Well, in this case, since it was the chairman's special field, and Bill Reidy was the expert, I didn't select any witnesses, or even suggest any. I would handle the invitations, you know. In those days we had a private reporting firm, Ward and Paul. They had to be called, and by God they better be there at the right moment, and sometimes they weren't--and it was hell. And the usual copies of the statements that had to be collected in advance and distributed to members and all the usual managerial details of running a hearing, but the substance was handled by Bill and the chairman. Now, another bill, which we'll go into another time, the National Defense Education Act, I had a hell of a lot to do with.

**RITCHIE:** Did you handle publicity for the Labor Committee?

**MCCLURE:** We didn't have any.

**RITCHIE:** Didn't have any?

**MCCLURE:** No, there were no releases.

**RITCHIE:** I guess the press paid attention no matter what.

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**MCCLURE:** Well that, or the chairman would come out of the meeting and tell them what happened. Or the minority spokesman would tell them their version, which was perfectly all right. And sometimes they'd stand together and corroborate each other's statements.

**RITCHIE:** You certainly came out on top in the debate over the Salk vaccine. Reading back over that it made Mrs. Hobby and the Eisenhower administration look like Scrooge.

**MCCLURE:** Not only that, but the next year we passed a general vaccine bill for the major children's diseases. No problem then. No, they didn't want that fight again!

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End of Interview #2

## WITH LISTER HILL ON THE LABOR COMMITTEE

### Interview #3

Tuesday, January 11, 1983

**RITCHIE:** I'd like to start with a focus on Lister Hill, who does not fit the stereotype of a Southern Democrat in the 1950s.

**MCCLURE:** Hardly.

**RITCHIE:** How do you explain somebody like Lister Hill?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, well now, that's not going to be easy. He was a very complicated man, as any big public figure has to be. He can't be a monotonous, single-level person. He also was extremely intelligent and had a good education and had read a great deal. His horizons were far wider than those of the typical Southerner, or even typical American. You have no doubt read his biographical material so I won't go into all that, but as a result of his early education and legal training he drifted toward politics. He became a member of the Montgomery city school board. There's an interesting background to that, I understand, though none of these facts I can vouch for personally. This was about 1918, after the first World War.

His mother was a Catholic; I don't think he went to parochial school but he was in the church. And it was decided that that wasn't a very favorable public aspect to have in the days when the Klan was

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reviving and anti-Catholicism was almost as strong as anti-blackism in the South. So he changed his religion, or publicly identified with whatever his father had been, Protestant of some sort. I don't know which sect. But his great-grandfather, who came from North Carolina, was a preacher. There were preachers in the family all along, though Lister's father was a doctor, surgeon. But anyway, in order to present himself to the hard shelled people of Montgomery for the school board he became a Protestant, though I don't think he practiced religion very vigorously. It was a political gesture, I think, basically.

He had also once wanted to be a doctor. He enormously admired his father, who was the first open-heart surgeon. He picked up a black boy who had been stabbed in the heart and sewed him up--remarkable first operation of that kind anywhere in the world I guess. The father named Lister Hill after Joseph Lister, the great English doctor (not the father of Listerine!). Hill is named Joseph Lister Hill, but he never used Joseph. He could have taken a medical education, but he went to watch his father perform a rather bloody operation one time and it so shocked him--he was a young boy or a

young man--that it just turned him off completely. He could have become some other kind of a doctor than a surgeon, but he didn't. He became a lawyer--he never practiced law either, to my knowledge, even briefly. He was in the war as a captain of infantry and pretty soon after the war went on the school board. Then came to Congress, very

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early, '23 or '24, meaning when he left in '68 he'd been here forty-five years, which is a very long term. I guess Carl Hayden had a longer one.

**RITCHIE:** About fifty years.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, but I don't know of anybody else who has that much, House and Senate. So you have an educated man from a professional family, with great intelligence and breadth of vision. He wasn't cut in the mold of the typical red-neck Southern congressman or even senator. He married well, into a very distinguished family.

In the days when his great-grandfather came to Montgomery, the way a small city or town would engage the services of a preacher was to give him land, and they gave the Hill family a big parcel of land in now what is the heart of downtown Montgomery. So they had a large amount of money forever, and a solid investment in land. He never lacked for money. In fact, he never raised campaign funds until the campaign got so terribly expensive later on that he did have to go outside his own resources. So there again he's in the aristocracy, so to speak, to the extent there is any in this country: good family, large fortune, fine background, everything. Nothing in his early life would have made him anything other than what he became: respected citizen, veteran, everything, couldn't miss. Of course, I didn't know him in the House. I didn't know him even in the Senate

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until 1955. By then held been there since '38 and he was one of the top powers in the body.

His real interest in legislation, other than things for Alabama, and TVA, and changing the basing point in steel pricing and that sort of thing, was education: vocational education and any other kind of education. And just about the time he was to inherit the Labor Committee, which handled all the legislation

affecting education, the *Brown* decision came down and the segregationists went mad. George Wallace wasn't governor, but the mood in Alabama was that it was no time for the federal government to put its fingers into public education. He was driven off of it, except for the NDEA, which was wrapped in the flag and safe. That's why he turned to health--well, he was also interested in it, of course. His father brought him up in a medical atmosphere. But it did afford him a vast field of action that supplanted what he would have preferred, I think, the field of education.

But whatever he was doing he was using the full capacities of his mind, to apply them to a big public problem. He was a senator who took his papers home. He read bills and amendments and reports, and when he went to the floor of the Senate as the manager of a bill he knew everything that was in that bill, every question that could possibly be asked and what the answers were. He had enormous pride in his own intellectual capacity, his enlightenment, his expertise,

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and to be caught without knowing the answers was unthinkable. He'd grill the staff at meetings before we went to the floor till he knew *everything* that they knew, and probably even more, too, because he was in touch with all sorts of other people, lobbyists and influential people in the health field. He was friends with all the great doctors.

One of his great colleagues outside the Senate was Mary Lasker, of whom you may have heard. They were friends and political allies. She gave her political money with a cold-blooded eye to results, especially in raising money for the newly growing National Institutes of Health, with which Lister was greatly involved. She'd give money provided the man would say "Yes, I'll vote for any appropriations possible for the NIH." Well, that brought her close to Lister Hill and he could use her influence to assist him in his operations.

He was an extremely skillful legislator. I suspect, without having full knowledge about everybody who served here, that he probably is the greatest single legislator of this century, in terms of volume, in terms of impact, in terms of breadth of interest, and in terms of skill in creating laws. It's hard to create a law. It can take years to enact a new idea. He used to say to me after some meeting where we've made one step, adopted one amendment, or even gotten a quorum, "Well, Stewart, we're on our way!" He *loved* it, the

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process, another step up that ladder. He just got a tremendous thrill out of effecting a change in this place; it's not easy.

He was so skillful in selecting his allies. The famous Hill Burton act, for instance, Hospital Survey and Construction Act. Senator [Harold] Burton, Republican of Ohio, had nothing to do with that bill. In fact, when it was on its way through Congress he went to the Supreme Court. But Hill wanted a Republican name on there, and this was a good one; he was a decent fellow and willing to go along. Later he played the same games with Styles Bridges, and Bridges, of course, was presumably a starch, rigid, conservative Republican. But Hill got him to go on to several big health bills, chronic disease and I've forgotten what else, they're all mentioned in the *Record*.

Like so many good senators, capable senators, he touched all the bases. Before any meeting of a subcommittee or committee he knew where everybody was going to stand on everything. He talked to them on the phone. The meetings may as well not have been held, in a sense, not that they voted on the phone, but the consensus grew and he knew where he was going to land up, and where the pits were and the barricades that had to be surmounted. He had an extraordinarily good intelligence system--staff, other senators, other committee people he'd known for years in the House, and everywhere else plus downtown, HEW. He had extremely good relations with all the

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middle-level bureaucrats who run the programs, the legislative representatives, and so forth.

So he navigated through these choppy waters with great skill and never went aground, never lost. Sometimes he couldn't get a thing through when he wanted to, but that was just because the time wasn't ripe and he hadn't marshaled enough strength, but in the end he won them all. I think he was the greatest legislator, and to me, what an opportunity. I'd been here six years by then but still--working for Senator Gillette was a peripheral thing. Here I was in the heart of the purpose of this institution, passing laws, under the tutorial direction of the greatest of them all. It was a total education. Every time something happened, a new door was opened. Managing the committee, of course, was part of it.

He knew the biographies of every member of the Senate, to the degree he needed to. He knew *everything* about the members of the committee before they even got here. I remember making a fool of myself once when Senator [Claiborne] Pell had just come aboard the committee in '58 I think it was. I jocularly said to Senator Hill, "Well, you've got another Southerner from Rhode Island." And he said, "Oh, you mean Claiborne's Louisiana connections. I know all about that. " Of course he did. And Joe

Clark's Louisiana connections. He had them all. It was just remarkable. He kept that big volume of the annotated biographies of members right behind his desk

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and would pull it down, "When did he get here?" Just had them all fixed in place with relation to him and each other. He was great, too, because he loved what he was doing. He didn't want to go home, or go to Europe, or go back to politick. He wanted to pass laws. This was his heaven on earth.

**RITCHIE:** Was he a particularly demanding person to work for?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, boy! I never worked for a tougher boss. I don't mean he was brutal or anything like that, he was hardly that, but demanding isn't the word for it. I used to write statements and sometimes speeches, as everybody does around here. I remember the first two or three, he kept them for weeks and sent them back all scribbled on: "What do you mean?" and "Where did you get that fact?" Or held call me in and we'd have to go over it; but he used them anyway. Finally I discovered the trick. He was afraid that I had just dictated these speeches to my secretary and never reread them afterwards. That must have happened to him, as it does to many; he was getting fresh copy, and the author, the ghost, hasn't even read the final script, and the senator is going to get up and read it. So I would go through the finished copy with a pen or pencil and make changes, which signaled him that, yes, I'd been over it, and reassured him that at least the ghost knew what he was saying.

Then, of course, as to being demanding, this whole business of preparing to go to the floor, or even to a committee meeting, the

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staff all had to know everything that was going to happen if they could find it out and give him the answers. He had small patience with fools, I would say, but he didn't show it. He was a great gentleman.

**RITCHIE:** You said once at lunch that things changed when you moved from the Capitol to the Dirksen Building, that he was now in the office right next door to you.



**MCCLURE:** Yes, I was about as far from him sitting at my desk as I am from the door to your office over there on the corridor. He had a system of phones. He'd lift one and it would ring on my desk, Jack Forsythe's desk, and the health guy's desk, Bill Reidy and later Bob Barkley. We'd all grab it: "Yes, sir!" And he'd say whoever he wanted to talk to or all of us. "Stewart, come in here!" He was deep South, but he didn't have a drawl. He had a clipped accent. It wasn't "Steewart," it was "St'rt," kind of a bark. There are many Southern accents; his was aristocratic and quite clipped. The vowels were clipped, of course, but he didn't slur or drop consonants. He was an actor, too, as of course, they all are. He had great histrionic gifts. He was an orator before the days when oratory died out around here and they all read their speeches.

Well, these phones would ring and we'd jump, maybe one, two, or three of us, and all I had to do was open my door and walk across and open his. He had the corner office. It was a typical new Senate

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Office Building office: bookcases, carpeting, unopenable windows, big desk, but nothing of the quality and character of those grand old offices in the Russell Building. He didn't want to move over here, but all the committee chairmen--almost all--did, under great pressure, as they are now using, I guess, to get senators to move to the Hart Building, twisting their arms off. I think they all did finally, [Richard] Russell, [Carl] Hayden, I'm not sure about Hayden, he may have stayed in the Capitol. After all, he was president pro tempore.

**RITCHIE:** Did they all take offices next to their committee rooms?

**MCCLURE:** That was the idea. Of course, when there was a change in chairmen that system broke down quickly. But for quite a time the chairmen stayed the same.

**RITCHIE:** Hill was essentially a liberal senator, and yet he represented one of the most conservative states. What kind of problems did that pose for him?

**MCCLURE:** Well, I would amend your question to say: Why did Alabama have such a liberal delegation in the '50s? [John] Sparkman, Carl Elliott, Bob Jones, Albert Rains. There were six members of Congress from Alabama, they were the most liberal delegation of any state in the country. I don't understand it, really, except that at

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the time they were elected, the issues in the South were economic, pulling themselves up, needing federal help, public works, and other things. These men knew how to get it and could work up here effectively. When the race issue arose in virulent form in the '60s they all became vulnerable.

Lister Hill almost lost his election in '62. I think he won by 700 votes or something incredibly close. Sparkman seemed to have survived without difficulty, of course he had a different constituency. Senators have different constituencies in their own states, as you know. Lister Hill's was based on the county judges, his organization. I've forgotten how many there were, ninety or so. And these gentlemen were all young men with him, and all grew old with him, and then they began to die out and the base of his organization began to fritter away. He didn't know the new judges. They at the time had been the political leaders of each county. Sparkman, I don't know what he based his organization on, some other constituency. He's from north Alabama, which is a more liberal area, more modern anyway. So was Elliott, so was Jones, the bloc of congressmen from the northern part of the state were more liberal than the others. So I think that's one explanation. These men were responding to the kind of issues that bothered the people of Alabama after the war, until the race thing came, and then they were not. Now the state is mostly Republican.

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**RITCHIE:** Hill signed the Southern Manifesto against the Supreme Court . . . .

**MCCLURE:** They all did.

**RITCHIE:** Basically came out against Civil Rights legislation, voted against the Act of 1957 . . . .

**MCCLURE:** But if you read his speeches, he never was a racist.

**RITCHIE:** I was wondering if this was basically the bottom line of what he had to do to get elected?

**MCCLURE:** Yes, they all did. [J. William] Fulbright and everybody. They couldn't stand out alone against this pressure. But Hill's proposition was strictly constitutional. He wouldn't let a word of racism appear in his speeches. He didn't wring the damn bloody rag or anything of that sort, whatever the expression is. He never "niggered" or "outsegged" anybody. It was a tragic time for people like Russell. He could have been president, I think, but he was paralyzed. Well, he wasn't paralyzed in the Senate, I don't mean that. But I mean politically, as a potential president.

Lister Hill was considered a presidential candidate in '48, I think, and he was also considered for Majority Leader, and didn't feel he dared take it, even that early. Maybe I'm overstressing whether he dared or not, but anyway he didn't. Well, of course,

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Tennessee had [Albert] Gore and [Estes] Kefauver, and pretty liberal congressmen, but it's still not deep South compared with Alabama, and Mississippi, and Georgia. Yes, I think he had to be much more careful as these years went on. I remember him coming back from the '62 election and talking to me after a meeting. You could see he was shaken, he had just barely squeaked in. I've forgotten his exact words, but their implication was, "Well, from here on you're not going to recognize me in many cases." I knew what he meant.

**RITCHIE:** He changed his voting?

**MCCLURE:** Yes, he had to. He had to be very careful in every bill that was reported out. You remember the Powell amendment that was always raised by Adam Powell, the anti -segregation amendment to any education bill. That was another reason for Lister to stay out of the education field; we'd have to tangle with that issue every time we went to the floor, or to a conference with the House.

**RITCHIE:** I also noted that he didn't seem to be associated with labor issues as much as with medical issues.

**MCCLURE:** No, he was not happy with labor issues. The labor movement in Alabama was not very powerful. There was one, of course, steel workers in Birmingham and other kinds of organized labor, but they were not anything like they are in Northern states; whereas organized business is pretty damn strong. He told me once when

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[A.S.] Monroney was proposing to split the committee into labor and education, two different committees, a reorganization act that never occurred--I broke my neck stopping that one--but Lister didn't give a damn. He was going to retire; this was in '68 I guess. He said, "Well, I never wanted to bother with this labor stuff anyway."

On the other hand, when he first came to the Senate and was in a primary race, the House had passed the Fair Labor Standards bill, and the senators from the South were waiting to see what happened to Lister Hill in this primary because it was an issue there. He had a great line about how he couldn't see why Southern workers shouldn't be just as well paid as workers in the North. He won and, therefore, the senators who wanted to go for the bill but were worried about its popularity in the South went along, too, and it became law. It was that test election that involved him in a labor matter before he even got here.

**RITCHIE:** The most interesting thing about the '50s is that the biggest labor investigation was the McClellan Racketeering Committee . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Sure.

**RITCHIE:** Which had some Labor Committee members on, but McClellan wasn't a Labor Committee member . . . .

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**MCCLURE:** No, there were four from Government Op [Government Operations Committee].

**RITCHIE:** And they got the public attention. I would have thought that the chairman of the Labor Committee would have wanted to be in the limelight on a thing like that, but it was McClellan not Hill who chaired the special committee.

**MCCLURE:** Senator Hill never had any desire to make big splashes and investigations. That was not his style. He was not a prosecutor. He didn't enjoy that kind of stuff, and that's what this was going to be. They were out to get Jimmy Hoffa. We had four members on the committee, [Pat] McNamara was one, I remember, I've forgotten the other three.

**RITCHIE:** Kennedy and Goldwater were on, I know.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, but there were four, and who the fourth one was I don't remember. But, of course, the results of the McClellan investigation ended up with Landrum-Griffin, and that we did handle. Just as an aside, in '56 or something, Senator Jack Kennedy was a member of the committee and Bill Reidy, who was our health man, and I, and Charlie Brewton, who was Lister's AA, got very interested in the problems of the aging, as a political question. We got Wilbur Cohen who was then I think at the University of Michigan --remember he was one of the founders of the Social Security System and was

later Secretary

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of HEW, a great man, terrific person--to conduct a survey of the literature on the aging, gerontology and geriatrics and everything else involved. We published a bunch of volumes on it, and Senator Hill created a special subcommittee on aging with Pat McNamara, who was the oldest man on the committee as chairman. McNamara really wasn't much interested in being a senator; he just went through here kind of putting up with it, but he liked this subject and worked on it.

But before Senator Hill appointed him, he asked us to suggest some other senators who might be interested. We all said Jack Kennedy; he's the youngest member, and an enormous percentage of the people in Massachusetts and New England generally are older, older than the rest of the population. I mean, the proportion is greater in New England, except in Iowa. Maybe California and Florida now, but in those days it made sense politically, and it was a beautiful issue; he couldn't get hurt doing it. So Bill and I went to see Ted Sorenson, who was Kennedy's legislative aide, and we laid it out, the great prospects for this young man. I'll never forget Sorenson saying, with a grimness in his voice: "Senator Kennedy will never be interested in the problems of the aging. Thank you very much." Of course, the election of 1960 involved just that question, to a large extent. And then Kennedy wound up as chairman of the Labor Subcommittee and had to have all this awful Landrum-Griffin stuff. I didn't think Sorenson advised him wisely at that time. Because

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McNamara would have ended up with Labor; in fact he did ultimately. Ah, that was funny!

**RITCHIE:** Was there much interaction between the staff of the committee and the staff of senators who were members?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, absolutely. I made it a point, and I think most of them did, too, to become very good friends with every administrative assistant, and every legislative assistant, and secretary if possible. All of them in Democratic offices and the top guys in the Republican offices, too. Sure, and that went for the minority staff also. We were always close. We fought like demons on issues but we were friends and there was none of that knifing that can go on when staffs are not collaborating. But I think Senator

Hill just set the tone or the atmosphere of it, to do things and not fight with each other.

I remember the very first evidence of that was after I'd been named staff director. Bill Reidy had been there quite a long time and he was a professional staff member. He became furious and went to see the chairman and said, "That job is called chief clerk, and I don't want Stewart McClure to be directing me as the staff director." So Senator Hill called me in and told me this. I said, "Well it doesn't make any difference to me what the title is, Senator, chief clerk is the official title anyway, let's make me chief clerk." Well, that settled that, but I could see that he didn't want

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any of this silly internecine backbiting and so forth. Of course there was some later, but not then. And that's the way he operated generally. I made it a point to know everybody whom I could possibly have need to call on. You see, I had to poll the committee frequently when they broke up before a final vote. I had to know whom to call and how to get him to act. Many of them would act on my say so, or I'd say, "Senator Hill wants this." "Oh, well, sure."

**RITCHIE:** Would you deal with the senator or with the senator's assistant?

**MCCLURE:** No, I tried to be as anonymous as possible. Some staff people spend a lot of time currying favor with senators, becoming pals with them. I didn't feel that was really my role. That was Senator Hill's role. My job was to work with the staff. Of course, if Senator Hill said "Please go ask Senator [Jennings] Randolph something, I naturally did it. But normally it was done on two levels. Of course, it made the staff members of the senators happy because they knew what was going on. There's nothing worse than to have your senator taking a position that you didn't know he was going to take, because he talked to somebody on the staff of a committee. That's not good. You can't win just one battle here, you might lose seven others right afterwards.

