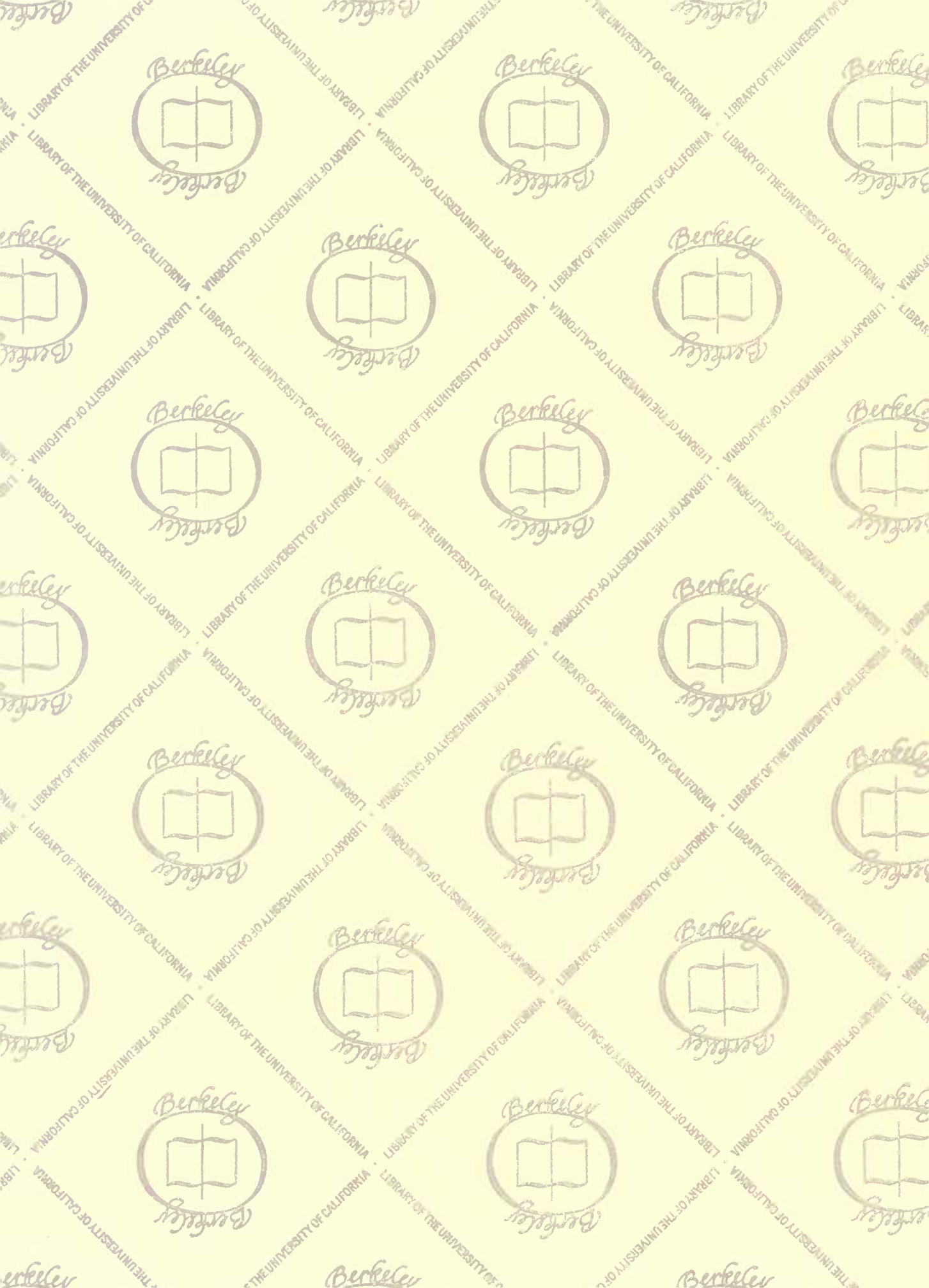


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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE LEADERS
VOLUME I

Interviews with:

Thomas W. Caldecott
Hugo Fisher
Frank D. Lanterman
Richard Richards

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Governmental History Documentation Project

Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE LEADERS
VOLUME I

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| Thomas W. Caldecott | Perspectives on the Republican Party and the Legislature: A Prominent Assemblyman Reviews the Goodwin Knight Era |
| Hugo Fisher | State Senator From San Diego, 1958-1962 |
| Frank D. Lanterman | Crusades of a Republican Legislative Leader, 1951-1978: Water, Mental Health, Education, Ways and Means |
| Richard Richards | South of the Tehachapis: A Southern California Senator Comments on the 1953-1966 Era |

Interviews Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris, James H. Rowland, Sarah Sharp
in 1977, 1978, 1979

PREFACE

Covering the years 1953 to 1966, the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., Oral History Series is the second phase of the Governmental History Documentation Project begun by the Regional Oral History Office in 1969. That year inaugurated the Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, which produced interviews with Earl Warren and other persons prominent in politics, criminal justice, government administration, and legislation during Warren's California era, 1925 to 1953.