**RITCHIE:** In the '50s, when you started out, the Congress was for the most part controlled by the Democrats, with the exception of

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the 83rd, at least the whole time you were on the Labor Committee staff the Democrats were in the

majority. But the administration was Republican . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Yes, until Kennedy.

**RITCHIE:** Did that make the committee more independent? What were the relations between the Democratic Labor Committee and the Republican administration?

**MCCLURE:** Well, of course it varied with the secretaries of Labor and HEW, in the case of our committee. Senator Hill always tried to be collaborative with who were they; Jim Mitchell in the Labor Department, Folsom, and Mrs. Hobby--that was a little more difficult. But on the working level, below the secretary and assistant secretary level, unless there was such a deep policy split that the guys downtown couldn't open their mouths, or we didn't want to tell them something, we worked pretty well with them, on a great many bills, health bills especially. When we were doing something about extending and improving the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Labor Department lent us a specialist, a technical guy who worked on it. And they would supply any kind of information. There was almost never any hiding--well, it had nothing to do with national security, you know, and we weren't dealing with hypersensitive issues, though some of them were politically sensitive. Other staff men may have had different relations than I did.

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I didn't like their policies frequently, but the people we were dealing with were after all mostly bureaucrats who had been here and would be here, and they did their very best to supply whatever we wanted. There was a famous guy in the Education Office, called Lilly-white, he knew all about the most abstruse education law there is: impacted aid. That's legislation that grants federal funds to districts where there are military installations and defense plants that sop up some of the taxable property. There are different categories of children, and--oh, it was just a madhouse. But old Lilly-white knew it cold. He could lead us through this minefield, and there were guys like that in many sections, Food and Drug and other mysterious places--we handled that, of course. You can get lost in technicalities there.

I think the only time we had real trouble, and it wasn't due to the Democrats, was a bill involving federal mine safety standards. Senator Joseph Clark, coming from Pennsylvania, was promoting a strengthening of the safety precautions, but [John Sherman] Cooper, who was from Kentucky and who was on the committee as a Republican, rose in defense of the eastern Kentucky small mine operators who can't afford any kind of safety provisions. They dig a hole in the side of a mountain and maybe have five employees, and their mines are always collapsing and it's a terribly dangerous kind of work. But to bring them under federal regulation, Cooper claimed, would just put them all out of business.

They couldn't possibly install all the

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timbers and gas gauges and everything else. So he put up a fabulous struggle, and of course the great John L. Lewis was still around and the mine workers were banging all the doors. Alabama had a lot of coal mines, too, so we had lots of pressure from them, and West Virginia, and so forth. Well, we had hearings and the Coal Mine Safety Board was resistant to this. We didn't need any more regulations was the line of the administration. They didn't want deregulation, they just didn't want any more.

Cooper prevailed on Senator Hill as chairman of the full committee to have the head of the Mine Safety Board come up and "give us the facts." Boy, it was like pulling teeth. He just was so resistant--he was under orders in effect not to talk, and so were his staff. So finally the committee dismissed him because they were just getting nothing and Cooper was at his wits' end because the Democrats had the votes and were going to report it. It was late in the session. So the old fox pulled out a bunch of handwritten amendments, in ink, and spread them in front of him, and then knocked over the water pitcher. That was the end of the meeting! They couldn't proceed. I loved that.

But that was a case where the administration would not get involved. The same thing happened later with black lung. They were very resistant to make payments for that dreadful disease. But they finally gave in. I think you get these conflicts where powerful

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business interests have a lock on some aspect of the Department in question, or powerful medical interests such as the AMA [American Medical Association] or a hospital association. Then the administration, a Republican administration particularly, can become very sticky because they're under the gun from the people who paid for the election. I'd have to really reflect to give you more on it than I have.

**RITCHIE:** Well you have a conservative Republican administration, and a relatively liberal Senate. What about the House? How did they figure into the equation when you were pushing new legislation? Did you have to assume that the House was going to be more conservative and dug-in on these issues?



**MCCLURE:** Yes, indeed. The chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor was Graham Barden of North Carolina, a tough, thick-necked, immutable, immoveable, rock-ribbed chairman. He wanted to repeal the Fair Labor Standards Act for the textile mills down there; he didn't want to increase the minimum wage, he wanted to abolish it, and as for additional coverage he was for repealing it back to nothing. Well, he was chairman of the House committee, which meant that he was in charge of education, too. And he wasn't in favor of federal aid to school construction or teachers' salaries or anything like that. It was just pulling teeth to get anything through there during the 150s. Of course he had allies on his

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committee, he wasn't alone, and the majority of them were liberals but they couldn't do a damn thing--except be obstreperous like Adam Powell with his damn amendment.

But there were good men and now [Carl] Perkins is a great chairman. I think Powell was a good chairman, too, before he went fluttering around Bimini. We dealt with the Commerce Committee on health matters, which of course is a different kind of constituency all together, different issues. There is no anti-veterans lobby. There are different positions within the organizations, but if you wanted to approve a veterans bill or act you didn't have to fight the NAM [National Association of Manufacturers] or something to do it. You might have to fight the Treasury Department over money. I think the chairman of that at the time was this fellow from Texas who later became chairman of the Science Committee, Olin Teague. He and Hill were old friends; Hill knew him in the House. So we'd have a conference that was like taffy-pulling. I mean, just fun.

But Hill had a bit of trouble with the House Commerce Committee under Oren Harris, even though everything went through the Senate smooth as glass. Especially in conferences--of course, House members come to conferences so damn well prepared, they have no other committees. Senators come staggering out of one committee and go into a conference and then back to the floor, and it's very hard to educate them. Well, if you've ever been in a conference you know that the

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senators are one or two and everybody on the House side is there. They require a quorum of the conferees on the House side. And do they hate it, to sit there twelve of them looking at one senator,

who speaks for the whole United States Senate!

Of course, once a bill did come over from the House it had gone through the fires of Hell and we didn't have too much trouble with it. I mean, they were generally bills that we favored anyway, but never could get through ourselves coming from the Senate side. But once it got passed the House, then it was probably going to become law. Well, all that changed with the departure of Barden and the accession of Lyndon [Johnson] to the White House. Then we galloped into the War on Poverty and the Great Society. I had never seen so much activity in my life around here! We were passing major bills every week. It was unbelievable. Just a great dam broke. Everything but national health insurance, everything that had been piled up since Truman plus a lot of new stuff. Jesus, it was fun!

**RITCHIE:** Before we talk about Johnson as president, could you talk a little about him as majority leader? What kind of dealings did you and the committee have with him in those days?

**MCCLURE:** Well, I had very few dealings with him. He was a tiger up here, there's no question about it. All in great friendliness and rubbing of the shoulders and pumping of the hands; he was a tough man of steel . When he wanted action it generally took

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place. He had a technique he used once or twice. He had Bobby Baker invite all the staff directors over for coffee in a room in the Capitol and then he came in and massaged us, about how important we were and how we could go back and get our chairmen cracking and get those bills out of committee. We were all wagging our heads. How did he think we could do it if he couldn't? It was sort of amusing. He went to any length, in other words to get something moving. Of course, he had the best intelligence system: Bobby Baker knew what the vote was going to be every time. He had a head counter par excellence, so there weren't too many surprises when a bill was going to come up.

I used to watch him on the floor, pacing around like a panther and being frustrated and going over and rubbing some senator to try and get him to do something. Worked at it indefatigably. Johnson worked all the time. His staff never got any sleep. He was a powerhouse. I think a lot of people were scared of him, I mean the members, because he controlled a lot of money in election time. While I don't go for Robert Caro's book [*The Path To Power*] wholeheartedly, I do believe it's true that he used Texas oil money to help Democrats get elected and then they were beholden to him thereafter. Now, of course, that didn't affect Lister Hill--he didn't need a nickel. But some of them did.

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I never heard Senator Hill refer to Lyndon in any way except "the Majority Leader." I don't know what he thought of him. He dealt with him, of course, as the leader; actually he had been here considerably longer. In fact, it would be hard to tell you what Lister Hill thought of most of them. He was like Gillette that way.

**RITCHIE:** You once mentioned Johnson talking about Paul Douglas, what was that quote?

**MCCLURE:** He said Douglas was probably back in his office "writhing around on his couch like Mossadegh."

**RITCHIE:** In what circumstances was Johnson referring to Douglas that way?

**MCCLURE:** It must have been in response to "Where's Douglas?" Probably at a meeting, or maybe he was needed on the floor. I don't know how it occurred, but I remember I'd just been over in Douglas' office at a meeting on what became the Area Development Act, which Douglas had dreamed up, and he was writhing around on his leather couch! He had dengue fever from the South Pacific; he was in agony most of his life up here. As with Jack Kennedy, a number of members were dying of pain most of the time. Teddy Kennedy, same thing. You wonder how they function, especially with back problems.

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**RITCHIE:** You mentioned before about Pat McNamara not wanting to be a senator and just passing through. Did you have problems with senators who really didn't carry their weight in the committee?

**MCCLURE:** There was always a problem with the quorum. Lister Hill would get mad; he would yell "Get on the horn and get those people over here, Stewart." Well, what can you do? I'd call and call and call. Where is he? Send out scouts. But they were spread too thin. They were in some meeting where they were really needed, or they had an amendment up, or something. They weren't taking the afternoon off, these were busy men. It was very hard, still is hard to get a quorum. Of course, they fixed that rule a little so you could go on past noon. But I don't recall any problem within the committee, except the quorum problem. All the Democrats had subcommittee chairmanships at the end, every one of them. So they had responsibilities; bills were referred to them by letter from the chairman; they would

find out if he really wanted them to act on it (he wouldn't even refer it if he didn't, usually, or unless they requested it--he never sat on legislation even though he was horrified by some of the things that went on).

But I don't know, I don't recall any Democratic senators who didn't perform. Now what their private notions of being senators were, I don't know. Joe Clark was very unhappy with the Senate and wrote a book about it, and made himself most unpopular. McNamara

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just--he never thought that being a senator was very important. I think he thought the school board of Detroit was a much better place to be. You'd see him sitting over in the lobby on the couch, talking to anybody who came by and cracking jokes. He'd make some remark, "Is that jerk still talking in there?" He was pretty crude in his private speech, but a loveable guy, a lot of fun.

**RITCHIE:** The two senators who seemed to vote against everything in the committee in those days were Barry Goldwater and Strom Thurmond. It seemed as if the Labor Committee was one that liberal senators gravitated towards . . . .

**MCCLURE:** They were assigned to it.

**RITCHIE:** I see, was that to keep them out of other committees?

**MCCLURE:** Yes. Put them all in one bag and then try to defeat anything they came out with.

**RITCHIE:** Was that a decision on the part of . . . .

**MCCLURE:** The leadership.

**RITCHIE:** But Hill was a part of the "Inner Club," wasn't he?

**MCCLURE:** Yes, but he couldn't control that process. Some of them wanted to be on it very much, but some of them didn't. I'll never forget I went to Senator Joe Clark when he was first

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appointed. I walked into his office--he had stripped it of all senatorial equipment, and had nothing but his own fancy stuff from Philadelphia, modern tube furniture and all that. It looked like a lawyer's office in Philadelphia. He said, "Stewart, I want you to understand one thing: I didn't want to come on this committee, and I'm going to get off it the first opportunity I have." I said, "You want me to tell Senator Hill that, sir?" That stopped him. I never did.

We talked a while and I said, "Well Senator, if something should come up around here that I think you might be interested in, that would make this a more attractive place to you, may I bring it to your attention?" "Oh," he said, "of course, Stewart." Well, in due course something did, the manpower question. He got a Subcommittee on Manpower Employment and ran a long way with it. Did a lot of good with it, I think, and when the time came when he had to leave one committee to get on Foreign Relations, he left Banking, he didn't leave Labor. I mentioned that to him once later. He pretended not to know what I was talking about. He was the only one I ever heard *say* it like that.

Thurmond got off as soon as he could, too, and then became a Republican anyway. He was a real problem because we had seven Democratic members, in the old days, seven to six, and he would flip over, switch, and Goldwater of course was riveted in the country club

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philosophy that is now riveted in the White House. He just wouldn't do anything. He had a very able committee counsel, Mike Bernstein, who was as conservative as he was, and who fed him bile and brimstone every day. Goldwater was a very decent fellow basically, but his ideas were antediluvian. Then we had George Murphy for a while; that was funny. The movie actor--boy was he out of his depth! I expected him to break into a tap dance or something. He was very popular, and all the staff who loved his movies loved him. He didn't do anything for or against. I don't think he ever offered a bill or an amendment or anything. Flitted his way through. Funny, funny, funny.

We had [Everett] Dirksen for a while. When he was minority leader he would give new Republicans breaks on committees. He didn't give a damn what committee he was on; he was minority leader anyway. So held leave his seniority positions, and he went on Labor at one point. He was a tough customer but a joy to be with, too. His techniques of combat in committee were something. One time there was a bill reported from Kennedy's Labor Subcommittee involving the prohibition on secondary boycott in Taft-Hartley, which labor unions had been fighting for centuries ever since Taft-Hartley. It had gotten out of subcommittee and Dirksen was determined to stop it. We still had the twelve o'clock rule. When the Senate went in, we had to break up. So he was very late getting there anyway. The

Republicans

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refused to make a quorum until the last Democrat came to make the quorum, and then they came in.

Dirksen came in with a stack of books about this high, hearings from the Judiciary Committee, which he put on the desk. Kennedy's face fell. After the preliminaries, Kennedy made his pitch for the bill, and then Hill recognized Dirksen, who had asked him to do so. Dirksen said, "Well, we've been considering legislation in the Judiciary Committee that has a bearing on this legislation, particularly as it affects the Northwestern Railway. I have here a history of the Northwestern Railway, which I want to place in this record, if the chairman will permit." And he read the history of the Northwestern Railway till noon. The bell rang and we broke up. Oh, God! Kennedy was laughing and everybody was broken up, it was just a preposterous business. "Then in 1864 . . ." you know. God, he was funny. But they all had to use what weapons they could, and the quorum game was the biggest one.

**RITCHIE:** So the quorum problem wasn't just that members were busy, but it was often deliberate.

**MCCLURE:** On this kind of thing it was used politically, sure.

**RITCHIE:** The minority members could use it to their advantage, knowing that the majority might not all be there.

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**MCCLURE:** That's right. Well, they had a scout watching. Of course the quorum changes with the size of the subcommittee or committee, and when the proper number of Democrats were in the room then the Republicans would arrive, or some of them. And sometimes not enough Democrats came, and you quit, particularly in the beginning when it was seven to six. Later when we had as many as ten Democrats to seven Republicans, or nine to six--well it varied from Congress to Congress--when we had a two or three man majority then the minority couldn't do much.

**RITCHIE:** I would assume that you saw a lot of lobbyists in those days.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, sure. They didn't come to me as much as they did to the professional staff. They came to me about scheduling hearings or just on a scouting mission, but they didn't lobby me in the true sense. They knew I wasn't transporting such information to Lister Hill anyway, or to the chairmen of the subcommittees. The staffs of those units were doing that.

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End of Interview #3

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## 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.

**ITCHIE:** 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:



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

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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## LIFE ON THE SENATE STAFF

### Interview #5

Tuesday, March 1, 1983

**MCCLURE:** I'd like to talk, off-the-record at least, about some of the internal life of the staff serving under Senator Hill. To start with, Senator Hill, it turned out, had a passion for gossip and for prodding a staff member to say something about another staff person, something unfavorable. I suppose it was one method of running an intelligence operation. He'd make his own observations, and then try to see if somebody else saw the same thing. But the net result was that certain staff people took advantage of this, to the detriment of others, naturally.

I first observed this when we were having staff meetings, way back in 1955, in Senator Hill's office over in the old building, at which would be present Bill Reidy, our health man, Jack Forsythe, the counsel, and I, plus Charlie Brewton, administrative assistant, and quite often Donald Cronin, who was a lesser member of Senator Hill's personal staff at the time. I'm not sure what his role was; I know he drove the senator to work and drove him home--which incidentally is a way to provide the opening and closing of the senator's day with your own input, so to speak. It's a very useful way for underlings to--to use a phrase from Broadway-- "ace" themselves in with their bosses, if they are so inclined. Anyway, Charlie, had really been

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responsible for my job, in having Lister Hill hire me, and in addition we were very close friends, outside the Senate as well as in.

Charlie was a great idea man. He came up with new schemes all the time, things for the committee to do, some things the senator ought to do. We'd talk about some of these, as well as about the business of the committee. And I noticed that Don Cronin was seeming to take a protective position with respect to the chairman, saying, "Well, Senator, wouldn't that cause some difficulties in Alabama?" He was positioning himself to defend the senator against these wild ideas we were tossing around. It always brought us up short, because Lister Hill, we thought, was perfectly capable of defending himself. If he didn't know what his own political situation in Alabama was, then nobody did.

**RITCHIE:** Was Cronin from Alabama?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, yes, graduate of the University of Alabama Law School, at least. I don't know whether he went to college. Well, so was Charlie a graduate, I think, of Alabama Law. Anyway, this situation prevailed for quite a few months and each time it got a little more obvious. Charlie would get very annoyed. He was making a presentation and suddenly it was being torpedoed. And then I noticed that Jack Forsythe was beginning to agree with Cronin. "Yes, Senator, there is a risk here. You know,

the race question down

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there. " Of course, Forsythe was not from Alabama, but he had been born in Virginia and his father was a newspaper publisher, I think, in a little town in North Carolina, so he could claim Southern covering.

From the beginning--I should go back--Bill Reidy, John Forsythe and I would say, "Look, there are three of us. The chairman is going to talk to us separately. We'll never be able to function if we don't tell each other everything he says to each of us individually." And we thought that was what was going to happen, but it turned out that in some of these meetings we'd all start to file out and then Forsythe would say, "Just a minute, Senator, I have something I must tell you." Then Bill and I would walk out. What was he telling him? We never found out, nor what the senator said in return. What was all this mystery? So Cronin and Forsythe found a sort of common bond. They were the same type of people. Certainly Forsythe was extremely capable as a lawyer, but he had this sense of intrigue, this whispering behind the hand, and he always had "something he picked up in the House," where he had worked, that he wanted to share with the senator--and it was certainly not for our innocent ears. Well, this was very aggravating, and Bill and I realized that our little threesome had become a dead duck. So Bill and I shared everything, but we didn't share much with Forsythe anymore because we didn't trust him.

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Well, Cronin really got under Charlie's skin. Charlie was a sensitive guy. He was a victim of polio: had a huge frame from waist up, but wasted legs and braces on the knees. He rolled around. He had a huge head and a brilliant mind, but he was wasted from the hips down. But he went on anyway. He had been a lawyer in the Justice Department. He didn't let his infirmity hold him back at all. In fact, it may have goaded him to greater achievements than he would otherwise have made. But Charlie began taking to drink. Oh, everybody drank a couple of drinks after work, that was standard practice, gathering in somebody's office and having a shot or two before going home. But Charlie wound up going deeper and deeper. Of course, this afforded Cronin another whip, or another chance for knifing.

But the ultimate, I think, in my experience around here was--Charlie told me this one day--the senator called him in and said, "Charlie, where are those letters I sent down to your shop to be answered?" Charlie had a room down the hall from the main office. Charlie said, "Well, what letters, Senator? I answered all the letters I got." "Well, I gave them to Don three days ago and he sent them through, I'm sure." Yes, he did send them through to Charlie's in-box, but then at night he took them out. As far as we could determine that's what happened, because the letters disappeared, after having been delivered to his desk by some clerk. Well, Charlie just was finished by then. The senator was believing Donald on

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everything, and now Donald was putting Charlie in these hideous situations. He was going to be driven out of there, no question about it, and he knew nothing could be worse for a man than to be an administrative assistant to a top senator and then be fired.

Well, during a previous session--it's hard for me to remember which year it was, '57 or '58--the Senate had passed a bill reported from our committee creating a commission on mental health and illness to determine what to do about mental treatment, insane asylums, and related matters. It was composed of many brilliant doctors, medical administrators, and health people. It was established in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under a doctor whose name I don't recall, who was a very close friend of the senator's--as many doctors were. So Bill Reidy, who had worked on this bill, called the head of the commission and persuaded him to hire Charlie as his assistant and fund-raiser in order to make this commission a success, because it depended on private contributions that would be matched by federally funded money. That rescued Charlie. He went to Cambridge with his family. There he was with his terrific Southern accent functioning with Cambridge dons! He made a great success of it and they raised all the money they needed. He went to AA and sobered up--he became a religious AA, believed God was personally watching over him; well, that was great.