The Knight-Brown series of interviews carries forward the earlier inquiry into the general topics of: the nature of the governor's office, its relationships with the legislature and with its own executive departments, biographical data about Governors Knight and Brown and other leaders of the period, and methods of coping with the rapid social and economic changes of the state. Key issues documented for 1953-1966 were: the rise and decline of the Democratic party, the impact of the California Water Plan, the upheaval of the Vietnam War escalation, the capital punishment controversy, election law changes, new political techniques forced by television and increased activism, reorganization of the executive branch, the growth of federal programs in California, and the rising awareness of minority groups. From a wider view across the twentieth century, the Knight-Brown period marks the final era of California's Progressive period, which was ushered in by Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 and which provided for both parties the determining outlines of government organization and political strategy until 1966.

The Warren Era political files, which interviewers had developed cooperatively to provide a systematic background for questions, were updated by the staff to the year 1966 with only a handful of new topics added to the original ninety-one. An effort was made to record in greater detail those more significant events and trends by selecting key participants who represent diverse points of view. Most were queried on a limited number of topics with which they were personally connected; a few narrators who possessed unusual breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. Although the time frame of the series ends at the November 1966 election, when possible the interviews trace events on through that date in order to provide a logical baseline for continuing study of succeeding administrations. Similarly, some narrators whose experience includes the Warren years were questioned on that earlier era as well as the Knight-Brown period.

The present series has been financed by grants from the California State Legislature through the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the office of the Secretary of State, and by some individual donations. Portions of several memoirs were funded partly by the California Women in Politics Project under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including a matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation; the two projects were produced concurrently in this office, a joint effort made feasible by overlap of narrators, topics, and staff expertise.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative direction of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library, and Willa Baum, head of the Office.

Amelia R. Fry, Project Director
Gabrielle Morris, Project Coordinator

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Amelia R. Fry
Gabrielle Morris
James Rowland
Sarah Sharp
Julie Shearer

Special Interviewers

Eleanor Glaser
Harriet Nathan
Suzanne Riess
Miriam Feingold Stein
Ruth Teiser

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GOODWIN KNIGHT-EDMUND BROWN, SR. ERA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
(California, 1953-1966)

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Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

Thomas W. Caldecott

PERSPECTIVES ON THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND THE LEGISLATURE:
A PROMINENT ASSEMBLYMAN REVIEWS THE GOODWIN KNIGHT ERA

An Interview Conducted by
James H. Rowland
in 1979

Thomas Caldecott — Once Presided On Court of Appeal

A funeral will be held today for Thomas W. Caldecott, 79, a former presiding justice of the state Court of Appeal in San Francisco who died of cancer Friday at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek.

Justice Caldecott was appointed to the state bench by Governor Ronald Reagan in 1969 and eventually became presiding judge of the San Francisco court until his retirement in 1984.

He was born and raised in Berkeley, earning his undergraduate degree from the University of California and his law degree from Boalt Hall School of Law.

He was active in state Republican politics for many years, serving as a Berkeley assemblyman from 1947 to 1957 and heading the powerful Ways and Means committee.

He also served as state chairman of the Republican Party during the 1950s.

Justice Caldecott left his post in the state Legislature for a seat on the bench in 1957 when Governor Goodwin J. Knight appointed him to the Alameda Superior Court. He left the bench in 1968 to join Governor Reagan's staff as chief legislative secretary. The next year, Reagan appointed him to the state appellate court.

His father was Thomas R. Caldecott, a former Alameda County supervisor who headed the special highway district responsible for construction of the Caldecott Tunnel.

Justice Caldecott was a member of Phi Alpha Delta, the American Bar Association, the California Bar Association, the California Judges Association, the Commonwealth Club, the Scottish Rite and several other organizations.

He was particularly proud of his membership in the East Bay Genius Luncheon Club, a group of 10 lawyers, doctors and other professionals who for years would meet for lunch every Monday at Trader Vic's in Emeryville.