The cabal had gotten rid of Charlie Brewton, and guess who became administrative assistant: Donald Cronin. So, I no longer had

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a pal at the top of Senator Hill's office. His second man, John Campbell, was a darling guy, friend of mine, but he had no real authority in the shop; good number two man. Well then, at meetings and in other ways we discovered that Bill Reidy was the next target. Bill was undoubtedly the best authority on health legislation who ever existed. Held started on the Hill with Senator James Murray of Montana, with the Murray-Wagner-Dingell bill in the '40s, which was the first national health insurance bill. Held been in the Farm Security Administration in California during the Depression, when they had had national health insurance and all kinds of programs that died with the war. But Bill was brash. He was born in Harlem, and Irish guy from Harlem, New York. Tough, always said what he thought, usually it was right. Swore a lot and drank a lot. Well, Lister Hill didn't like people around him who drank much so that was a bad point against Bill, but it never affected his work. In fact, he wrote his best speeches when he was potted. His Irish imagination could just flow with a couple of shots of whiskey or more.

So the schemes began--I don't remember the exact technique, but it was based on needling, and they got the senator moved around so he was needling in a kind of arch way, "Well, Bill, feel up to coming in today" kind of thing. Bill and I read those signs very clearly. Fortunately, Senator Murray was still alive and chairman of the Interior Committee. Charlie Murray, his son, was his administrative assistant, and, as I may have said, was really in effect the senator

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in the last years. So Bill moved over to the Interior Committee at the end of November 1959. They had gotten rid of him. I could see no reason to any of this. I mean, Bill was doing a magnificent job. Charlie had been doing a magnificent job. What was the point of driving these good people out? Cronin wanted Brewton's job, of course, but he didn't want Bill's job, and certainly Jack didn't. It really made no sense. It was just feeding this unhappy tendency of Lister Hill to listen to poor-mouthing and bad-mouthing of other staff people.

Well, here I was. We brought on a new health guy, Bob Barkley, and Cronin became AA. All my pals, original friends and colleagues in the Hill entourage, were gone, except Fred Blackwell. Well, along came the NDEA, we've gone through that. It was a great success, it still is on the books. In fact student loans are a big issue right now. Anyway, it was a triumph for Lister Hill because he had put an education bill through without the race issue torpedoing it, or his being blackened by it. I had worked my tail off, but as time went on, as so often happens in legislation, the idea man is shunted aside and the lawyers take over, to help get the text right--well, I fully agree with that, that's why we have a legislative counsel. But the smart operator who's a lawyer can just shunt aside professional staff people right and left, "Well, sure it's a great idea Senator, but you can't do it because of Section 6 of Title 10 and stuff, stuff, stuff, stuff . . . ." which poor professional staff members never had

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time to learn. So the bill was--well, I won't say drastically modified--but a lot of directions changed and ideas were left out as Forsythe and the lawyers went to work on it; some of them I think were necessary, politically, but some of them weren't.

Anyway, I was very pleased that it was passed, and thought it was a great achievement; it was. I was proud to have had a big part in starting it, and managing it up to the last few months. It became law in the autumn of '58 and we moved over to the new building in early '59. We had this new intercom system of telephones that rang when the senator lifted his. Well, in early 1960 the phone would ring. I'd pick up. Jack would. Bob would. "Bob, Jack, come in here." This went on for a couple of weeks, I was not summoned. So I thought, "Well, they're targeting me, there's no question about it." But I had to see the chairman because there were vouchers to sign, letters to sign, and all sorts of committee business that had to be carried on, but that was the limit of it. I would have to ask to see him and wait my turn, and was in and out, bip, bip, no chit-chat, no sitting around and gassing as we sometimes had. I was on a blacklist, right on top of having contributed to Hill's triumph! It was terrible.

Well, I had a boy in college and a girl in private school, I didn't have a very big salary, and I couldn't afford to lose that job. Furthermore, who wants to be a chief clerk fired by Lister

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Hill? Where do you get a job? It would have been bad. So I said, well, they're not going to get me. I'm going to do my job so damn well that there can be no possible criticism of the thing I'm paid to do, but I can't have any in-put in any other kind of activity or legislative program. So I just put my head down. From 1959 to 1963 the only connection I had with Lister Hill was signing of papers and getting staff appointments cleared, making arrangements, payrolls, and the usual administrative stuff. It was unbelievable. It went on almost to the end of '63. Weird business.

There had been one moment in about '61 when this pattern changed briefly. This is a story in itself. I've written a five-page memo on it, and I might even include it in the record, but briefly. I was having lunch with Maurice Rosenblatt down at this old fish restaurant that used to be next to the Commodore Hotel, Wearley's--a great place. Lister Hill used to go there to lunch on Saturday and have his one public Manhattan, and his one luncheon off the Hill, as a matter of fact, per week. This time Cronin was with him and they sat in the back. As they were leaving they stopped at our table. He knew Maurice and somebody else who was with us. Senator Hill said, "St'rt, what are we going to do about this U.N. business?" Well, I knew what he meant; the right-wing was making a great effort to get us out of the U.N. There was a resolution pending and they had stirred up a huge public furor. Senator John Sparkman, as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee had somehow been assigned the

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position of defending the U.N. He as getting all kinds of brickbats and garbage slung at him from Alabama and elsewhere, and it was falling over on Lister, his colleague. Now here was my chairman asking me, "What are we going to do about stopping this mania, this mail, and these crazy people who are trying to wreck our foreign police?" I said, "Well, frankly Senator, I haven't given it too much thought, but if you wish I will." He said, "Yes, bring me a memo on Monday."

I'm foreshortening this, but anyway, I dashed back to the office and told Marjorie Whittaker, my secretary, we're going to work all weekend, and got a hold of Charlie Brewton, who was then working for President Kennedy in the Office of Emergency Preparedness. "Charlie," I said, "this is it. They're going to get me now if I don't produce on this one." It was an impossible task, or one of the more, I thought. I said, "You're from Alabama, that's why I'm calling you, what can we cook up that would shut this stuff down?" Well, the long and short of it was, by noon Sunday we had a scheme, which involved having the president appoint Mrs. Kennedy as chairwoman of a Women's American Peace Movement for the U.N. and calling on everybody, Republican and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, in the name of womanhood and peace, and so forth. We had a grand idea, we thought.

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By God, at ten o'clock in the morning on Monday the phone rang, "St'rt, you got that memorandum?" "Yes, sir, I'll bring it right in." It wasn't too long, of course, and he read it over. Cronin was there. The senator said, "My God, that might just do it, seriously, it might just do it." Most of the Kennedy's weren't liked in Alabama, but Mrs. Kennedy was. She was a charming lady, she'd done nice things for the White House, they had no hatred for her. He said, "Well, how do you think we can get it done?" I said, "Well, I've thought of that, too. A couple of months ago, Bobby Kennedy, then Attorney General, had a bunch of us down to his office, and he talked about his job and what he was doing and so on. He said, 'Now, listen, guys, when you get back up there, anytime you have an idea you think will be helpful to the president or me, call me up.'" So I said to Senator Hill, "I think I can go to Bobby Kennedy on that basis at least. It has to be done within the family anyway, and he's the one who can go into the president's office with it. So I think the doors are partly open." But I said, "I think I'll need a letter from you to the Attorney General. I just can't walk in; I work for you. I can't go floating around with ideas for Mrs. Kennedy." He said, "Write up a letter, but you sign it." I said, "Well that won't do any good." He said, "Well, you can indicate that you're doing it on my authorization." Or I thought he said something like that. Well, he had to, how could I proceed this other way? So off went a

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letter with something in it about Lister Hill, indicating that he wasn't opposed.

Bobby had a guy named John Seigenthaler, former editor of the Nashville, Tennessee *Tennessean*--he's still around, very bright guy--as his administrative assistant. So I called him a day after I sent Bobby the letter. He said, "Yeah, I got the letter, come in and see me." So off I went. The letter enclosed the proposal that I had given to Hill. It was just about the same language but turned around as a proposal to the Attorney General to take to his brother. Well, Siegenthaler said, "I like this. Unfortunately the Attorney General is going to Indonesia in two days. I don't know whether I can catch him to read it." He said, "But he's coming in from Virginia for a big State Department briefing in about an hour and maybe I can catch him in between." So he said, "I'll call you." In a few hours he called back and said, "Yep, Bobby thought it was great and is taking it to the White House." By then I was in seventh heaven. I called up Lister Hill right away and said, "It's moving." Oh, yes, and Siegenthaler called the next day and said, "It's on the president's desk." Evelyn Lincoln had taken it in.

The next day I got a preemptory call from the chairman, "St'rt, come in here!" There was Don Cronin, and he had shot me down this time. Here's how he'd done it: held persuaded Lister Hill that the mention of his name in a memorandum to the Kennedy's would be leaked

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to Drew Pearson, and the Southerners would realize that Hill secretly was a supporter of the Kennedy's and that this would not only do him in but shoot the whole project down. I said, "Senator,



there was certainly no intention on any of our parts to have this happen. You read the letter. You read the letter, Don. What is this all about?" "Well, we've had second thoughts," meaning Don had been needling him, probably called a couple of editors in Alabama and had them squawk. Well, I was just shattered. What in the hell can I do about it? It's on the president's desk, with that paragraph in it! He said, "Get it back." Get it back?! How do you get a letter off the president's desk?! He said, "I'm sure you'll find a way, Stewart, you better had."

Well, old friendships come to mind in critical times and Mike Manatos, White House liaison with the Senate, had been on the Hill and had been administrative assistant to Senator Lester Hunt from Wyoming, who shot himself in his office for reasons we won't go into having to do with Joe McCarthy and Styles Bridges. But anyway, Mike found the body and we who were nearby in the hall heard the tumult, and did what we could--awful time. Mike now was Kennedy's man for the Senate. So we met in Majority Leader Mansfield's office and I told him the story. I said, "You've got to get that thing back. The senator has agreed to let it go through if we just take off that bottom paragraph. I'll get it retyped, clear it with him, and bring it to you, and you can put it back on the president's desk. Can you

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do this? He said, "We'll just see." He called up Evelyn Lincoln and said, "By the way, there's a mistake in that letter transmitted from Bobby; would you send it back and we'll fix it up?" Well, she hadn't read it and Mike Manatos was of Senate origin, so back it came. And on it, in bold writing: "I think this is terrific!" signed Bobby.

So, we kept the first page and retyped the last one, leaving out the heinous paragraph. Then I walked into Hill's office, took the original last page, and tore it into small pieces right in front of him, threw it in his waste basket, and handed him the revised one. He approved it, I took it back to Mike and down it went to the White House. I went over to the floor to report that the transaction was complete so far as this end was concerned. And Senator Hill sat me down on the couch, put his arm around me, banged my leg, and said, "St'rt, boy, I can't tell you how glad I am you did it. Can't tell you how glad I am, boy, you did it!" He'd gotten off Cronin's hook. He didn't want to fire me, or do anything to me. But still that didn't really change anything in my position. By then Cronin was so furious at me, he was absolutely determined to put me out of business. He must have done something else in the Hill office because the old pattern resumed: I was the technical guy who brought in the payroll, until a couple of weeks after the Kennedy assassination. Oh, by the way, what happened to the memo? It was sent to the State Department of all places; and Fred Dutton who was there had it; he was passing it around, and showed it to Senator Goldwater's

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administrative assistant of all people, who happened to be a friend of his. Well, of course, nothing came

of the whole idea. How could Fred Dutton talk to Mrs. Kennedy? The whole thing had gotten sidetracked. Well, anyway, the U.N. is still there and everything is all right.

Jack Kennedy, the poor devil, had been murdered, and the Senate was having eulogies on December 3rd or 4th, and we were in conference with the House on a health bill, in EF-100, you know, that funny little place in the Capitol with a Roman bath outside. The conference broke up for the House members to caucus, and Hill and a couple of other senators and I and Forsythe were walking around out in the Roman bath. Suddenly I heard a voice: "St'rt, come over here, I want to talk to you!" "Yes, sir." He told me, "I'm facing a hard one. They're having a eulogy for President Kennedy, about a week away, and I don't know anybody who can write that speech for me but you. Do it. I want a first draft Monday," which was two or three days off, no time at all. I said, "Have you any idea what you'd like to say?" He said, "Well, he was a member of my committee for years, chairman of an important subcommittee of my committee. On the other hand, he's hated in my state and I can't say anything that will offend them. We've got to walk between these two things: my duty to say something appropriate that will not stir up great trouble." I said, "Well, what's Kennedy done recently that's so great?" There was that limitation on the use of atomic weapons in space, remember

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that treaty that the Russians and we agreed not to fire off bombs in the sky? It was the one disarmament step, I suppose you would call it, that Kennedy managed to take. So Hill said, "Yes sir. Man of Peace. Kennedy, Man of Peace, that will be the theme." OK, it could be done. Nobody could take that away from Kennedy, or from Hill for saying it.

Again my old pal Charlie Brewton came into the picture. By then he had come back to the Senate and was working for John Sparkman as general counsel to the Defense Production Subcommittee. That must have been a strange relationship between Senator Sparkman and Hill with Charlie Brewton around, but it seemed to have worked. I never heard any echoes of it. So I said, "Charlie, here's what the senator has handed to me this time. Man of Peace, hmmm." Well, we knew how to use all those words. We drummed up Marjorie for the weekend and off we went. On the way through the first or second draft, Charlie said, "You know, there is something else that would tickle the senator, and it can't hurt him in Alabama and which I think he probably thinks could properly be said about Kennedy." Lister Hill, if anything, is in pursuit of excellence in whatever he does. And President Kennedy reflected in some ways that same spirit. He liked the brightest boys around him, he liked the best ideas. He wanted no shoddy workmanship, no cheap machinery, no falling apart of the works. He truly, I thought, sought excellence. Well, we worked that in, too.

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It was a short thing, five or six pages. We typed it up and ten o'clock in the morning, "St'rt, got that

speech?" "Yes, sir." Took it in, and he read it, read it twice. He said, "You know, St'rt, when I come to big decisions in my life, I have to clear them with my red-haired twin sister. I have to send this down to Alabama." I had not yet met her, a wonderful person. So, a few days later: "Just had a call from my red-headed twin sister. Says it's the best speech she's read since Cicero!" Seriously, he said, "She thinks it's great; so do I. We'll go ahead with it." After that, they couldn't touch me. I was Lister Hill's right-arm buddy till he went out of office, on most everything. Isn't that interesting?

**RITCHIE:** What happened to Cronin?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, when Senator Hill retired Cronin went down to work for the Corcoran law firm, where I guess he still is.

**RITCHIE:** The Corcoran?

**MCCLURE:** Tommy-the-Cork. Corcoran and Rowe and Somebody, in a minor position. I think he's doing corporate taxes, or something dreadful. But he could do that kind of work, I'm sure, and no doubt is well paid for it. Anyway, Tommy-the-Cork was close to Senator Hill and took care of Cronin. Campbell went to work for the American Hospital Association. I saved one of the poor guys at the bottom,

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who was just going to fall in between the cracks, put him on our printing staff, and he's still down here on the first floor, Paul Pinson.

Forsythe, however, stayed on. There was an election in '68, and Lister Hill retired. Senator Morse was up, and Senator Randolph was going to be chairman of Public Works and wouldn't take the Labor Committee anyway. So Morse was defeated and Senator Yarborough inherited the chairmanship. Forsythe, to show what a slick, smart cookie he is, slipped out to Oregon. He was a greeeaaat friend of Wayne Morse. Looked at some of the polls, and knew Morse was done for. So he slipped down to Yarborough in Texas and locked himself in there. And suggested, I'm sure, that since the new chairman would want his own man he ought to get rid of McClure and put somebody else in, which he did. Oh well, Forsythe finally resigned and went to work some life insurance lobby, getting \$80,000 a year probably, unscathed by all this, happy as a clam.

It's funny, I didn't mention this, but during this period that I was having such a glorious new honeymoon with Lister Hill, Forsythe cracked up, had to be sent to a dry-out farm, divorced his wife-which Lister Hill thought was terrible. He didn't like divorce; Forsythe had married a sweet little girl, and here she was being dumped. Well, Forsythe was in the dog house, if that's the proper

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term, for the rest of his term with Senator Hill. Some kind of justice in all this, I guess.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think there were a lot of pressures on a staff member at that time that would cause someone like Forsythe to crack up?

**MCCLURE:** Well, he no longer was number one, you see. And Cronin, after this "great" speech, couldn't touch me with Senator Hill, so he broke with Forsythe, too, to save his own skin. There was no more trouble from Cronin. He may have caused Forsythe trouble, I don't know.

I do recall, I forgot to tell you, the senator called me every half hour after his sister had approved the speech. At least for two days the phone would ring: "St'rt, just wanted to tell you again, a great speech, boy." And one time I heard Forsythe say, "Aw, shit!" and slam his phone down. Ah, God, it looks funny now, but it wasn't too funny then.

**RITCHIE:** There was a member of the Secretary's office who did a management study of the employees around here and he found that while most everybody seemed to like their job, and got great satisfaction out of it, very few people had great sense of security in their job.

**MCCLURE:** It was impossible.

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**RITCHIE:** Because there was no Civil Service, I suppose.

**MCCLURE:** To start with.

**RITCHIE:** And you lived by the whim of the chairman or the majority.

**MCCLURE:** No question about it.

**RITCHIE:** Was that a pervasive sense throughout the committee staff?

**MCCLURE:** It's understood. You must perform as well as you can at all times, and at any moment you can be tossed out. Of course, there are inhibitions. A senator can't fire some girl from his state without worrying about what the effects will be. I mean, it's not a carte blanche power that's given a chairman, but the awareness is there at all times. And it's a good thing, I think. It keeps everybody on his toes. You've got to produce. You've got to satisfy your boss and a lot of other people, too, to whom he looks for assistance and approbation and so on; he doesn't want some guy running around

whom everybody dislikes. All that sort of thing.

**RITCHIE:** But do you think it encourages that kind of jockeying for power and backstabbing?

**MCCLURE:** I've rarely seen an office where it didn't go on. There may be some, and some you don't know about because you don't

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know the office well enough, but in those I knew fairly well there was generally somebody. Frequently he or she was ostracized by all the others because they knew what a p-r-i- - he was, so his effectiveness was not so great. But when the top guy is working against you, you're really in trouble--the AA, or the staff director. Of course, I never indulged in any of this crap myself. I didn't have the brains to do it, I guess. Certainly no inclination to do it.

There have been bad staff directors who have mishandled their people, mistreated them. AAs who insist on sleeping with secretaries before they'll give them a raise. Oh, sure, that's part of it. I don't know how much, but I know of cases. Fortunately, Lister Hill, and Wayne Morse, and Guy Gillette, and Jennings Randolph, the four I really worked with, were all above the age of girl-chasing. I don't know what they were doing when they were younger, but there was no sexual hanky-panky going on around them.

**RITCHIE:** Well, what's the best way for a chairman to handle a staff situation like that, given all the pressures underneath? Or who do you think handled it the best, of all the chairmen you worked for?

**MCCLURE:** Well, let me take Senator Randolph as chairman of Public Works. He never allowed it to start. If somebody gave him a bad note like that he'd just stare him down, just go deaf, glare at him, wouldn't even say anything. So it just stopped right away. It

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just couldn't go. While he was chairman, I don't know how it is now, I imagine it is quite the same because Senator Stafford, the present chairman, is the same kind of person, but that was a good staff and there was no in-fighting. There were jealousies, of course, but they never reached the chairman, and there was no attempt to knife somebody in a way that would lose him his job. They might fight for positions on a bill, or for their point of view, or snarl at the way some staff member was listening to that lobbyist too much, and so forth. But that's inevitable. That's staff work. You have to have different ideas and different sources and fight for your position. But this business of using any of those things, or other things, to threaten the position, the job security, by feeding poison to the chairman, I regard as vile, and no chairman should allow it to occur. Certainly Randolph never did.

I didn't see Gillette in charge of any staff, except his own, and there was no fighting there. And Morse had no chairmanship either, except the subcommittee on education where his staff amounted to two or three people and there was little possibility of knifings and so forth going on. His office was beautifully run by Bill Berg, and I don't know for sure, of course, but I don't think so.

But Senator Hill, as I said in the beginning, got a kind of a kick, like a duke might of having the courtiers telling nasty stories about each other, and thus increasing his sources or fund of

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knowledge about them and giving him a little handle here and there. Senator Hill loved to kid people. Sometimes it was fun and sometimes it wasn't so much fun. You never could tell exactly whether the dagger was rubber or real. But that was just his way of joshing. It didn't mean anything. But he could spot your weakness, and sometimes he found that weakness not just by himself but by other people telling tales. And there are so many ways they do it, you know, "Gosh, Senator, I think Bill looks bad, don't you?" "Yeah, what do you suppose is the matter, Don?" "Ah, you know, he loves to hit it up after--not during work, of course." "Oh, yeah. Yeah, he does look pretty bad." That kind of thing. What can you do about it? Even if you look wonderful. Ah, dirty stuff. Well, I think that sums up the off-the-record things that I know about that I thought were worth telling. Some of them are pretty good stories and give you a feel of what goes on beneath the surface to some degree.

**RITCHIE:** While you're speaking under embargo, would you be willing to tell that story about John Kennedy and the conflict-of-interest that you told me the other day? It was about the committee he formed.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, that. Didn't I tell that?

**RITCHIE:** You told it to me, but we didn't have the tape recorder on. We were next door.

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**MCCLURE:** This story relates to Senator John Kennedy when he was chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, in fact newly-made chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor. The McClellan Committee on Investigation of Labor-Management Activities was revealing all sorts of nasty things about the Teamsters. Bobby Kennedy was the counsel for that committee and was riding hard, too. He was a tough prosecutor. The minority leader, the guy from California . . .

**RITCHIE:** William Knowland.

**MCCLURE:** . . . Knowland had come up with a "Democracy in Trade Unions" bill. Well, you know

Bill Knowland didn't give a damn about democracy in unions. It was all designed to hamstring the leadership and permit all sort of anarchic activity to go on. McClellan's committee also came up with a bunch of recommendations. They were all going to come to the Labor Committee, and Jack Kennedy could see these juggernauts coming down the track while he was revving up his presidential campaign. Somebody--I think it may have been Ralph Dungan, who was on our staff at the time as Kennedy's man, though not a lawyer a damn fine staff guy, even for this technical stuff--he must have suggested that Kennedy create a bi-management-labor panel to study the need for revision of Taft-Hartley, which was then the existing law and which these amendments from Knowland and McClellan sought to change a great deal. So in due course the committee created a panel of twelve members, some of whom were from unions,

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some from business, and some professors. While I don't remember all of the names there were some terrific people on it, including Willard Wirtz and Arthur Goldberg, and Gerald Reilly of the Retail Federation, and John what's-his-name from Harvard.

**RITCHIE:** Dunlop?

**MCCLURE:** Dunlop? Anyway, great guys, and they all were willing to do it. They were to meet here in Washington. We got them a staff, and money to pay for their transportation. They would meet and read papers and debate and seek to come up with resolutions and propose amendments to the Labor Committee. Well, the whole purpose, I think, from Kennedy's point of view, was to stall, so his nomination, at least, could be attained. That was really the purpose, I think of this body. They met over several months. Well, anyway, before they met officially there was a gathering in S-114 in the Capitol, one of the Appropriations rooms. The panel members were all invited, Senator Kennedy was going to make a welcoming speech.

About ten o'clock that morning, Bob Brenkworth, then Financial Clerk, called, and said, "Stewart, has Senator Kennedy given any consideration to the possibility that some of the members of his new panel will be faced with the conflict of interest, since they are on the payroll of their respective businesses and unions. This doesn't apply to the professors, of course." I said, "My God, Bob, I don't think he has. I certainly haven't mentioned it. It never occurred

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to me." He said, "Well, just think of this: suppose the panel comes up with a recommendation that some group doesn't like. They will charge that the fellows who voted for it were really voting for their union of business position while they were being paid by the Senate." This could have damaged whatever the panel did. I thought, well that certainly makes sense. In any case, Senator Kennedy should be alerted to

it. So I told Ralph Dungan right away. He was busy as hell and said, "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah." I said, "Call Brenkworth, for Christ's sake, and get this thing worked out so you can tell the chairman before he get to the meeting." Well, nothing like that happened, and we're in the meeting, and I'm there as clerk taking notes; Ralph is there, backing up Kennedy.

Kennedy makes a beautiful speech, and everybody's pleased as punch. I have twelve copies of the appointment form to be signed by Lister Hill, appointing these twelve gentlemen to a panel to be paid for entirely by the Senate. It was a dollar-a-day kind of thing, but with expenses. So Ralph turns around and says, "Oh, by the way Senator, Stewart has something to report from the Financial Clerk." Oh, Jesus. I thought to myself, "You dirty bastard, you really dumped it on me this time." What was I to do, with twelve gentlemen and the chairman looking at me. I said, "Yes, sir, Mr. Brenkworth, Financial Clerk, called this morning, and thought that you all should be aware of a potential conflict of interest if you are signed on the Senate payroll while being paid by your own organizations." I

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thought Kennedy was going to kill me! He turned around black as a cloud, shoved me back from the table, and said, "What the hell did you bring that Goddamned thing up for? What did you bring that up for?" I said, "I had to, it's my duty. I had to." He said, "Well, all right" and finally calmed himself down. Of course, they al I agreed and it was all worked out so there would be no conflict of interest.

**RITCHIE:** Did they just not accept the funds?

**MCCLURE:** They didn't get the one dollar, and the people who were in town didn't get the expenses; it turned out that all of them except the professors were in town anyway, so the thing became moot, and not even important, but I had to do it. I mean, Brenkworth would have raised it himself, and then where would we have all been? Senator Kennedy never forgave me for that. Held glower at me across the room, for months afterwards. God, it was unpleasant. And it was all that Goddamned Dungan's doing. Well, he may have not intended to do it, but a thing of that sifnificance I'm sure he must have remembered, and he didn't want that black glare to fall on him. Terrible.

**RITCHIE:** I heard a number of stories about Brenkworth and I get the feeling that a lot of the chief clerks of committees felt as if

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they were between a rock and a hard place. On one side was Brenkworth and on the other side were the committee chairmen and members.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, and Brenkworth always won. He was wonderful. I hated him and was scared to



death of him for many years, but finally I got to know him and realized what he was up against, with a hundred senatorial payrolls, and sixty subcommittee and committee payrolls, and thousands of people taking trips, some of them that weren't authorized, and hiring planes that weren't authorized, and submitting vouchers. I don't know how anybody stays sane in that job, and, of course, they all have had heart attacks, except the last one, Bill Ridgely. I saw him the other day, he looks untouched. But he had a different temperament. Brenkworth was a top-sergeant kind of guy, and he talked like one, barking at you. But he didn't have time to be nice, he had just too much to do.

We became very good friends after a while. I could forestall difficulties with him by knowing what to do and what not to do. But for new people he was rough. Especially girls, they'd just come back panicked: "Oh, don't send me over there again, Mr. McClure! I can't take it!" But he was always right. He knew the law, he knew the books, he knew the accounting, he knew what you had to do, he knew the regulations and rules. You couldn't argue with him; he knew. So why bother? You could argue fact, well, of course the senator had to

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take that plane because his car broke down, and so forth. And then he, of course--all the vouchers went to the Rules Committee--could have a little cushion there. If they approved then he was off the hook. But he fought first.

**RITCHIE:** Did John Kennedy have a reputation for having a hot temper when he was a senator?

**MCCLURE:** I don't know that he did. He wasn't much of a senator, you know, until he took on this labor subcommittee. He wasn't really a senator.

**RITCHIE:** In other words, he wasn't someone you were nervous about offending in advance; you hadn't anticipated his response?

**MCCLURE:** No. Well, he was making great speeches on foreign affairs, and evading the tough ones, like labor law, and so forth. He was kind of lazy. His first appointment on the committee, I think, was Railroad Retirement, which would not turn anybody on much. No, I don't think he was regarded as hot-tempered. His brother was much disliked up here, though he changed greatly in later years. When he was a senator himself, he was a wonderful guy, Bobby--great loss.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have much direct dealing with him when he was a member of the staff?

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**MCCLURE:** Not too much. He was a prosecutor and I was not in the law business. But you would

see him on the floor, and he treated everybody like crumbs because his brother was sitting there as a senator. Oh, it was nasty. And we all knew that he had been hired by Joseph McCarthy, and that didn't endear us to him either. Anyway, that's another story. But the Labor Committee did have all three Kennedy's. In fact, at one time we had two of them, Bobby and Teddy, and sometimes the by-play in executive session was just hilarious, because they had these inside family jokes, none of which I remember, but they'd be alluding to something that was said the night before someplace: "Well, you didn't say that last night, Bobby!" It was fun.

**RITCHIE:** I noticed that Senator Edward Kennedy took the Aging subcommittee at one point, and I remember that you had said that you couldn't persuade John Kennedy to take it.

**MCCLURE:** No, I couldn't persuade Ted Sorenson to take it. I never talked to John Kennedy about it. Sorenson was so wrong about that. Kennedy could have avoided that whole Landrum-Griffin thing if he'd wanted to. "I'm busy with the problems of the aging, you can give that to somebody else." I don't know if Lister Hill would have let him get away with it, but he certainly would have been in a better position than he was to resist it.

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**RITCHIE:** How does the subcommittee distribution work? Would a chairman like Lister Hill assign someone to a subcommittee that they wanted to serve on, or did he arbitrarily assign them?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, never arbitrarily. He was a great diplomat. He never surprised anybody with anything like that, no. Well, the tradition was that there were three major subcommittees: Labor, Education, and Health. And there were a lot of others, fifteen at one point. I think they now have fourteen. Five of them were special subcommittees that didn't do anything legislatively. The tradition was that the chairman would take whatever subcommittee he wanted.

Then sometimes, outside pressure would play a powerful role in the selection of a subcommittee chairman. In 1961, after Jack Kennedy became president, the chairmanship of both the Labor and Education subcommittees became vacant, since Senator Murray, chairman of the latter subcommittee, had died.

Senator Morse was Number 2 on Labor, followed by Senator McNamara. Senator Hill was Number 2 on Education, followed by Senator Morse. As chairman of the Health subcommittee, Senator Hill could not take the Education subcommittee chairmanship. Number 3 on Education had been McNamara, so with the death of Senator Murray, he would be expected to inherit Education, while Senator Morse would replace Kennedy on Labor. Oddly enough, just the reverse took place.

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This was the result of heavy lobbying by both organized labor and education, the AFL-CIO and the National Education Association. While still in the doghouse, I had no personal knowledge of what went on. I learned that the AFL-CIO didn't want Morse as chairman of what they regarded as their subcommittee, because he was too independent, while McNamara, an old trade-unionist, was their kind of guy. Also, the NEA and the education lobby in general didn't want McNamara governing their field of interest, but strongly favored Morse, a former college professor and a known advocate of federal aid to education.

So Chairman Hill finally had to work out a satisfactory compromise; he named Morse chairman of Education, to which he was entitled by virtue of subcommittee seniority (Senator Hill not exercising his right), and McNamara chairman of Labor, to which he was entitled when Morse was disqualified by having been named Education chairman.

In the end, everybody was happy. Morse made a superb record in Education and McNamara not only reassured the labor movement but managed the poverty legislation. When Senator McNamara died, Senator Yarborough inherited the Labor subcommittee, and when Morse was defeated in 1968, Senator Claiborne Pell became chairman of the Education subcommittee.

**RITCHIE:** There was Railroad Retirement, Veterans . . . .

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**MCCLURE:** Yes, until they created the Veterans' Committee, which made no sense at all because most of veterans' affairs involve health and education, and hospitals, and so forth. Anyway, they got their damn committee. Well, senators would assert their seniority on the committee for the subcommittees, that's the way it would work, and then they could keep them--you couldn't throw them off. And sometimes, if nobody really wanted it, and the chairman had left, Hill would appoint the next ranking member, unless he were chairman of something else. We usually had anywhere from seven to ten Democratic members. For those who didn't get operating committees, like Pete Williams, we created a Migratory Labor subcommittee. And McNamara had the Aging subcommittee for a while, until he inherited the Labor subcommittee.

The Republicans, on the other hand, I don't know how they worked it out, but they always had a clash between the right wing and the left wing. When Goldwater was in all the right-wing guys got the best subcommittees, and when Javits was in all the other side got them, unless they were already occupied by Goldwater people; then he never tried to displace them. But the minority membership on a subcommittee doesn't amount to a damn. It's all run by the majority. You know, they don't set agenda, or hearings. They can call witnesses, of course, put in amendments, and bills, and so forth, but so far as running the show they don't have anything to say about it. I don't know how most committees operate. You'd have to ask. I

suppose it's quite similar, after all seniority is still the reigning law here, and should be.

**RITCHIE:** I was just wondering, in the sense that there are obviously some subcommittees that are more attractive and there are some that are more dangerous than others.

**MCCLURE:** Yes. Well, sometimes a man goes on a dangerous subcommittee when he's a freshman, and suddenly some years later he finds he's chairman. It happened to John Kennedy. Well, of course, we tend to make too much of all these things. We look in our own little forest here. The public doesn't give a hoot really who's chairman of what. Lobbyists do, you bet.

**RITCHIE:** Well, being chairman of the Labor subcommittee obviously helped Kennedy with the labor movement, the unions.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, I'm sure it did. That Landrum-Griffin conference was something. Kennedy had hired a wonderful fellow from Harvard, who later got involved in the Justice Department's troubles under Watergate, big tall, smart guy, I can't think of his name. Hired him after the panel had disbanded to be his legal counsel, because Dungan wasn't, and none of his own staff was. Archibald Cox. Cox was very smart, much smarter than Kennedy was on labor law. The Republicans on the committee hated him; he was too damn good. They had a good man, too, in Mike Bernstein, an expert labor lawyer and minority

counsel, but he met his match with Cox and couldn't get away with a lot of the stuff he had done before, when our side wasn't quite as familiar with the implications of a certain amendment.

We ended up finally in conference with a bill that contained something that the building trades didn't want, if I remember correctly. I can't remember the details but it was a whole title of the bill that really had nothing to do with the purpose of the bill, which was to democratize and improve the operations of trade unions. This had something to do with secondary boycott or some other Taft-Hartley issue. There had been a terrific fight in the Senate and the McClellan and Knowland group almost had enough votes to substitute their proposals for the committee bill; it failed very narrowly. I remember we got into conference and it went on and on and on and on and on for days, and the lobby outside was packed with labor lobbyists, newspapermen who couldn't get in, tourists trying to get through, chaotic, right in front of the Disbursing Office, with Brenkworth going mad!

Well, we came to this final question, the building trades title, and the House insisted on it. Maybe we hadn't put it in, I guess that was it, they'd been strong enough in the Senate to keep it out, but it was in the House bill. Landrum and his group had it in. It was a red flag for the building trades. That was it.

And Cox kept arguing that it had nothing to do with this legislation and Kennedy

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would repeat this ad infinitum. Morse wanted to dissolve the conference and return the bill to the Senate for instructions. "My God," Kennedy said, "we'll lose if we go back, they'll give us their bill." which was true, I think. Finally, Dirksen got up and said in his huge voice, "Mr. Chairman, in view of the inability of this conference to reach any agreement while staff is present, I move that all staff be expelled from the room until we resolve this question." That meant Cox, and all the rest of us, too. So we trailed out into the corridor and fought our way through these people, all of them saying, "What's going on? What's going on?" Well, in the end, the Senate accepted the House language, and Kennedy went back to the floor with Morse threatening to filibuster; he wouldn't sign the conference report, put on a terrific Morse show. But the minute it was resolved, then Cox was asked back in to help write the report!

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that Kennedy gave in because Cox wasn't there?

**MCCLURE:** I don't know why.

**RITCHIE:** He didn't put his name on the bill. It wasn't the Kennedy-Landrum Bill.

**MCCLURE:** He didn't want it.

**RITCHIE:** Both Landrum and Griffin were members of the House.

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**MCCLURE:** Wasn't Griffin a senator by then? No, I guess you are right, it was the Democratic-Republican bill in the House. We had a bill, a Kennedy bill, and that was the one we went to conference with, but we accepted the House language, so that's the way it ended up, I think. Furthermore, Kennedy didn't want his name on the damn thing for the rest of history. Tied up with Landrum, that character from Georgia? No way. I don't know what happened. No senators would talk. I guess they felt they had to have a bill, they couldn't just sit there forever, and the House was adamant and the Senate had voted fairly closely on it, and Kennedy wasn't sure he could withstand it--I don't know. But in any event, it didn't lose on its merits, it lost on a power play. I mean the Senate didn't lose in the merits of the question, it just lost because they couldn't see their way to winning.

**RITCHIE:** Did you ever encounter anything like that again in a conference committee, where the staff was asked to leave?

**MCCLURE:** No. We had a senator from Colorado named Gordon Allott, a brash young fellow who came out of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, that type, and it took, him a little while to catch on to this place. He was early on a member of the committee and when things would start going badly for him in a meeting he'd say, "What are all these staff people doing here? I would like, Mr. Chairman, to ask them to identify themselves, to determine whether they have

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any business here." Lister Hill would always finesse that one, "Well, they're all here at the request of senators. You can have your man here, too, if you wish." Allott pulled that crap quite a few times.

Of course, executive sessions in those days were fun, and staff people, especially the legislative guys with senators, wanted to be there, even if the bill wasn't in their domain, but it made a kind of a crowd. If there was one thing Lister Hill would never allow was for any of the prerogatives of the chairman to be challenged, let alone successfully challenged. He just fixed it immediately. Not that he over performed his privilege, over exerted in exercising it, but he didn't enjoy anybody trying to take his place, even partly. The old boys all knew that, and they didn't either, wherever they were chairman. But it took some of the young fellows time. Probably still does. Well, I don't think we've got anymore revelations at this point.

**RITCHIE:** OK. Next time I thought we'd talk about the 89th Congress, in 1965, '66, when that great rush of legislation came through; some of the atmosphere, and the Johnson treatment, and all that.

**MCCLURE:** I think I'll go back to the minutes, I've been looking at them. It was so complex and there was so much going on. I was talking to Don Baker, who was on the staff of McNamara on our

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committee at the time and he's now, and has been for a long time, the chief clerk of the House Labor Committee. I went to see him one day and I said, "Whatever happened to the War on Poverty?" He said, "Well, I'll show you, it's still going on, and every program." it was not being funded in large amounts, but every one of them is still on the books and still functioning. He said, "They don't make any noise," especially since the recent administration, but even under Carter they were very quiet, and certainly under Nixon. Nixon tried to abolish it. Now the community action programs, which were the most controversial, pitting the poor against city hall, most cities accept them. It's a good idea to find out what the folks think. And it's working all over the country, but nobody talks about it. It's just going on. That was good, I was glad to hear that. Headstart, that was an especially good one, taking little kids into pre-school.

**RITCHIE:** I was a teacher in Headstart one summer.

**MCCLURE:** Were you? Well, you know it was a grand idea. And it's still going on. And Upward Bound, another one of those. I guess the Legal Services thing was in that program. It was a massive business; twelve titles or something. Well, give me a little time.

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**End of Interview #5**

**THE GREAT SOCIETY**  
**Interview #6**  
**Tuesday, March 22, 1983**

**MCCLURE:** I haven't talked about the Dirksen Building much, but the point of this story is that its design was made in 1943. [Allen] Ellender was chairman of the Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee and he never would allow a nickel to be spent in upgrading the plans. So when they built it in the '50s they were using wartime plans, with all the constraints of material and conceptual approaches. Whatever was in vogue was prolonged over into the late '50s, and they gave not one thought to staff and the relationships of people to people, and visitors, and phones, and all of that. The phones were in channels under the floor, and that told you where you could have a desk, and where you couldn't have one, because there was a lump on the floor for the plug.

Well, Senator [John] Stennis was a member of the Building Commission who had a good staff. They took a good look at this place, before the room walls were installed between the separate offices. They insisted--and he, therefore, did--that his office at least would have a little room for each staff member, with half a window--the partition was set so that the wide window went half to one side and half to the other--and inside was room for a staff man's desk, and his secretary, and all their files, which is the way it ought to

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be. Each staff member needs his own space, of course. But that was the only office that had that. Then afterwards, of course, we put in all these partitions and everybody started trying to do the same thing, but Stennis' office started out that way. It was built into the floor and went to the ceiling. We were all very envious of the staff of Senator Stennis because they had it the way it ought to be, and none of us ever did. No matter how many partitions, there was always a lot of noise. They couldn't run the partitions to the ceiling because of the air conditioning. In fact, Stennis had the wall of the partition go right up to the ceiling so the air conditioning split to each side. It was all very cleverly done, and could have been done everywhere, but it wasn't.