He is survived by his wife of 33 years, Rosalie E. Caldecott, his stepson Robert A. Engel of Danville and seven grandchildren.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Thomas W. Caldecott was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office for the Goodwin J. Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. era segment of its Governmental History Documentation Project. Assemblyman Caldecott's position as chairman of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee and his chairmanship of the Republican State Central Committee provided valuable perspectives on the Republican party and the legislature during the Goodwin Knight era.

Caldecott was the second of three children born to a well-established East Bay family. His father, Thomas Edwin Caldecott, was a prominent Berkeley mayor and Alameda County Supervisor. It was his father's political interests, name recognition, and popularity that encouraged his son's involvement in the Republican party and the political process. Raised in Berkeley, he attended local schools and the Berkeley campus of the University of California. After reaching a decision, with his father's reluctant acceptance, to study law instead of medicine, he enrolled at Boalt Hall School of Law. After law school, he worked under Attorney General Earl Warren in the late 1930s as a special agent. Returning to Berkeley in 1945 after a stint in the military during World War II, he waged a successful campaign for the 18th assembly district vacated by Republican stalwart Gardiner Johnson. Entering the assembly in 1947 he became associated with the Dirty Seventeen--predominantly freshman assemblymen leading a good-government drive that eventually installed James Silliman as assembly Speaker. His loyalty to Silliman combined with his legal and budgetary acumen elevated him to the chairmanship of the influential Ways and Means Committee. In this position he built a trusted relation to Governor Goodwin Knight and successfully navigated the governor's budgets through the shoals of legislative criticism.

The Republican party hierarchy provided another political arena for Caldecott. Active in the Republican State Central Committee, he moved to vice chairman of the committee in 1954. An admitted Earl Warren loyalist with a personal appreciation for Goodwin Knight and a family preference for William Knowland, his diverse allegiances in the party should afford the reader an intriguing study of the scramble for party power between the Nixon, Knowland, and Knight forces in the mid-1950s. In 1957 he was appointed by Governor Goodwin Knight to the superior court bench in Alameda County from where he was later appointed to the state courts of appeal by Governor Reagan. He is presently presiding still for Division Three of the First Appellate District.

I first met with Judge Caldecott at his spacious court chambers in the San Francisco state court building on June 5, 1979. After a problem in locating an outlet for my recorder, we began the first session that covered his family and personal history, early political campaigns, personalities in the Republican party, and prominent people and issues in the legislature during his tenure. Our second and final interview was held on June 29, 1979 in his

court chambers. He concluded his recollections on personalities and issues in the legislature--including lobbyist-legislator relations, working with Governor Knight on the annual budget, highway legislation, and the tidelands oil revenue bill--and finished the interview with remarks on his appointments to the superior court and appeal court, and his advisory role to Governor Reagan.

After rough editing, the interview transcript was forwarded to Judge Caldecott for review. He meticulously reviewed each page of the transcript, provided clarifications where needed, and promptly returned the transcript to our office.

Implicit in the Caldecott memoir are the qualities of political leadership, mediation and bargaining, and precise legal reasoning combined with charm and warmth. For clarity and analysis, the Thomas W. Caldecott memoir stands as a stellar oral history on the 1953-1958 period in state government. It will remain a valuable addition to the Goodwin J. Knight-Edmund G. Brown era governmental history collection.

James H. Rowland
Interviewer-Editor

13 May 1980
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

I RETRACING A PERSONAL HISTORY

[Interview 1: June 5, 1979]##

Family Background

Rowland: You know a little bit about what our project is studying.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: We're basically doing legislation, issues, and events during the Goodwin Knight-Pat Brown years of California politics.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: We're particularly interested in getting background on the Knight years. Of course, the first-person story of Goodwin Knight is gone and we want to get as much on Goodwin Knight as possible. But we're also interested in legislation and events during the Knight period.

We have a certain format that we follow here. Let me just ask for your patience in this: tell us about your family genealogy and your childhood and your education. I understand that you have quite a history of background in that your family goes way back in Alameda County.

Caldecott: My family came to Alameda County, both my father's family and mother's family, in the early 1900s--my father from Canada and my mother from Australia. I was born in Berkeley and went to the Berkeley public schools and the University of California (did my undergraduate work there) and also to law school at Berkeley.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 93.