Of course, there are only two things important up here--it's not the money, because that never was important--parking and your office space. These are the keys to happiness. Morale in the Senate, and the House, too, I'm sure, depends on those two things. In a sense the parking aspect is even more critical, because these lots which have no numbered spaces--first come first served--require all the secretaries to come in at eight o'clock, even if they don't start work till nine, to get places for their cars. I'm sure some of them use the Metro now, but even so, there are a lot who come from Virginia and Maryland. If you can't get to your office on time you're not likely to keep your job, so parking is highly



critical. Then all day you're sitting in a buzz of noise and traffic, and other

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people, and phones ringing, that distract you from whatever you're doing, unless you have a well-planned structure. Of course, when they started this institution back in the eighteenth century they didn't have any staff. Nobody had ever heard the word. It meant a stick that you walked with.

**RITCHIE:** I remember from interviewing Featherstone Reid that he gave great value to what he called "real estate," it was a bargaining chip, and a senator who controlled real estate had power.

**MCCLURE:** Yes. Oh, yes. Never give it up either, never give it up. The Labor Committee, for example, quickly ran out of storage space; everyone did. We had numerous lengthy hearings and hundreds of printed volumes. What do you do with them? Well, in the Russell Building they have attic space, cages. They have the same in the "New" Senate Office Building [Dirksen]; the seventh floor is really not a floor. It's big walk-in cages. Well, we filled one of those immediately. Then we got a whole room in the sub-basement. It goes back in and you can get a ladder and crawl into a sort of an underground mezzanine and put stuff back in there. And God help the committee if Paul Pinson, the printing clerk who handles all that stuff, ever leaves. I don't think they'll ever be able to find anything, because he knows where it all is. No one just ever foresaw what was going to happen.

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**RITCHIE:** Well, the Dirksen Building was built in the days when the staff of a committee might be fifteen people or so.

**MCCLURE:** Oh, yes, sure. I asked the other day, and I think they have ninety-six now, and so does the House Committee on Labor and Education. That's about maybe a third more than they really need. I'm not sure about that.

**RITCHIE:** Well, some of the subcommittees now have staffs about the size that the full committee had when you first came on. They have their own chief clerks now.

**MCCLURE:** That's right. Well, a whole rationalization of this place is overdue. I don't mean by some outside management firm. They might be helpful, but somebody who knows how the place operates,

someone who's been in the Secretary's office for years, or the Sergeant-at -Arms, or the Superintendent's office, somebody who knows how the place really functions should be detailed for a year at least to rethink the structure, the planning, the staffing, the pay, and everything else within this institution. It's just chaos at this point. Too much of everything. Too much staff, too much legislation, too many amendments, too many meetings. The United States got along even in the hectic years during and after the war--when we did expand the government--and we didn't need a hundred staff people on a committee. I don't think they do now. But I don't have enough facts to go on, and I'm sure everybody can justify his job--it's not too

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difficult--but in terms of their real contributions, an independent look could be profitable, I think. But then, who's going to take the time even to think about that? They're so busy keeping up with today and tomorrow.

**RITCHIE:** This might be a good point to go back and to take a look at the 1960s, because that seems to be the period when the real take-off occurred in terms of the number of staff members and the activities going on here. The 89th Congress seems to be the pivotal point.

**MCCLURE:** What years were those?

**RITCHIE:** That was 1965 and 1966. That's when the Great Society program was rolling down at full force. I looked at a list of principal bills that went through the Labor Committee in 1965 and '66. It included the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; the Economic Opportunity Act; the Mine Safety Act; Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke Act; Higher Education Act; Manpower Act; National Foundation of the Arts and Humanities Act; Older Americans Act; the Cold War GI Bill--and that's just the main ones. The committee calendar had a whole page of major legislation that it sponsored in the 89th Congress.

**MCCLURE:** And that passed! Much of it.

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**RITCHIE:** Yes, it all came out. How did the committee handle this incredible increase in work, and all these major pieces of legislation that all came along at the same time?

**MCCLURE:** Well, you know the favorite device for reducing staff is attrition, as it's called. Now, what is the opposite of attrition? Accretion, I guess it is. It didn't happen over night. It just grew out of necessity, I think, in our case. After a while there is some empire-building added to it, of course, but in the beginning a senator would be assigned a subcommittee and a big blob of educational bills or some kind of bills would be referred to him and he had one person trying to handle it all. He'd just come to the chairman and say, "I can't do it, Lister, I can't do it. Please give me another staff man and a secretary." OK, that's reasonable, and that would happen. Six months later the volume again had increased, the pressure was tremendous, and the staff was working fourteen, and so forth, hours a day. So it wasn't a plan, it wasn't empire-building in the beginning, it was a response to the tremendous activity that Johnson sponsored downtown and that came up here to be acted upon.

We didn't handle it in any schematic way, or in any planned way; it just was a response to demand. While I'm sure in the later years, when the heat from the administration had declined, and Johnson was no longer there--and Nixon was not noted for visionary new

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programs--by then every senator had gotten the feel of having a subcommittee and running something, and he had staff, who had been hired during the big time, to keep on, so a lot of manufactured work, not really essential stuff was brought into being in order to maintain staff, and in order to maintain a subcommittee, and in order to maintain a chairmanship. Then we see the results: there ' s a great lot of fat, people who just aren't as busy as they were in the '60s. In those years everybody worked all the time. There was no question about it.

I should say, in preparation for your request last time, that we talk about the poverty programs, I spent some time with Donald Baker, who is now the chief clerk and staff director of the House Committee on Education and Labor, and who was the staff man on the poverty program on this side. Well, Don is an extremely able, experienced man. He's a lawyer who came here with Congressman James O'Hara of Michigan, and when O'Hara was defeated he came over here with Senator Pat McNamara of Michigan. Then to jump ahead, when the poverty program was established in the Office of Economic Opportunity under Sergeant Shriver, he became the general counsel of the agency, and later on in '69 he came back to the House under the present chairman, Carl Perkins, as chief clerk and counsel. So he I s had great experience on both sides and downtown. So I wanted to find out from him his recollections of the beginnings of the War on Poverty, and I have taped it, too.

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In substance, he reports that John Kennedy in about 1962 had asked some staff people to look into the extent of poverty in the United States, the dimensions of it, how many people, where are they, and to bring him a report. Which they did in early '64. They brought it to Johnson in '64. They worked on it in '63, and when Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson became president the report then landed on Johnson's desk. He was greatly interested in it and established a task force, mainly of government people although not entirely, headed by Sergeant Shriver, who had been the head of the Peace Corps under Kennedy. They raked people in from Justice, Labor, HEW, Agriculture, even Defense, several guys from the Defense Department, Robert McNamara people. They did a thorough review not only of this report and other documentation, but set out to develop a program to deal with it, and in as short a time as March 14, Johnson sent up a message. Now this was fast work. A message to the Congress outlining this concept, new programs, so forth. The next month they had a bill written, and of course, it came to the Labor Committees in the Senate and the House.

Senator Hill, the chairman, must have done some extremely careful investigative work about the implications of this program for him as a senator from Alabama. He decided to stay as far away from it as he could while still being chairman of the committee that was considering it. Well, he came up with a marvelous device. He created a subcommittee consisting of all the members of the committee

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but himself. The ranking Democrat, who was Pat McNamara, became chairman of this super subcommittee. McNamara had hired Don Baker to be the counsel to the subcommittee on Labor, which is a standing subcommittee. So when this new huge package arrived from the White House, he told Don that he was going to have to handle it, too, and they just put aside the Labor subcommittee business for a while.

Well, Pat never liked to hold public hearings. He thought they were a waste of time. He told Don Baker, "Now, let's keep this short. We're in a hurry. Let the House act and we'll take care of it." So they had four days of hearings on this enormous program, which involved as you recall such things as Headstart, and Upward Bound, and Community Action, and the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and a dozen others which I don't recall, involving health and education and income, food, nutrition, and so forth. Well, the bill had been well-drafted and there wasn't much the committee needed to do with it, really. McNamara said, "Well, why do we need all these administration witnesses? Get Sergeant Shriver up here." Then there was a lot of pressure from downtown, and they admitted Willard Wirtz, the Secretary of Labor, and that was it. McNamara said, "They've all testified on the House

side," and he instructed Baker to just incorporate in the Senate hearings all the testimony from the House hearings. Don't have any duplication; save time.

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Then they went into executive session, and twelve days after the hearings--including the July 4th weekend--twelve calendar days, not legislative days, the subcommittee had a meeting and McNamara said to Baker, "I want to keep this short." Held heard that Lyndon Johnson in some off-hand remark had complained about the Senate "stalling" on his bill, and McNamara wasn't about to take that! So he was going to act yesterday. "Don't want any amendments. The president doesn't want any amendments. Don, you cut off all these amendments." McNamara, seeking to demonstrate his concern for rapid action, didn't say anything in the meeting. Don was left to cope with Javits and Williams and various other people who had amendments, beat them down, or turn them aside, or do something.

The most outstanding ones were five or six bills affecting migratory labor which Senator Harrison Williams had perfected over a number of years in his subcommittee on migratory labor, and which had passed the Senate in several Congresses but had died in the House. Such things as education and day care for children, and feeding and housing, and health, sanitation for migratory and other seasonal or part-time workers. Well, Williams, of course, tried to put this in the poverty bill, which seemed a very good place for it. Here was poor Don Baker resisting. He wanted them, too, but he was under orders. Finally Senator Javits, always the great compromiser, came up with the simple suggestion that they authorize the director of OEO to conduct programs in health, education, day care centers, nutrition

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centers for migrants and other seasonal workers, putting it all in about twelve or fifteen words which were in six long bills. Williams accepted that, and it worked just as well; in fact it's the only way they would ever have gotten into law, I suspect. The opponents to migratory workers were very powerful, but they couldn't do a thing if it was part of this poverty program.

Since Lister Hill had withdrawn from participating in anything to do with this bill, the general counsel, Mr. Forsythe, was not present. The subcommittee on migratory labor counsel, Frederick Blackwell, was in an antagonistic position, and only another staff man, of whom I've not spoken but should, Edward Friedman was of any help to Don Baker in handling this monumental product. Ed was at that

time working with Senator Joseph Clark on a subcommittee on manpower, and he helped Don write language that dealt with manpower, and retraining, and that sort of thing. So they had a two-hour executive session and the only amendment was this abbreviated, chopped-up form of migratory labor law. The Republicans couldn't do much to stop it. Goldwater and Tower wrote ferocious--well, Mike Bernstein, their counsel, wrote--a ferocious minority report denouncing the whole thing. One other Republican from Idaho, Len Jordan, who was there just a short time, didn't put up much struggle either. And [Winston] Prouty, who was still alive, and Javits supported it.

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So it was reported to the full committee and the same day it flipped through there in one minute flat, and was on the floor, and passed the Senate, I think by August 14. The House didn't want a conference and accepted the Senate amendment, and the bill became law in a very short time. It could be September or October. Then there was a question of appropriations, of course, so the agency didn't really start to function till about mid-October, though they had borrowed people from all over the government on a temporary basis to get started. But that was a remarkable process. I suppose normally it takes ten years for a new idea to seep through this institution. This went through in less than six months, with almost no organized opposition. That was the power and influence of Lyndon Johnson in that first year after Kennedy's death. God, you could have done anything. We did! We did anything.

**RITCHIE:** I wanted to ask you about the "Johnson treatment." I always hear about that. I wondered how influential he was in lobbying, but it sounds like in this case his influence was so powerful he didn't have to do anything directly, he indirectly . . . .

**MCCLURE:** He dropped it in the papers.

**RITCHIE:** Influenced someone like McNamara.

**MCCLURE:** Yes.

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**RITCHIE:** How did Johnson and his administration come on to the Labor and Education Committee, when they wanted legislation?

**MCCLURE:** Well, they knew they were welcome. They weren't coming with anything that we hadn't been working on for years: education and health and unemployment and everything else. The whole social package of the Johnson administration--not all of it, but a great part of it--came to this committee where we had been straining since Truman to get action. So there wasn't any problem. There was question of which way, perhaps, or what language, or how much and so on, but the purposes were all identical. Everybody on our committee--well, all the Democrats certainly, and some of the Republicans--were committed to the Johnson program before it was introduced, before it was invented as a program.

**RITCHIE:** The House had been a stumbling block for years to things that the Senate had been proposing.

**MCCLURE:** Sure.

**RITCHIE:** Was the Johnson effort then directed more at the House?

**MCCLURE:** Didn't have to be. Adam Powell was chairman by then, and he was the same, too. Held been struggling for Harlem and the poor people of his district and, therefore, of the country for years. There was no need of arm-twisting and bullying or anything

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else. Certainly not in the case of poverty legislation. That was true generally of education and health, Johnson welcomed them, and we did, too. We wanted his support and his administration's support.

**RITCHIE:** How would you rate his legislative liaison and the way they approached Congress, as opposed to the Eisenhower and Kennedy and Nixon administrations?

**MCCLURE:** Well, I think you have to phrase it differently. It wasn't how they approached, it was the conditions of the country, the political picture. Johnson could do no wrong for the first year or two. He wrapped himself in the Kennedy mantle so effectively that if you attacked him you were attacking a dead man. It was all in a good purpose, because Kennedy was never going to get anything done; it just wasn't going to happen. He had great public charisma and popularity but he was not popular up here and everything he got he had to strain for. The Old Bulls didn't think much of him, and they still dominated both sides. But Johnson was one of them. He'd locked elbows and scrubbed shoulders and shot back shots of whiskey with them. He was one of them. The fact that he was crazy on all that social stuff was too bad, but he was their guy. A Southerner, too, you know, a Southwesterner, not one of

these effete Easterners from Boston.

So he had, in the beginning before Vietnam, a perfectly beautiful, symbiotic relationship with Congress. It didn't require

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any browbeating and arm twisting, at least in our committee. Now, it may have in others; I'm not familiar with them, I'm sure there were some things that Congress broke with him on, or didn't go along with. But on our committee I don't think there was any of that. That was reflected in the kind of people he appointed and the people with whom we dealt in the agencies, including the secretaries at the top. It was all very cozy.

What it was for those of us who had been around for a while, whether members of Congress or staff, the fruition, the culmination of *years* of effort, of fruitless hearings, of endless meetings, of dozens of votes, all of which had gone down the drain. Sometimes you would go home at night and say, "What am I doing here?" A whole year's work tossed down the tube at the end. It was frustrating as hell. And here, suddenly, we'd all hoped that Kennedy would give us new directions and a new world and all that--and he intended to, I'm sure--but it didn't happen until Johnson became president. Then, God, it was wonderful. We were just all elated, in joy and on high clouds all the time, until the Vietnam war began to rot the infrastructure and the whole Johnson thing collapsed.

**RITCHIE:** One person who seems to have stepped back and kept aloof from all this was Lister Hill, whom you mentioned did not get involved in the poverty program, even though he represented one of the poorest states in the Nation, and who chaired this committee and

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had helped liberal reform in the 1950s. Yet he seems to have kept it at arms distance in the 1960s. What happened to Hill?

**MCCLURE:** Well, he foresaw what did happen, that these community action agencies in every city in the country and every town in the country would come into clash with the existing institutions, welfare, relief, education, school systems, medical provisions, hospitals, and so forth, all of whom thought they



were doing a great job for the poor, but they were not. They were being challenged by the organizations representing the poor, the people left out. People who never could find the clinic or didn't know it existed, had a voice. He could see that this was going to just bring into frightful clash the very structure that elected him--the political structure-with the common people.

The program never was a great success in the South, except where they had tremendous battles, in Atlanta and places where they won, in fact, and elected their own mayors. But it was a tremendous struggle in the '60s, and Lister foresaw this. It wasn't that he was anti-black; he wasn't. But he could see that any federally financed organization going in and rounding up the poor people of Alabama to confront the established order was going to be agony for him, and any other Southern senator. And, indeed, it was. But none of the other Southern senators was chairman of the Labor Committee! But he never stayed out of any of the health and education legislation. My God,

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on the contrary, he pushed it as much as anyone else. Oh, he was all for Wayne Morse' bills in education, his own health measures, of course, and Yarborough's GI Bill for peacetime veterans benefits. No, I wouldn't say that he had withdrawn from any other area of activity.

**RITCHIE:** Well, do you think he felt increasingly uncomfortable with the direction things were going, since it was putting him in a politically difficult position?

**MCCLURE:** Yes, well, it was doing that, there was no question about it. He had almost been defeated, as I pointed out earlier, in '62, and he told me when he came back that he was going to be a different man, and he was, to a certain extent. I don't mean he really changed, but his public expression certainly had to change, or did change, and I feel he--well, he never said so and I couldn't prove it--but I think he did not run in '68 largely because he felt he might be defeated, by a Republican, because they were picking up Republican seats in the '60s in Alabama. What had been the most liberal delegation of any state in the '50s, was turning "Black Republican," (not in any color sense); they were right-wing Republicans who were taking over the seats in the House.

I feel he just didn't want to be defeated, and probably felt he could be, and might even would be. He was getting on in years, and it was a graceful time to leave. I don't think he felt too

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comfortable; the cities were in riot; the '60s were a tough time for everybody and members of Congress, too. Smoke rising up on Fourteenth Street, you remember, and so on. The world was rushing on passed him. He had done his great work, and I don't think he thought he could do much more. NIH was practically completed, the Library of Medicine was standing there, all these marvelous monuments to his vision in the field of human health and medicine were on-going, research programs, training programs, medical schools, nursing schools, etc., etc., etc. There wasn't much left to do, really. The machinery for discovering the cure for all ills was in place. It was not up to senators any more, except to give them more money, to do anything.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think it was that they were running out of new ideas or were they beginning to run out of money, in the sense that the "guns and butter" issue took over in the 90th Congress?

**MCCLURE:** Well, of course, you are spreading the question far beyond the Labor Committee. You're getting into welfare payments and food stamps and all that sort of thing. We didn't handle those things. We should have, I suppose, but they were under Finance and Agriculture. Though we were called Public Welfare, we didn't really have any welfare at all, that was a Finance thing, along with Social Security, which substantively should be in the Labor Committee but has always been, because it's based on a tax, in the Finance

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Committee. Well, that's the way this place is divided up. To the degree, and it was enormous, that the Vietnam war sopped up vast public funds and dumped them in the Mekong Delta, obviously it cut down the amount of money available even for ongoing programs, let alone new ones.

I don't think it was a question--I was speaking earlier of Hill--of his running out of ideas. I'm saying that he had damn near done everything that needed to be done, except to vastly improve Medicare and Medicaid, neither of which he could do a thing about; they were in Russell Long's [Finance] committee. I think he felt he'd made his contribution, that another term would just be another term, without any promise of advance, and maybe some promise of retreat, when you see what's occurred. Nixon was coming in and all of that. He got out in time. I miss him. I missed him then, but I can see he didn't make a mistake in his own terms in leaving.

**RITCHIE:** I asked about the Johnson treatment in lobbying, but the AFL-CIO also seemed to play a prominent role in Great Society legislation. Did they have a lot to do with lobbying the Labor

Committee?

**MCCLURE:** They certainly were the most powerful single outside influence on the Labor Committee that existed. They were prominent not only in labor legislation, which is, of course, what they are all about, but without their muscle, advances in health and education

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would have been very much more difficult, because they recognized that working men's children need education and working men get sick, and their wives need medical treatment, and so forth. Not only from a public relations point of view was it essential that they support these programs that were not directly involved in labor relations, minimum wage or something, but it was good for their own members, good internal relations, too. Oh, they were extremely powerful and extremely important, and if they threw a "No" on something it probably wouldn't happen. Of course, they didn't always win. They had endless struggles to repeal that section of Taft-Hartley that prohibits secondary boycotts. Never got it through. In fact, they never got anything through favorable to themselves that amended Taft-Hartley. That was the Rock of Ages on which they foundered, once it was in law. All they got was Landrum-Griffin on top of it.

**RITCHIE:** That was one of the few pieces of labor legislation that Johnson was defeated on.

**MCCLURE:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** What was it about that one that made it so impossible to crack?

**MCCLURE:** Well, it affected the building trades, largely. The carpenters would want to throw a picket line around a site and freeze out plumbers and riveters and all the other trades. Or they'd put a

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picket line around another plant that produced something that the first plant needed, that kind of thing. But mainly it was all on construction sites. The industrial unions didn't give a damn, really--the CIO unions within the AFL-CIO--about this provision. They weren't involved in secondary boycotts. The contractors are numerous and generally well-to-do, and very well connected with the business

community, and the banks and financing, and you really had a confrontation by a segment of the labor movement, against the whole organized business community. In that situation they couldn't very well recruit enough members to support them. Big unions didn't really care. Even the Teamsters weren't particularly concerned. It was a building trades issue. Oh, it was perennial. We had a hearing every Congress. Sometimes we'd report it, maybe we wouldn't. Nothing every happened to it.

Be that as it may, anything affecting the labor movement, whether directly or through their interests in other subjects, brought word from them--they had a squad, they had twenty-five people on the Hill, they had a legislative director who managed the troops, they fanned out; some of them were actually indefatigable, some were lazy, but they were there. And they let you know. They touched all bases. They really didn't need to come around to us except to tell us, "Great, keep doing what you're doing," or make some comment about "Well, don't do it that way because . . .", "We prefer it this way, but it doesn't matter too much." We were intertwined with them so

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much. We lunched together. We knew what they wanted, and we knew our bosses wanted it, so we didn't have any problem with conflicts of interest or being bribed by a ham sandwich or something.

Just to show you the kind of impact they could bring to bear, when I returned to the staff directorship after Senator Williams became chairman in 1970, there used to be a little club called the "Club 116" in an alley back here, which no longer exists. It's where the Hart Building now sits. Schotts Alley. A lot of lobbyists belonged to it and played poker and what-not, waiting for something to happen. One day, shortly after I came back, Senator Williams said, "We're having lunch with Biemiller at the 116 Club at 12:30." I said, "All right, I'll walk over with you." Now, Andy Biemiller was a former congressman from Milwaukee who had been defeated in the '40s and had joined the legislative staff of the then AFL, before the merger with the CIO. As time went on it was amusing, as George Meany got heavier and jowlier, and bigger-bellied, so did Andy Biemiller. They were physical twins at the end, and I think twins in every other way, too. So Biemiller had a list and he just handed it to Senator Williams and said, "Now this is what we want this year." The senator said, "Stewart, you've got your marching orders." That was the end of it, just like that.

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**RITCHIE:** When they indicated the issues they were interested in, how did they go about supporting them? Did they offer support, background material . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Oh, all the time. Anything, plus buttonholing, and lapel-holding, and backslapping, and indications of support in upcoming elections and all the other things that lobbies do. They were often more effective on matters not directly effecting themselves because they were allied with other lobbies that were working toward health legislation or education. Whereas, in the case of a labor struggle per se they didn't have any allies really, oh, a few public interests groups issued statements, but you didn't see the nurses or the NEA up here struggling to help get some amendment to Taft-Hartley. It just doesn't work that way. But they were the muscle, the labor lobby, labor movement, behind all social legislation passed up here in the last twenty years or more, probably longer, but certainly since the war. After they merged in '55 they, of course, both weakened and strengthened themselves. The dynamism of the CIO was greatly muted, but the muscle of the AFL was added to the mix.

I think George Meany, if we separate out his gruff manner and his harsh views on certain things, and his rather long reluctance to recognize the Civil Rights Movement, was probably the right leader for the labor movement after the war. He did have a heart, and he

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did have social concern, he really did. He certainly understood politics as well as anybody in town. I'll never forget--I think I mentioned this earlier--in 1968 I think it was, the Senate set up a committee under Mike Monroney of Oklahoma to reorganize the Senate committees that were getting out-of-hand and overlapping. They ground away in their backrooms for months. I guess they had some hearings, but mainly it was a staff operation. They prepared papers.

Word leaked out that one of the proposals they were going to make--they had legislative authority--was to split the Labor Committee in two to create an Education and Health Committee and just leave the Labor Committee standing there naked by itself. Well, I've just told you that the interrelationship, this symbiotic relationship between education and health on one side and labor on the other was brought to focus in our committee, more even than in the House where health is in the Commerce Committee. We were the central point at which these three different forces met, and to pull them apart would weaken both and might absolutely wreck labor's power up here completely, because it would be impossible to get anybody in his right mind to serve on the Labor Committee if all he was going to be involved in was the labor-management war. He couldn't win. No matter which way he went the other side would murder him. They would have had to dump freshmen on it like they used to do on the District Committee, who'd sweat till they could be promoted off of it. It would have been utter

disaster.

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I saw that and so did Bill Reidy and we went to work. Since Lister Hill was retiring, he didn't give a damn, but he didn't stop us. We set to work to stop the Monroney proposal from ever leaving the committee or even getting in their report. We recruited Mary Lasker, of whom I've spoken, this millionaire woman in New York who had backed Lister Hill's health measures and especially research in medicine. She got on the horn, and she knew all of these senators because she had given money to most of them, and expressed her concern. We rounded up a number of troops, but the clincher was that I could never get a hold of Biemiller. Why wasn't he around? Here was a thing that was going to wreck their legislative program forever and he was making no signs of paying any attention to it. It called him and I called some of his people. "Ah, that's not going to get anywhere. Don't worry about that." I said, "What do you mean? I'm talking with the staff of that outfit and they're going to put it in their recommendations and it will be grabbed by a large number of senators if it ever gets out of committee." Well, they never did anything.

So one day there was a bill being signed by President Johnson. It was a bill from our committee, I don't remember what it was, something that the AFL-CIO was interested in. Johnson used to invite all the lobbyists and interest-group spokesmen, and members of the committee and staff to the signing. You got a pen, "The president wants you to have this as a memento of . . ." We all had scores of them at

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the end. But whatever this was, we met in the Fish Room first, standing around, milling around till we could go in and go through the line and shake the hand of the president and Mrs. Johnson and get our little pen and a speech from him. It was a nice thing to do. They still do it in a minor way; they have a few senators and congressmen around the president as he's signing it; you see it in the paper. But this was a big show, based I think on that memorandum I sent to Johnson at the very beginning, urging him to bring the congressional staff into his operation, that we needed it and he needed us. He did a lot of things like that. He had a whole evening lawn party for staff; well, I hadn't meant that, but the idea was that--and he knew after having been up here--that staff had an enormous say in things and should be cultivated and kept informed, by the White House not just by the departments.

Well, anyway, here we were, and I noticed George Meany standing talking to somebody. I went up and when the other person left I said, "Mr. Meany are you aware of the proposal in the Monroney Reorganization Committee to split the Labor Committee?" And he said, "WHAP" I said, "To split the Labor Committee into Health and Education in one committee and Labor in another." I thought he was going to blow his stack. He'd never heard of it. "ANDY!" Biemiller was standing across the room. "COME OVER HERE!" What's this about the Monroney Committee proposal?" Biemiller said, "Well, what one?" "Well, Stewart was telling me . . . tell him." It was

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terrible because I'd really wrecked my relationship with Biemiller, but I had to do it. Then, having gotten through it very fast and wishing I was somewhere else, Meany said, "Andy, get up there and stop that." Which he did, and it did. Because he understood *instantly* what that would mean. He was a very shrewd old guy.

Of course, Biemiller hated me from then on. We were never great friends, but we had a good working relationship, but after that it was just hopeless. He never came around; I didn't exist. Well, I left the committee, too, shortly thereafter, when Lister Hill retired. I called him up once to get a line on something I was working on and I might as well have been talking to a blank wall. "Yeah . . . right . . . uh huh, goodbye." Because really I'd caught him out in the most critical posture for the legislative rep of a big organization to be caught in, but I didn't know how else I was going to stop this thing. The chairman of the committee didn't give a damn. How were we going to stop it? Well, you had to use the only muscle that was available, and they wouldn't respond. It was a bad show.

**RITCHIE:** Do you attribute it to labor's intervention that they were able to stop the Monroney Committee at that point?

**MCCLURE:** Oh, sure. Immediately. I'd been to Morse and Javits and they were active, too, but when they could march in with George Meany and a few muscle men from the labor organizations . . .

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Well, Monroney wasn't really sold on this. He had nothing evil in mind, he was just tidying up things. He quickly saw the point, too, and shelved it. It was a staff proposal in the first place. Nobody had any

intention, I don't believe, to do what it would do, or realized the effect it would have, but once it was pointed out to them, then they could see that they were proposing a very dangerous idea, unless they were working for the Chamber of Commerce, which I don't think they were.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned that you sent a memorandum to Johnson when he became president, about the congressional staff. What prompted you to do that?

**MCCLURE:** Well, one time when he was majority leader he called committee staff directors together and gave us coffee; Bobby Baker rounded us up and Johnson would rub our shoulders, "Now, get back there and get your chairman going." It was absurd, because we had very little to say about what our chairmen were going to do, to promote things. I was impressed at he technique, though. I didn't think that it really served a purpose except that it pleased the staff people to be recognized. So Charlie Brewton, who went down as a deputy director of the Office of Emergency Planning under Kennedy, stayed on and worked in Emergency Planning conducting the president's fund-raising organization, thousand-dollar tickets for special treatment at the conventions and all that sort of thing. That was

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Charlie's emergency, to raise money for the President's Fund. It was quite legal, of course, it was political money. There were no deductions. So he was pretty close to the White House. Furthermore, that unfortunate chap who was Lyndon's closest aide, Walter Jenkins, was a friend of ours on the Hill.

Charlie and I were talking one night about what could be suggested to Lyndon to help him. He had just become president, with all of this crashing around his head, and we got talking about this, the waiting troops on the Hill who want to help him, but they've got to be asked. Charlie said, "Why don't you draft up something and we'll take it over to Walter?" So I did. In fact, Charlie joined in, and in his usual flamboyant language made it quite an impressive document. I just wanted to send in the idea, but he had troops marching and the colors massing. You could just see the whole Senate staff out there: Huzzah! Huzzah! Walter liked it and took it right in to the president. I just thought it would be nice to have the staff people down to talk with the White House staff on legislative matters and the president might drop in and pat them on the back. That's about all I intended. But, God, he went into a full-scale lawn party. He had a reception one night and the whole White House was turned over to the congressional staff, huge reception line, champagne and the works.

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He had a lot of things going that were designed to influence the staff, no question about it. Well, he did the same for members, of course, but this was something new. Now whether it came out of my memo or not, I have no idea, but I did suggest something like that. And it was a natural for him, because one way he operated was through staff. That's not well known, I suppose, but he had to. Maybe not directly, maybe Bobby Baker did the actual talking, but he knew all of the staff and who was whom, and who worked for whom, and what they were up to. Hell, you can't work up here without knowing the staff has to be taken into consideration. How do you get an idea to a senator? Frequently the only way is through his staff.

**RITCHIE:** In addition to Johnson I was interested in the Senate leadership in the 1960s, Mike Mansfield, Vice President Humphrey, Edward Kennedy as Democratic Whip, Everett Dirksen as Republican leader. How effective was the leadership at that time?

**MCCLURE:** Are you talking about the Johnson period?

**RITCHIE:** The Johnson period, mid-60s.

**MCCLURE:** I don't think they had to be effective. The leader was in the White House. The leadership of the Democratic party was in the White House. That includes both houses. Mansfield was an ideal successor, since nobody could fill Johnson's shoes. There wasn't anybody around like that. Never will be again, probably.

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Mansfield was a quiet, scholarly, gentle, soft-spoken man, highly respected by everybody. I've seen him get angry once or twice, but it was very rare and usually on some minor issue involving Montana where he wanted to get a headline by shrieking--a Veterans' hospital about to be closed, or something like that. But in terms of the operation of the Senate you didn't even know he was around. To the degree there had to be traffic movement, which there does, Kennedy was perfectly able to do that. It's a staff matter anyway, which bill comes up when, how do you manage the day-to-day operations of the floor. I don't recall Mansfield's intervening in anything at any time. Nor did he have to, much.

Then he became, I think, quite disillusioned with the Vietnamese war, early on, as did, oddly enough, Richard Russell, long before any public intimation of that appeared. Most senators were very disturbed by it. None of them were as clever as George Aiken who said, "Why don't we just declare a victory

and get out." I wish we had. You know, the Senate really never did take a position, at least not very early, on Vietnam. They were awfully unhappy with Johnson. I remember hearing Russell in the lobby looking at an AP printer, and turning away and saying to somebody, "For God's sake, we've got to get out of that place!" This was early, I don't remember what year it was, '66 or something.

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But Kennedy didn't have much to do either, and I guess he didn't please people enough to keep him, because he lost the job the next round. Humphrey didn't do anything much. You didn't have to. With Johnson in the White House, having majorities in both houses, the leadership on either side didn't have to do a lot, didn't have to run things.

When Nixon came in, of course, Mansfield was still leader and [Carl] Albert was still speaker, and the present speaker [Thomas P. O'Neill] was majority leader, you had a whole different ball game. You were in opposition and you try to keep your troops in line and you try to look like you have an alternative. I don't think we did too well on that, and haven't done too much since, in posing alternatives that were any better. It's hard to say, I wasn't up here for much of Nixon's time. I wasn't up on the Hill, so I don't know exactly how things were done, but I know from the very beginning Senate committees were quite critical of Nixon's appointees, they gave him a hard time on a lot of them. But they usually gave in and let him have his people, as they always do. And again, Mansfield didn't change his style and there wasn't any leadership.

Mansfield's style was to let the chairmen of the committees run their own shows, come out with whatever they wanted to come out with, whenever they wanted to. And he'd juggle around the schedule to take care of them. But he never called up to say, "We've got to have your

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bill on Tuesday," or something like that. Johnson would. No, very low-key, quiet guy. Of course, the chairmen all loved this. They were all kings again in their own domains. Dukes of their dukedoms.

We'll never see another Lyndon Johnson, at least in my time; maybe yours. Sui generis, that guy. He seized the moment, by God. He probably never expected to become president. If Kennedy had lived and been reelected, Johnson would have served two terms and departed the scene too old to run. So

here was this fabulous opportunity, and he made the most of it. God bless him.

Well, you read a list of bills earlier on that we acted on in that 89th Congress--by the way, this is not on point, but earlier when we were talking about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I made the claim that Charlie Lee and I had dreamed up this Title I. Well, if we did, it was in the afterglow of what had happened in the poverty legislation, as Don Baker reminded me just this morning, and I want to amend what I said earlier and not take quite as much looming credit. But the first concern of the poverty people in the task force, long before a bill came up here, was the church-state question. If you're going to pour money into communities and have community action groups who were going to be spending federal money, it was bound to be that a lot of them would be Catholic and other church schools and hospitals and so forth.

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In the process of refining legislation to take account of that--which is what Charlie and I were thinking about, too, later, the next year--it was determined that the money would go where the poor children were, no matter what building they were in or under whose auspices the program was being conducted, that the money was going to the poor, children as well as adults. And that's really what the key to Title I of ESEA is, it goes to the poor kids who happen to be in a certain district, but it doesn't go to the school district because it was a geographical area; it goes to a district because it has a high percentage of poor children going to school there. So I want to add that, that this idea was not totally new. Part of it was, but not all of it.

Well, there aren't any new ideas really around here. You know, somebody's thought of these things and they're tucked away in an amendment somewhere in 1912. In fact, a staff man could make himself a very important position up here by just digging into the past ideas that were great but never got anywhere, looking for the moment to reintroduce them. Take Senator /Harrison/ Williams, for example. Senator Humphrey had been on the committee in the early 150s, before I went aboard. He conducted lengthy hearings on the problems of migratory labor, but left the committee to go, I believe to Foreign Relations, and that just ended it. Nothing was ever done, I don't think any bills ever developed out of them.

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Then one day in '59, Senator Williams, who had just been elected to the Senate and named to the committee, and was very eager to be doing something, though he was the most junior member, came over with this great idea he wanted to have me help him sell to Senator Hill. He said, "I think we ought to have a subcommittee on international health." I said, "Well, I think we should, too, Senator, but if you propose that to Senator Hill I'm afraid he wouldn't have a very high regard for you for the rest of your life around here. He is Mr. Health." "Ah," he said, "that's right. Yeah, well, I hadn't thought of that," he said. "I was thinking of outside the country." I said, "Well, he thinks outside the country, too; in fact he's got a bill, involving international health, cooking." "Oh," he said. "Well, damn it, I want to do something, Stewart, what can you think of that would be good for me, from New Jersey, close to the labor movement?"

I thought a moment and I said, "You've got a lot of migratory workers in New Jersey. This would be good for you only in one sense, what I'm going to suggest." He said, "You mean I should take over the migratory labor field?" I said, "Sure, that's what I'm going to suggest. But you've got to reflect that all the growers aren't going to like what you are going to find, or any of the legislation that you will develop." He said, "Oh, I know that, but I know the conditions those people live under. They're horrible, they're vile. Something should be done, and I'm going to ask Senator Hill to put me

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onto doing that. That's a great idea." Well, we dug up Humphrey's hearings and off we went.

He became a hero in New Jersey among all the people of good-will, the good-works people, the religious people. The only people who hated him were the farm growers, the owners who hired migratory labor, who were going to be required to put in toilets and something beside tar paper shacks. But that was pure serendipity. I had been reading something in the back history of the committee and noted this study that Humphrey had made and then abandoned. Oh, Williams went a long way with that. I don't know whether migratory workers are any better off than they were, but at least the federal government paid a lot more attention to them after his efforts.

**RITCHIE:** It became a national issue shortly after that when CBS did "The Harvest of Shame" documentary.

**MCCLURE:** Sure, terrific program.

**RITCHIE:** Made a reputation for Williams.

**MCCLURE:** Yes, it did. He did well with it. He went down into the South into these God-awful places where these people returned after they stopped working up here, when they worked in the fruit fields in Florida and all over the South. There are two migrant streams, one up the East coast, to follow the crops as the season

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advances, and another goes up the middle West. There's a third one on the West coast, but it's much smaller.

He did a wonderful job, and he had a grand guy doing his work for him, Fred Blackwell, who was one of the first additional staff members we added, I think I told you. When /Strom/ Thurmond, who had drafted him to be counsel to the Veterans' subcommittee, left, Yarborough took over the Veterans' subcommittee, but there wasn't really a lot to do. So, when the proposal made by Williams reached Senator Hill, about migratory labor, the chairman asked me in. He said, "What are we going to do about staff? I don't want a lot of staff around here." I said, "Well, Fred Blackwell probably would be sympathetic to this whole subject; he comes from a very poor mill family in South Carolina. They're not migrants, they're not in the bottom of the heap either, but he knows all about the poverty problems of the South. Furthermore, he isn't doing enough to keep him busy in the Veterans' subcommittee." So we assigned Fred to that. Well, of course, in due time we had six or eight people on it. And Yarborough had three or four on Veterans'; but that was the process as the '60s went on.

**RITCHIE:** With all this change with the creation of new subcommittees and the addition of new staff members, how did this affect your work as the chief clerk of the committee?

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**MCCLURE:** Well, it multiplied it about as many times as the staff . Don't forget that among my duties was taking the minutes of *all* executive sessions, committee and subcommittee. This was before the open hearings and open meetings we now have, and before they hired stenotypists to type it all up. The committee clerk's job in the law is to keep the minutes. I was scrupulous about it, never missed one in my life, took them in long-hand on long yellow sheets, and within the day had them typed--so I could remember what I didn't write down. They were very full, because I wanted not just the sparse thing saying "Senator So-and-So offered an amendment which was adopted," as the old minutes read. That

didn't mean anything. It didn't really describe what happened, and the arguments for and against. You needed more, not boringly, but the essence of everything: who did what, who said what, and how it came out.

Well, as you got fifteen subcommittees--fortunately I had control of time and space so that nobody could have two executive sessions at the same time, that was out. We had to find rooms, we still do, of course, everybody has to borrow somebody's hearings room. We could have three or four hearings going at once, that was no problem because the subcommittee staffs handled those. In keeping track of what each subcommittee was doing and sitting in the executive session taking minutes I was pretty well aware, and if the chairman said, "What's going on over there?" I knew because I had been there and could read him the minutes, if he wanted them, which

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he sometimes did. It was an intelligence operation for the chairman as well as for historical record. And the staffs used it when it came time for the floor; they wanted to see how things went in executive session, and they had a record vote, the names, and the voting slips attached, so that the staff could be thoroughly briefed on what had happened. They served a number of purposes. And they're fun to read now, as a matter of fact, because I put in jokes and anything I could liven it up with. So that was a big piece.

Handling the payroll, which was supervised by the Disbursing Office, required knowing all of our people, what they were earning, where they were sitting, and how long they had been here, and whom they depended on for their job. Then the annual struggle for resolution money and justification got bigger and bigger and bigger as time went on and more justification had to be dreamed up to be presented to the Rules Committee. What a farce that all was! But we went through the routine every year; I guess they still do.