- Rowland: Why did your parents settle in Alameda County? Or was it your grandparents?
- Caldecott: Actually, my father came first. He had graduated from the University of Toronto in the School of Pharmacy and then came out to California, basically looking for a job. He had no trouble finding a job out here. They were very short of professional people at the time, and he was offered a drugstore in Berkeley.
- Rowland: Did he prefer to settle in the Bay Area?
- Caldecott: I don't know that he particularly did. As a matter of fact, they apparently were so hard up for professional people that wholesale houses were willing to finance a person, a pharmacist. He went up to Woodland. I guess Woodland was probably as good a place as any as far as he was concerned. He didn't know any of the towns. [He] spent about a year up there and then was offered a pharmacy in Berkeley, so he came down to Berkeley, and that's why we happened to settle in Berkeley.
- Rowland: Can you describe your parents' personalities and preferences?
- Caldecott: My father gave the appearance of being a very easygoing, very friendly person. He enjoyed people, meeting people. He had a rather interesting way of getting things done. He never pushed an issue very hard. He moved forward when the opposition was slight, and when there was a lot of opposition he was willing to listen to them and bide his time, with the result that he was quite successful in the projects he undertook.
- Rowland: Your father's name was Thomas E. Caldecott?
- Caldecott: Yes, Thomas Edwin Caldecott. He served on the Berkeley City Council in 1923 when the city changed from the commission form to the city manager form, and then in 1928 he became mayor. He served as mayor until 1932 and then went on the Board of Supervisors of Alameda County and served on the board until his death in '51.
- Rowland: And your mother?
- Caldecott: Mother was a nurse, graduated from Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley.
- Rowland: What was her first name?
- Caldecott: Her first name was Evelyn.
- Rowland: How many children were in the family?

Caldecott: Three. I had a brother and a sister.

Rowland: Older? Younger?

Caldecott: The brother is older and the sister is younger.

Rowland: What were your relations with your brother and sister?

Caldecott: We've all been very close. We've always been very close and still are. They are both alive.

Rowland: And their names?

Caldecott: My brother, Chester E. Caldecott. And my sister, Elizabeth Caldecott. She goes by the name of Betty, actually.

Rowland: Who were you closest to in your family?

Caldecott: As between parents, my father. We were always very, very close.

Rowland: Did your father encourage you in all your pursuits?

Caldecott: Yes, yes.

Rowland: He wanted you to be a lawyer and go on to law?

Caldecott: No. [laughter] As I recall, I was in the seventh grade and my brother in the tenth grade at the time. My father had wanted to be a doctor and for financial reasons could not be. He didn't go through medical school. He started at Stanford and then had to drop out. So, he wanted my older brother to be a doctor, and my brother wasn't very happy about that, and then he wanted me to be a doctor. But, as I said, when I was in the seventh grade my brother and I decided to go down and talk to Dad and tell him that we were not going to be doctors; we were going to be lawyers.

Rowland: Was that a rebellion?

Caldecott: No, no. We just told him, and he took it. He said, "Well, if that's what you want, that's fine. We'll work towards that."

Rowland: Who was the authority figure in your family?

Caldecott: On most things, my mother; except if Dad felt very strongly on something, then he was. But I would say Mother was a stronger personality, actually.

Rowland: What did your family do for amusement and entertainment? Were you musically inclined?

Caldecott: Well, we all took musical lessons, yes. My brother actually had an excellent voice as a boy and he sang in the Cathedral Choir, which took a good bit of his time. They practiced--I think he spent five days a week with the choir after school and, of course, on Sundays.

Rowland: It was a church choir?

Caldecott: Yes. Grace Cathedral here in San Francisco. Those were the days when they had the great boys' choir, and they spent a lot of time, and the church also gave the boys quite a bit of entertainment.

Rowland: And yourself? Do you play an instrument?

Caldecott: I used to play the clarinet until the Berkeley High School band found out what the discord was. So, [chuckles] my musical talents were really not great. It was assumed from the fact that my brother had a great voice that I too must have musical talent, but--

Rowland: Did your sister play an instrument?

Caldecott: As she expressed it, she graduated from the violin at an early age. [laughter]

But I guess you might say my great interest while in school particularly was athletics.

Rowland: And what sport did you--?

Caldecott: Well, whatever was on during the season.

Rowland: At Berkeley High, what--?

Caldecott: I wasn't on the varsity team at Berkeley High, no.

Rowland: In growing up, did you play baseball?

Caldecott: Baseball, football, yes, and basketball.

Rowland: I remember that when I was in elementary and secondary years there were some particularly important teachers that I felt kind of guided me in a certain direction. I wonder if that was the same for you. It seems to be the same for many of our interviewees that they remember certain important teachers or significant teachers.