Plus the human equation of having fifteen so-called staff directors of subcommittees, some of which had only two or three people. But there were fifteen men or women with whom I had to be in touch at all times: drop in on their offices, keep an eye on them, find out what's going on, and they coming to me with a lot of traffic all the time. I don't mean I was staff director in the sense I told them what to do. That was not my role. I was chief clerk,

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technically and in fact. But if you're going to try to manage one of these huge things up here with sixteen senators on the committee, plus a lot of others who get involved, and their staff, and your staff, and your chairman's staff, and your members' staffs, you know, there may be five hundred people you've got to be aware of at all times, and maybe two hundred of them you see in a week, in a hard week when you've got to run around and do things outside the office, and go touch bases. I loved every minute of it, don't misunderstand me, but it was really a hot seat by the time we had a hundred and fourteen people.

**RITCHIE:** I was wondering in the sense that obviously the work increased at a greater rate than the remuneration . . . .

**MCCLURE:** Oh! Indeed it did!

**RITCHIE:** And yet you stuck it out with this committee for all this time.

**MCCLURE:** Sure, I loved it.

**RITCHIE:** You were probably in a position to have gone into lobbying.

**MCCLURE:** I was offered a couple and I didn't even think of it. I knew there was no better place in the government to work than the Senate, and as I looked around the country I knew I could make

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more money, but I couldn't see any place where I'd have as much fun, where I went to the theatre every day for free, sometimes two and three different plays going on at once. Hearings, executive sessions, conferences, debates on the floor--wonderful. And topping it all, the feeling that you're participating in historical events of some consequence, sometimes. God knows, not all the time, but at times you really were involved in big things, and that's fun, of course. Oh, I wouldn't have quit here. If I had a chairman I could live with I'd still be here. No, I wouldn't, I couldn't have lived with the Republicans, that's not true. I would have left. But I mean in terms of functioning, I wouldn't be able to stand it even if they wanted me around. I got out about the right time. Nixon was in power and there wasn't going to be anything going on that would interest that committee much; mainly fighting off Nixon and his minions was the principal job. I'm just very happy I wasn't up here when Carter was president, and I'm *doubly* happy, triply, that I'm not here now. Should Walter Mondale, or some Democrat become president and we get a Democratic Senate again, and I'm only seventy-five years of age, I

might consider coming around, a Nestorian figure advising from the sidelines. That's by no means certain.

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**End of Interview #6**

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## 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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## HARRISON WILLIAMS AND THE LABOR COMMITTEE

### Interview #8

Tuesday, May 3, 1983

**RITCHIE:** What was it that drew you from the Public Works Committee back to the Labor Committee?

**MCCLURE:** Poetic justice, really. I had a perfectly lovely job with the Public Works Committee. I was friends with all the staff. The chairman, Randolph, was a favorite man of mine. I got along with everybody and I did very interesting work, but I had been a staff director and I'd been ousted in a manner that was degrading, I thought. While it was quite appropriate that the new chairman is entitled to have his own man, the manner in which he'd done it was so stupid and crude and inhumane, I really thought I had been unjustly expelled from my job, and I wanted it back.

The other thing about it, professionally speaking, was that as a professional staff member one had a rather limited field of activity. One was assigned a bill or an area of concern, and one performed within those limits. Well, I'd been used to dealing with the entire spectrum of legislation and subcommittees that the Labor Committee handled, and the subcommittees it created to handle it. It was a very broad spectrum with everything from labor and education and health on through to juvenile delinquency and the arts and

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humanities and alcoholism and anything one can think of. We had fifteen subcommittees, which was a much bigger arena, so I was tempted to go back and be in that arena rather than this more circumscribed spot on the Public Works Committee. But I left the Public Works Committee loving them all, and Randolph understood quite well why I was seeking to do what I was doing, and supported me, too.

In the campaign of 1970, Senator Williams, who had had a history of alcoholism in the Senate, which was well known to everyone, and there had been some sad scenes in New Jersey--I believe at some NAACP convention he fell down off the platform drunk as a goat, you know, it was really very bad--and the party bosses in New Jersey said they were going to dump him because he would be defeated by any Republican. Well, for whatever reasons, Senator Williams performed a very difficult task. He stopped drinking, he joined the AAs [Alcoholics Anonymous], he concentrated on physical exercise, and as far as I know he's never had a drink since. If you see him sipping something it's ginger ale as a rule. He defeated this demon, and I have enormous respect for him. In the process he went on

television in New Jersey and told the people of New Jersey that he had had an alcoholic problem but it had been licked and never again would the filthy stuff pass his lips.

Then the party bosses believed him, and it was true, and the unions, who were the biggest force in the state, said, "Fine, we love

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Pete Williams, but we couldn't take him the way he was\* We'll all go for him." But there was lagging, of course, among the troops who hadn't studied the whole question, and his reputation was very poor in that respect. So, I don't know who it was but somebody went to Senator Randolph, who was then the ranking Democratic member of the Labor Committee. He had a choice of chairing either committee, and he sent forth an announcement which was used in the Williams campaign very heavily, endorsing Williams and saying that if Williams were elected he would be the chairman of the Labor Committee because Senator Randolph intended to stay as chairman of Public Works, thereby opening the way and taking himself out of the seniority ladder on the Labor Committee. That was very helpful to Pete, of course, to Senator Williams, because then they were not only reelecting a senator, they were electing a chairman of a very potent committee that had enormous impact on the state of New Jersey. It's a people committee, and New Jersey's an urban state, really. The committee, other than the Banking and Housing Committee, probably has more impact on persons living in New Jersey than any other Senate committee. So they had every good reason to support Williams, and he won.

I sent him a contribution and I was in touch with his people, and I knew them anyway. He returned to Washington briefly after the election and I paid my respects and told him I was eager to come back and work with him. I planted the seeds, so to speak. Well, he

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disappeared, went into some health spa or something over Christmas. So I generated a certain amount of lobbying, internal and external, but I could never get to see him. It was a little like seeking Yarborough as to when he was going to fire me as it was to see Williams to persuade him to hire me! There was just one little black spot in the whole thing. I ran into my old friend Frederick Blackwell, who worked on the Labor Committee and had been Senator Williams' staff man on migratory labor and his drinking companion or hand-holding companion when Williams was sopping up stuff in all the

bars in town. Fred and I had always been very close. He said, "Stewart, you're making a big mistake. It won't work. It isn't like it used to be. It never will be. Senator Hill's gone. Yarborough's gone. This committee is not what it used to be and never will be again. You won't be able to stand it. Don't do it." Well, in my excess of hubris and certitude that I could conquer all these minor obstacles and difficulties I brushed that aside, but I remembered it. In due course I had reason to. But he gave me the warning and I didn't listen to it. I didn't follow his suggestions.

Finally, I cornered Senator Williams in a hallway someplace. It was getting to be the first of January or near there, and I said, "Senator, we're going to have a new Senate in about a few days and then we'll have to have an organizational meeting. I would like to know if you're going to hire me as your staff director. If not, I must tell Senator Randolph and the staff there so they can put me

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back to work in that committee, or find somebody to take my place if I move here." I gave him all the reasons why he had to make a decision. So he said, "All right, bring me the papers." Well, Randolph was chairman, technically, until the Senate reorganized. So I had this weird set-up in which Randolph ordered me taken off the Public Works Committee and put on the Labor Committee as acting chairman of the Labor Committee. So Williams never really signed me on. Technically, it had to be done that way. I carried the papers around to Brenkworth, and it was all done.

Then the new world opened upon me and it was not at all like it had ever been before. In the first place, I couldn't find my chairman: the first week in January, the second week in January, the third week in January. He had a new AA named Ben Palombo, a professor from Princeton, able, capable young man, and a couple of other new people. On the Labor Committee I found some persons who had been brought in by Yarborough, very good men, most of them, from the Labor Department: Bob Nagle, Nik Edes, and another chap whose name escapes my mind although he was an extremely able guy. They were on the Labor subcommittee which Yarborough had been chairing, and Williams liked them all and intended to keep them, too. So I met these chaps whom I had not known, and we found we got along very well. Nagle was chief counsel and the other guy was counsel of the subcommittee on Labor, and I've forgotten what Nik's job was.

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But also there was a huge hang-over of Yarborough people, including Mr. Robert Harris, who'd been the staff director. Since Yarborough had been defeated in the primary in June, his boys had *loaded* the committee with friends who did nothing, I mean they just drew salaries. There were ten or twelve guys who had nothing to do, but they were pulling down Senate money as Yarborough appointees. I don't think he even knew they were there. You know, Harris pushed the papers around and they did it. Well, those boys were all going to go and they knew it. I didn't even have to tell them. We just couldn't have them around. They were doing nothing; they had no connection with Williams. There was a room at the end of the suite, separated by the minority offices, and it had two desks and a few telephones. I told these guys to use that room to find jobs, which they all did in due course. All from Texas--what a gang!

Then Mr. Harris, I called on him and I said, "I don't have a green parking sticker to give you, because I've been parking over under the fountain [underground Senate parking garage] in a numbered slot, but I would like my parking place in the [Dirksen Office Building] garage back again." He said, "No problem. I'm going to be staff director of the DC [District of Columbia] Committee under Senator [Thomas] Eagleton, and I've got a slot about three steps from yours." That's a great story of the parking lot and parking spaces!

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There was a girl who'd been a pain in the neck to me for years, a girl named Lucille Gould, from North Carolina, I believe. She'd been hired in a critical moment way back in the beginning, when we needed an extra secretary. One of the old-line staff people who'd been there long before I came, named Chick Heerlein, a nice simple-minded chap who'd been a minor clerk to the committee since the beginning of the century, I guess--there were quite a few old characters around when I first came aboard with Lister Hill--well, this fellow had stayed on. Calendar clerk, that was his job. So when we needed a clerk he said, "Oh, I know just the girl, she works for a congressman from North Carolina and she's looking for a job." So over she came.

She was damn good. She was a very efficient, competent, capable secretary. She could not be faulted by anybody. But she was a bitch. She tortured all the other girls. She tortured me! But every guy she worked for--and she worked for every staff man on the Subcommittee on Labor that we had--couldn't do without her. She knew all the union guys, she knew all the lobbyists, she knew where the files were, she knew who said what in what meeting and what time. Absolutely superb professional staff person, but a virago, hoyden. Girls would come in to me weeping: "Mr. McClure, I can't work in that office any longer if that bitch is going to be there!" So I'd try to fire her and her guy each time--Ralph Dungan had her, John Sweeney, John Bruff, Don Baker; I can't remember them all--everyone

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of them, they knew she was a hell of a problem for everybody, but she was so good for their purposes that they would never allow me to get rid of her.

Bob Harris had been the latest Labor Subcommittee counsel when I was still there the first time, and he had latched on to Lucille. He brought her into his office with him as secretary to the staff director, and expelled my old secretary Marjorie Whitaker, who'd been there longer than anybody practically. She was dumped into nowhere land. They didn't fire her but they just didn't give her anything to do. She'd come down to the Public Works Committee and weep, and I'd take her to lunch and pat her hand: "Maybe things will get better, Marjorie." Well, they did for her. The first thing I did was to summon Lucille Gould--after I'd traded parking places with her superior officer. I said, "Lucille, you are going on extended leave." She said, "What's that?" I said, "It's leave requiring you not to come to the office, allowing you time to find another job at which time your leave will cease. Goodbye." That was that. Then Marjorie came streaming back in in all her glory, fixed the office the way it had been, moved the furniture back the way it had been, got rid of all the Lucille Gould doodads. It was a moment of triumph. Oh, dear, what fun.

Well, still my chairman was not available. We had a lot of new, to me, members. I didn't know Eagleton, I didn't know [Alan]

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Cranston. There was one other who'd come into the committee while I was on Public Works, Harold Hughes of Iowa. Well, they all had to have subcommittees, of course. The regular structure pretty much remained. Yarborough was no longer there so the new chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor was Williams. Then he merged Migratory Labor with it so he wouldn't violate the new rule that no senator can hold more than one subcommittee chairmanship on a given committee.

Senator Eagleton came and said, "I would like to have the Subcommittee on Aging." That was a nice, easy research-kind of subcommittee, well they had some legislative power. I said, "Well, I'm terribly sorry, Senator, but Senator Cranston's man has told me that was what he would like." And Eagleton--I'd never had a senator come to my desk before he did--said "Stewart, you may not realize it, but when I was elected in 1968 in Missouri, the governor appointed me to the Senate the day after the election, so I have seniority over Senator Cranston." Oh, God. "I didn't know that, sir." He said,



"Well that's the way it is." So now I had to go to Cranston, who was not in town either--he was in California--go to his man, Jonathan Steinberg, and explain this situation. But I shouldn't have had to be doing this at all. I was not the chairman of this committee. Here I was dealing with United States senators over subcommittee chairmanships, which were the life blood of any senator. It was absolutely awful.

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There were others of that kind where I just got into terrible binds. I had to make decisions I had no power to make, and the people who received the word operated on it as if I did, and then I'd have to later get Senator Williams to ratify it. It was awful. Papers piling up, the horrendous appearance before the Rules Committee to get our money was looming, and there was still no chairman. It was the most ungodly month I ever spent. As anyone working around here knows, when your boss is unavailable--I couldn't even find him on the phone--and you've got to do things, the law requires things to be done, the facts require them, other senators require them. Oh, God, it was awful.

But of course, in due time he appeared on the scene, bristling and ready to go, and everything was apparently normal. Then he said, "Well, we better have an organizational meeting. Call all the Democratic senators over to your office and assign subcommittee chairmanships and memberships and work all this out." Bob Nagle and I did the paperwork of who wanted what and who could have what, and fitted it in to this, that, and the other. The meeting took place and it was all very cordial. Everybody was happy to have Senator Williams as chairman, I think they really were. He was a charming guy and everybody liked him. He was sobered up and looked like he was ready to take charge and be the chairman.

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There was just this one loose end. Senator Cranston wasn't there. He had been eased out of the Subcommittee on Aging and there really wasn't another subcommittee. There would have to be one created. I told Jonathan Steinberg that and he was to get a hold of Cranston and come up with a suggestion. Well, Steinberg is alone without a senator in this staff and Democratic caucus. Senator Williams said, "Mr. Steinberg, you represent Senator Cranston I believe. What would you suggest we do to provide him with a subcommittee?" Steinberg, instead of saying, "I'm sorry, I can't speak for him, he's not here, could this be put off?" (which would have been a very sensible thing to do) leaped in and

said, "Yes, we want a subcommittee on the environment!" I looked over and here's Senator Randolph with the steam beginning to come out of his ears. Jesus, you know the Public Works Committee handles the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act. All of the environmental legislation in the Senate is in the Public Works Committee. I thought he would never get his speech out of his mouth. He said, "Bu-bu-but Mr. Chairman, rrrrrgh, I think it should be pointed out," and then he got a hold of himself, "that the Senate Public Works Committee has been considering legislation involving clean air and clean water and solid waste for many years, and has written a number of important laws . . . of

He went on in this self-controlled politeness, and poor old Steinberg was just shriveling. He hadn't given the first thought to, nor had he told me or anybody else this preposterous suggestion he

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was going to make. Well, at that point Senator Williams said, "I think we'd better wait till Senator Cranston returns to town. Thank you, Mr. Steinberg we'll deal with this matter at a later meeting." But it was so funny: a case of a staff man who was just so full of his own importance, speaking for his senator, and told to come up with an idea. He just splattered himself all over the place. It took him months to get anybody to give him any credence after that. Well, he went on to have a very fine career as the staff director of the Veterans Committee, which they set up later with Cranston as chairman, and an extremely able guy, but God he really got splattered that first time.

Then I had another hard job. This involved Senator Williams' present wife. Her name was Jeanette Smith, when she first came into view. She'd been employed in the House by Cornelius Gallagher, a congressman from New Jersey who subsequently went to jail. I don't know if she had anything to do with it, but indeed he did go to jail and she needed another job. Senator Williams had been in the House and a colleague of Gallagher's--and over there they went around dating each other's secretaries and so forth. I should add that Senator Williams was married and had four children, but his wife refused to come to Washington. Never would come and live in this city. It was terrible for him. Here's a bright, handsome, charming, gallant young man without a wife. What does he do? He goes out with

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other girls, of course. So Jeanette was one of his flock in the House. I think many of the House members in those days had active sex lives.

In due course, when Senator Williams became chairman of the Migratory Labor Subcommittee, back in the '60s, one of the new employees that he asked to be put on was Jeanette Smith, who was then married to a naval officer, I believe, living out in Chevy Chase. She was made a clerk of this subcommittee. I never could find out what she did there, except every time I came in the office she was on the phone, talking to some Italian politician in New Jersey. She really was his political agent. She had nothing to do with migratory labor, never came to the hearings, never knew anything about it. She was Senator Williams' political agent, keeping all the pockets sewed up and tempers cooled. There was always a stream of strange looking Italian gentlemen coming through all the time, part of the machinery of the New Jersey Democratic party. But she had an extremely strong hold over Senator Williams. In fact, she divorced her husband with a view to marrying Senator Williams in due course. He had to get divorced, too, and I guess he did, had to, because in--I don't know when it was--they became married.

Mrs. Williams remained on the subcommittee staff, where she assumed the title of chief clerk. Chief clerk of a subcommittee! I now understand they have such things, but in those days it didn't

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exist. Well, this was what he wanted so that's what happened. As time went on it was clear to me, and others too, probably before I saw it, that whatever decisions were being made, both in politics in New Jersey or in the operation of not only Senator Williams' personal office but to every degree possible the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare were being made by Mrs. Williams, then still Mrs. Smith. There had to be at some point a clash, because either I was the staff director or she was. I stalled her off a long time, against terrible demands that somebody be fired because she'd heard her say something contrary to policy, or she was late in the office. Well, it soon turned out that Jeanette Smith had spies in my staff who were reporting to her on a daily basis on the arrival times and departures and length of lunch periods and office comportment of all my own staff, subcommittees and full.

Jeanette persuaded Ben Palombo, the committee chairman's administrative assistant, to have weekly staff meetings to discuss the full panoply of legislative interests and committee interests of Senator Williams. A guy would come from his subcommittee on Banking, which was securities, and somebody from the Rules Committee where he was a member, and three or four of us from the Labor Committee, and then his own staff. We'd sit around and hash the schedule for next week and how this bill was moving and that. And she would sit there, not quite presiding but an imposing presence behind Ben Palombo, who was presiding. These were horrible meetings. There was nothing

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really to discuss that couldn't be done over the phone in two seconds. It was just her way of exhibiting her power over all of us, and insisting on a report on such-and-such being written and submitted to the chairman, something that could be told on the end of a phone or by bumping into him in a corridor. But this was all her scheme of arranging the whole thing so that the chairman was running it all, but it was she who was running him.

Oh, boy, it was very tough on everybody. Nobody wanted this. You take orders from your chairman, of course, and you do what you're supposed to do, but here was this intervening black queen--we finally began calling her "the spider," if she ever laid her paws on you you could expect to be sucked dry and the husk thrown out the next Monday morning. I had to protect my own staff because she was determined to have somebody fired once a week. Later, when she was in full charge and I had left, that's what she did. Once a week somebody would be told on a Friday night, usually some girl who had just barely gotten there, that she was not proving out and her desk would be cleared out by Monday and somebody else would take her place. Every weekend the guillotine came down. Well, I didn't let that happen, but it was

tried all the time. Sometimes the senator himself would say, "I'm hearing funny reports about that girl who's handling this-or-that." I said, "What are you hearing, senator?" "Well, that she's never on her job." "That's not true, she's on her job all the time." I would

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say that this was just a lot of crap. I knew where he was getting it, and he knew I knew, but this was a silly dance we had to go through.

Meanwhile, we did proceed with legislation and we had a good session and reported bills that became law, and it went on on the surface as a well-run committee. Really it wasn't. The subcommittees just went hog-wild, did anything they wanted up, spent any money they wanted to, especially Senator [Edward] Kennedy's Health Subcommittee. I mean, I just had to finally . . . I couldn't get the chairman to talk to Kennedy to bring some kind of discipline. They were going out and hiring cars and trains and planes and spending enormous sums of money all over the country without consulting me or getting any approval of the expenditures. It all had to come back through vouchers, and that's where we stopped them, of course. We'd just say, "Well, this voucher isn't going to be paid. It will have to come out of your pocket." They were a loose-running band. Then, of course, Kennedy wasn't paying any attention to these details either. It was all at the staff level. They were making him look good, getting him in the

papers and on TV and all that, very well, but just as if the federal treasury had been opened to them to go hog wild. And no amount of verbal discipline on my part would stop them.

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I'd go to Williams and say, "Look, we can't go to Brenkworth and the Rules Committee with a bunch of vouchers like this. These are all illegal. You can't *do* what these people are trying to charge us for." He'd say, "Oh, dear, well." "You've got to tell Senator Kennedy to tell them to stop it. I can't tell Senator Kennedy to do anything." "Yeah, you're right, you're right Stewart." And then nothing would happen. That was what was awful. Within the committee, below the surface, behind the facade, and in rooms other than the public rooms, this thing was just shambling along, just crumbling along. If Senator Hill ran a tight ship--and he did--Senator Williams was running a kind of after-the-game melee of celebrants. This was chaotic.

I didn't see how I was going to stick it out. In the first place, I was sure that Jeanette was knifing me at every turn. I'd become close friends with Ben Palombo, the administrative assistant, which at least gave me one strong arm in that office, but he upped and quit one day and decided he was going to help Lloyd Bentsen become president. That was the end of that. Then I didn't have anybody over there whom I could trust, or who would dare to talk to me. You see, that was another part of the game. If you were seen with somebody, Jeanette would get the word and then put dubious connotations to work. Oh, boy, well, she worked at it all the time and did nothing else, so you couldn't take time from your job to fight all this off all the time. It was just sad as hell.

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The thing began coming to a head in 1973. I came back in '71 and I had stood the first session fairly successfully and the second one was halfway through. I was walking over to the floor with Senator Williams one day, and he said, "Stewart, what's this about this financial clerk you've got there? I understand she's not performing quite as well as she should." I said, "Well, I'm afraid I have to disagree with you, sir, she's kept the best books that anybody ever kept since I've been around here." He said, "Well, I hear she leaves early." I said, "Oh, you do? Well, she does. When her books are done and I've looked at them, I tell her to go home. There's no point in sitting there looking at the wall for an hour." He said, "Well, she could share in answering the telephone." Now, how the hell does he know about this? I said, "Well, we have four other girls in that office whose job it is to answer the telephone. They

don't handle these complicated vouchers and financial books, which if you'd ever seen them Senator you would know nobody can understand except Bob Brenkworth and a few of us who have spent our lives studying them. This girl does a fine job."

Afterward, I thought, oh boy, what is all this? Well, the girl had a funny name: Stewart (like I spell my first name) Home. I thought, I better find out how she got here, because I came back from Public Works and she was there. I had not hired her or had anything to do with her. Well, it turned out that she was married and lived down in Alexandria or some place. Her husband had disappeared and

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she was working in a bank, and she had come to the attention of the chief clerk of the Rules Committee, Gordon Harrison. Gordon was a hyper-active guy. He had had a heart attack or two and was popping nitro pills at every hour, and full of energy. He'd gone for this Stewart Home, but he didn't have any job on the Rules Committee for her, to save her from this bank. He and Harrison Williams were old-time buddies, irrespective of the fact that one was a senator and one was not they'd been carousing around Washington for years together. Gordon asked Harrison if he could persuade Yarborough to find this girl a job on the Labor Committee. I suppose all these Harris and Harrisons get funny but Bob Harris then was Labor Committee clerk and he naturally wanted to be cooperative with Senator Harrison Williams and to his good friend Gordon Harrison, who gave us the money [Rules Committee authorization], so this was worked out. This was before I was there, I mean between times.

So I thought, well, why is she being persecuted now? Why does Jeanette want to get her? Gordon Harrison and Harrison Williams are still very good friends. As far as I know, this girl and Gordon are very good friends. What is motivating Jeanette Smith? Then she took it upon herself to call me and say, "You know that girl Stewart Homme. You've got to get rid of her, Stewart. She's utterly impossible. All the other girls are complaining. She doesn't collaborate with them. She doesn't answer the phone. She takes hours for lunch. She comes in late, and goes out early." I said, "Jeanette,

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she's the best financial clerk we've ever had here. What else have you got against her? What is the point?" She said, "Well, you'll find out."

I was in the habit of telling Marjorie everything like this. She was my eyes and ears and always had been a very faithful secretary, public servant, spy, whatever you wish, whatever one expects one's secretary to do in terms of keeping one alert and informed. Marjorie was no fool and she always was careful to be friends with all the powers. She had a great welcoming smile. The senators would come through my office to go to the hearing room, and she'd say, gleamingly, "Would you care for a cup of coffee, Senator?" And they'd gleam back. She was beloved by all the men that came in and out, and of course, in time she'd made friends with Jeanette Smith--after all, the chairman's friend. So I told Marjorie this latest development, and I said, "Can you find out what the hell this is all about." Meaning, please find out from Jeanette why she wants to do in this girl over me, I'm the staff director. In due time, Marjorie reported back that Jeanette had been *told* by somebody that Harrison Williams had been seen embracing Stewart Homme in some corridor, and that was it. Whether that was true or not, of course, no one knows, but that was anyway the pretext that Mrs. Smith was operating on.

Well, I said, this is it, I'm going to cease being staff director in fact if I don't put an end to this. So, again Williams

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caught me in the hall and said, "I'm getting terrible reports about this Stewart Home. What are you going to do about it?" I said, "Well, I didn't think I should do anything until you'd talked with Gordon Harrison." That stopped that for a little while. I mean, he'd hired the girl because Gordon had asked him to. Here was I getting the rap. Well, Jeanette had covered the bases, too. I ran into Gordon at a party a day or two later. He was drunk, and he said, "You stinking bastard," and lit into me as an enemy. What was I doing to his friend Stewart Home? Oh, God, it was just hopeless. What could you do? Somebody had gotten to Gordon and switched it around that I was persecuting her. Maybe Stewart Home had told him that, I don't know. It was just getting to be hopeless. You couldn't do anything, and I was spending much more time on that kind of junk than on my job. Anyway, I refused to fire the girl for a long time.

Finally, I got an order from Williams himself and I had to act, because I'd just in effect said that I'm not going to do something that Jeanette Smith tells me to do. You want it done, you tell me. I mean, I had to get to that stage with him. It was awful, I'd never talked to a senator like that. Never had to deal with a man who couldn't be a man. Well, I got an order, and I told her, and she knew what it was all about, and I knew what it was all about, and Gordon Harrison, everybody knew what it was all about. But I was the goat and everybody -- Homme and Gordon Harrison--fingered me as the

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source of all this stuff, and that came back to Williams. His pal Gordon was furious at me, and therefore Harrison Williams was. It was the most damnable intrigue I've ever gotten into, and for no reason. I mean, there was nothing at issue, there was no public problem involved, there was nothing. Just a power struggle, really. Well, I said, the hell with this, this is hopeless.

About that time, I don't know what had been going on in the Williams office . . . wait a minute, Ben Palombo was still there, but in one of his last acts he came over and said, "You have three choices, you either have to quit, or become a consultant, or move out of this office and sit somewhere else. We're putting somebody else in your job." He was dying when he said it, and I knew it. I said, "Ok Ben, let me think about it." This was about June, I think, of '73. I knew that this new law had been passed that if you retired from the Senate by the end of '73, you had an eleven percent permanent increase in your pension. I wanted to round out my years anyway. I said, "Well, I'm not going to quit, and I'm not going to become a consultant. I'll be promoted laterally." So I ended up in the Plaza [Senate annex] on the sixth floor, with a desk and a phone and absolutely nothing to do. Another guy took my job. He didn't want it, was terrified of it, and got out of it as soon as he could.

It was a bad six months. Oh, I made work for myself. I kept myself busy, but on the 31st of December I retired. It was an awful

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thing to have happen after a nice career, to just dwindle away like that. I was very down for a long time. It was just an awful thing to end up that way. And there was no way I could fight it, you see. There was nobody who was going to back me. And the worst thing of all, in the process I discovered that Marjorie, having figured out I was a doomed man, had switched allegiances and become a spy for Jeanette, and was reporting everything I told her. This had been going on considerably earlier than this Homme affair, so everything I had told Marjorie since the beginning of the year probably had gone right to Jeanette. Oh, my God, you're doomed when you're in that position. There's no way out. I couldn't prove it, but I knew it. Awful, just awful.

**RITCHIE:** How do you figure someone like Harrison Williams?

**MCCLURE:** Weakest, most indecisive, charming man. I do not resent what happened to the degree



of disliking Harrison Williams. On the contrary, I like him very much. He ' s a sweet man. I don't think he ever willfully hurt anyone, though he allowed many to be hurt in his name--too many, too many, too many--which is a terrible fault, and it's caused by weakness and willessness, and submission to some other power, namely in this case his mistress and later his wife. I don't know the secrets of his heart, but I do know that his behavior is that of a weak, indecisive man. He should never have been chairman of anything. He was a fine senator with just one vote

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and no responsibility over anybody else. Well, I think I told you in an earlier session how Andy Biemiller told him what the Labor agenda was and how Williams said, "Well, Stewart, you heard the word," or whatever. Good God!

**RITCHIE:** What impact did Williams have on the committee as chairman? You mentioned about the Kennedy subcommittee, were there other problems of the committee functioning with a weak chairman?

**MCCLURE:** It didn't appear while I was there, but I think it did later, that the chairmen of the subcommittees, realizing there was no firm hand, simply went off on their own. At one point--I had to stop it--they were even trying to print subcommittee reports on legislation, before they'd been reported from the full committee; the subcommittee would write a report. Well, that was stopped. But that sort of stuff. They could get away with anything. The staffs of the subcommittee just felt they were full committees and entitled to do anything they wanted, spend anything they wanted. While it wouldn't appear in a meeting--no one would criticize the chairman's performance- -everybody knew the damn thing was not being run by anybody. It was just whoever had the guts to proceed in some direction went ahead and did it, and never was called to account.

I have no idea what any other senator on the committee thought of all this, I never asked them and they never said and probably never will. But I could sense at times, at the raised eyebrow or the

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look to the side at another senator, "Are we going to get anywhere here?" or "What is this?" Williams was a very able guy if properly briefed. He sounded good on the floor, in the committee, too. You

wrote notes to him and told him what was going to happen, and what should be said and done, here, there, and the other thing. He did it, beautifully. He was a public performer of quite some expertise and quality. He spoke well; he remembered what he was supposed to say. He was no dummy by any means. It was just in these situations where a chairman has to say "No" or "Go" or something, he never did.

**RITCHIE:** Did you get a sense that Senator Williams was taken up by wealth and status?

**MCCLURE:** No, not particularly, no. No, I don't think so. He was a playboy. He loved to drink and chase girls. His favorite subject of conversation was sports. I don't happen to care anything about sports, and it was rather difficult when I would get in a discussion in his office he would get raving about some basketball player and I never heard of him. I managed to just stay quiet. But he was nuts about sports: football games, baseball games, everything, followed them all avidly--much more than he followed public affairs. For him, life was fun, sport, drinking, carousing, girls. And being a young, in effect unmarried senator, he had his opportunity to party all over the place all the time. Well, Jeanette cut him back, of course, and circumscribed his activities to her

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interests. No, I don't think he had any ambitions for power or wealth or the high life or anything like that. He may have wanted more money, I suppose everybody does, but senators were beginning to be fairly well paid by the end of the '60s.

Poor guy, I really feel for him. He seems to keep up a terrific front. Everybody who runs into him finds him solid, and "we're still fighting," and "we're going to the Supreme Court." His spirit is very strong--well, he's right of course. In this instance he has good reason to be strong. He was railroaded and the Senate wouldn't believe it, and the courts don't believe it, but time and history will prove he was trapped. Sure he went along, he's a weak guy, and it must have been quite appealing, some of the offers made him. But he didn't do anything. He never got a nickel. He didn't take any bribe, there wasn't any there. The fact is, there's no crime been committed, honestly, nothing. This is sad to me, even though I have an awfully difficult time praising him as a senator--I don't--but as a man I think he's a fine guy and a darling friend, and I just don't like this sort of thing to be done to anybody. I think it's very dangerous when they start doing it to members of Congress. Well, I think we've pretty much wrapped up, unless you have some other questions.

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**RITCHIE:** I have a few general questions. Looking back over your whole career in the Senate, from 1949 to the end of 1973, how would you say that the institution of the Senate changed during the period you were here?

**MCCLURE:** The institution. What do you mean by that?

**RITCHIE:** Well, the Senate as a whole. Was it the same in 1973?

**MCCLURE:** No, of course not.

**RITCHIE:** What were the most noticeable differences?

**MCCLURE:** Well, I think first of all it changes every year. Not only the personnel changes, people are elected or defeated or resign or die and so on, there's a new crop of senators. And staff changes are compatible with that. There's been a general decline in the age of senators, when they're elected, that is. They come in younger and younger and younger. The old system of being a county official and a state legislator and a House member and then a senator, maybe a governor on the way, was the training of most senators in the past, and they were seasoned politicians and seasoned legislators, and quite old, in their fifties and early sixties when they became senators. I think in the past that was true. Nowadays, and increasingly since television came along, and a new form of campaigning, senators can be elected by their looks or by the exposure they have to the public on television, and by virtue of their renown in some other field than

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legislating or serving the public, such as movie actors and astronauts, and so forth, who know nothing about the Senate and public policy. Of course, there is a great leavening in that sense, many different kinds of backgrounds appear in the Senate. They're not all lawyers, they're not all practicing politicians. A lot of them never held office before. They're really green, new boys, and take quite a time to find out where they are. So what is this legislative body: it's the men in it, the people who work for it, and the people who are elected to it. So the change in the personality, the personnel of the Senate, determines the change in the Senate, it seems to me.

Now there have been some institutional changes, of course. Attempts to cut down on the number of committees, to cut down the tremendous burdens on each member--I think Javits once told me he was

on sixteen subcommittees, three of which were always meeting at the same time. They cut down on that. So there's been that kind of change. The Committee on Ethics has been established. They've pretty much held to the basic fifteen or sixteen standing committees, and changed the jurisdictional limits of many committees and readjusted fields of interest and concern. So many of them now are very broad: the environment involves everything and ten committees can legitimately say they have a role in it, as they do in the House.

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What else? I gather, though I haven't been subject to it, that the rules on the floor have been greatly changed so far as staff people are concerned. In our time you could wander on the floor no matter what was going on, sit down, listen to the debate, and nobody criticized you. Now, I believe, you have to have a bill from your committee up or your senator has to be on the floor, there has to be some real reason for you to be there. This was Senator [Robert] Byrd's innovation, and I suppose it's quite proper because I gather with the growth in staff that a great many young guys who had nothing else to do would just crowd the back of the chamber and talk with each other and drive senators crazy. I think he had to do it. In our time nobody opened his trap. If you were on the floor you may have whispered to your companion, but that was all. And you sat down in those deep leather sofas and were as inconspicuous as possible. That's the way I learned how the place ran was to spend the first six months of my work here sitting on the couch listening to the debate, learning all the rules. I suppose they can go over now and sit in the gallery and get the same education, not quite the same but it's probably pretty equal.

Well, of course, the whole security invasion so to speak, the attempt to protect the membership from bombs and assassins and so forth is all new and has given the police a much bigger role, and altered people's perceptions about what being a senator is. Are you

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a target of some murderer? And the sheer increase in staff, I've forgotten what the numbers are. Six thousand is it now?

**RITCHIE:** Closer to seven thousand.

**MCCLURE:** Incredible. You can't create a metropolis out of what has been a small barnyard without having thousands of events take place that wouldn't happen otherwise. So many people stumbling over each other, lining up for lunch, filling the rooms, committee rooms, and everything else. I walked by the Labor Committee one day a year ago in the afternoon; they were having a staff meeting. There were twenty-five guys and girls sitting around a table. A staff meeting! It was a mob. There is an enormous amount of make-work by the staff now, in order to justify its existence, think up new amendments and new laws and keep their senators busy, busy, busy, so they can justify their own jobs. You just can't help it, but that's certainly a big change.

There was an intimacy when I first came here; it was a very quiet place. You knew everybody. You could call anybody up and he knew who you were, even if you didn't know him personally. You could do business quickly with a few people around the Hill who had some power. It's gotten out of hand in many ways, I think. Now another building, and longer subway, and more guards, more people to fill the rooms--which, of course, as you know, are spread all over the Hill in these buildings here. I don't think the quality of legislation has

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improved any. In fact, the legislative process has become almost hopeless in some cases, with the budget structure and the struggle to get any appropriations. It's become an unwieldy institution. It was always designed to not do anything, to prevent rash action, but boy, I think it's just become almost unmoveable in some respects.

**RITCHIE:** We have another long series of reform proposals, this time former Senators Abe Ribicoff and James Pearson have been appointed to a special panel to study the Senate and propose reforms, and that's going to be coming up before the Rules Committee. Over your years here was there anything about the legislative process that you found particularly frustrating? And if you had the opportunity to institute reforms was there anything that you would have recommended that they change?

**MCCLURE:** I really can't think of anything particularly. Again it came down to people. Most of our frustrations with the Labor Committee occurred in the House Committee, which was run by Graham Barden for many years. As I pointed out earlier, we would pass marvelous legislation that would die in the House. You would go home at the end of the year having killed yourself and nothing would become law. But when that changed, when Mr. Barden went on to wherever he went, and Adam Powell became chairman, and then Carl Perkins, the committees worked together and things passed and became law. So it wasn't institutional obstacles so much as persons and their views.

No, I wouldn't change seniority, I would not prevent filibusters. All the things that outside liberals frequently think are horrible have their reasons and there's nothing better, there's no substitute that's any good. Electing chairmen of committees is a disaster--everything is politicized then. At least seniority is a neutral law, which everybody observes and you proceed with that in mind. And filibusters, as we all know, are used by everybody from liberals to radicals to conservatives. I'm glad that they exist. It's a nuisance, it's offensive many times, and it's certainly annoying if you're trying to buck it, but we've been involved in liberal filibusters, too. So those typical criticisms you hear leveled, I don't agree with. I think basically the institution runs as it should, and it depends to an enormous degree on who are the senators. I think I'll have to stop there, I can't think of any rule changes of any importance.

**RITCHIE:** One other question: all those years you spent as a member of the staff and also as a staff director, observing other staff members, what really are the best qualities for a person to work as a member of the Senate staff? What were the type that you looked for, and what really works in a place like this?

**MCCLURE:** On the committee staff, where we're dealing with particular issues, you've got to have a man who knows what it's all about, an expert, someone who's demonstrated his ability and worked

at his profession or trade long enough to qualify as a person who can be a professional staff member, and who can answer questions when asked by members about the subject at hand and the laws applying thereto, and the meaning of amendments that are being proposed, and changes, and so forth. Without that they can be the nicest guy in the world and friends with everybody, but they've got to know what they're talking about.

Beyond that, the second most important thing is to understand your leader, your chairman, your senator, what his needs are, what his interests are, what he can go with, what he cannot. There's nothing more stupid than to propose something to some senator which is going to be anathema to him, or murder him in his state. Nobody lasts very long who does that. But that's not easy to know. You have to study your chairman, your senator, know his state, know his history. That's the second major qualification.

The third is one that applies, I suppose, in any job involving people. You've got to get along, respect the other persons' needs and interests, try to figure out how to collaborate with them in the common interest. The least desirable is the backbiting, backstabbing, ambitious climber who tries to do in his fellows and succeeds in rising to the top of the heap by that method. There are

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always some around and they are the poison in the system. Sometimes they're very hard to get rid of, because they learn how to survive in the jungle.

There are plenty of other qualities, of course. It's good to be good with words up here. It's good to know how to write well, or at least intelligently, to explain your ideas and your position, and to do it in the name of a senator, if you're writing a speech, which everybody ends up doing somehow, sometime, and writing reports that mean something, that tell what the bill is about. That's a skill, all the communicative skills are good to have, but writing is especially good, especially useful.

What else? A willingness to work all night at some time in the year without putting up a fuss, because sometime in the year you won't do any work--at least that used to be the way it was. We had tremendous pushes where we just went day and night, and then it would stop. Well, you have to be able to do that and have a wife who will put up with it, once in a while anyway. And it used to be that certainly you weren't interested in money. Now I think it's quite different: they're probably overpaid. But for a long time this was no place to work if you wanted to make money.

Then, if you have a sense of theatre and enjoy the incredible number of scenes that are available to you at any day, this is an absolutely fabulous place to enjoy yourself, in your own committee or

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in other committees, or on the floor. It is a great scene, a great show, and I loved every minute of it--in fact, even the parts I didn't love. In the long run, it was a wonderful place to work.

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End of Interview #8





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