- Caldecott: I remember one particularly in high school, Miss Edna Lewis. I guess most of her boys remember her. She was somewhat partial to the boys, I will say.
- Rowland: What did she teach?
- Caldecott: She taught geometry, trigonometry.
- Rowland: What was your favorite subject area?
- Caldecott: History.
- Rowland: And you followed that at Cal?
- Caldecott: No. I was sort of halfway between economics and political science when I was at Cal.
- Rowland: At UC did you get involved in any extracurricular activities?
- Caldecott: Oh, a little bit. I was at little theater to some extent and, oh, with student government a little bit. I wasn't on the-- what do they call it--the executive committee, I think, was what it was called in those days.
- Rowland: You mentioned Grace Cathedral.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: I wondered if that was your family church.
- Caldecott: No, no. The family church would be the local parish, which was St. Clement's in Berkeley.
- Rowland: Was your family very involved in the church?
- Caldecott: Not particularly, no. They were typical Episcopalians, you know --never go to church. [laughter]

Growing Up in Berkeley

- Rowland: [laughter] You're from Berkeley, and I live in Berkeley, and I'm very interested in your observations on Berkeley in those years. Could you kind of sketch Berkeley as it was then?
- Caldecott: Berkeley, when I was growing up, was really, I think, an ideal place for a young person. There was almost no crime involved in Berkeley. In fact, as I remember--and you're familiar with the

Caldecott: streets--at night, Berkeley had one policeman on duty south of Dwight Way. They didn't allow any cars to be parked on the streets, and that way the police could, just by driving up and down the main streets, notice everything was clear, and, of course, it would be difficult for a burglar to do anything if he didn't have a car to leave in.

Rowland: They didn't allow people to park on the streets?

Caldecott: No, they didn't.

I remember that--I don't recall the year now; I guess it was about the middle '30s--there was a holdup in a gas station up by the Claremont Hotel and the attendant was shot and killed. The San Francisco news reporters came, of course, running over. The reporters wanted to interview the chief of the homicide detail, and the police told them they didn't have a chief of the homicide detail. The reporter said, "Well, anybody on the homicide detail." The police chief said, "Well, we don't have a homicide detail. We haven't had a murder in eight years." [laughter]

But that was the kind of a town it was. You might say they took the sidewalks up at eight o'clock.

Rowland: Were there two Berkeleys in a sense: the west Berkeley area and then the university campus area along Shattuck Avenue?

Caldecott: I think you could very well say that west Berkeley was considered separately as an entity, south Berkeley was an entity, the university community was an entity, and then maybe the rest of the city. There weren't any strong dividing lines between them at all, but I think very definitely there was a--

Rowland: Was there a bit of animosity between the intellectuals up at the campus and the working class in west Berkeley?

Caldecott: I don't think so. And I think one reason there wasn't was because Berkeley did have a great many university graduates living there. I went to Emerson Grammar School--it was grammar school in those days--and I'd say most of the parents, or the fathers anyway, of the students were faculty members or professional people. Emerson did not have the very wealthy of Berkeley. It had mostly the, as I say, faculty and professional.

Rowland: How did Berkeley get through the Depression? I imagine the Depression years must have been difficult in the Bay Area but I wondered about Berkeley in particular.

Caldecott: Yes. I think Berkeley probably came off better than most cities because the principal employment in Berkeley was government employment through the university and then the federal government had a number of offices located in Berkeley that had some affiliation with the university. The State Public Health Department was in Berkeley. The federal government had the Federal Land Bank; I don't think that had any university connection, but that was a large employer. So, I think that as compared with other cities they had a more steady employment that was less affected.

As a Student at Cal

Rowland: Now, you went to the UC Berkeley campus in what year?

Caldecott: I entered in '32.

Rowland: Could you describe the campus in those years? I imagine it must have been a lot different and much smaller, too.

Caldecott: Well, they had, as I recall, 14,000 to 15,000 students. It wasn't a small school at all in those days. Of course, there weren't as many buildings on the campus. The law school was in the old Boalt Hall, a little square building down by the library. I think it was a very delightful experience being there then. Of course, there were those who had their own ideas, the liberal groups and the conservative groups. They weren't as active as such groups are today.

Rowland: That's an interesting point. I wondered if there had always been a political consciousness in Berkeley as there is now, the kind of progressiveness in Berkeley.

Caldecott: I think there was. And liberal groups would have rallies. They weren't in Sproul Court there or--

Rowland: Sproul Plaza.

Caldecott: Plaza. But they were at Sather--it was termed as Sather Gate.

Rowland: The Sather Gate tradition?

Caldecott: Yes. I guess it's really exactly the same area, only it was referred to as Sather Gate. Of course, Sproul Hall was not there then. In fact, Telegraph Avenue ran up to Sather Gate and

- Caldecott: there were stores on either side of the street, just until you got to within, say, fifty or seventy-five feet of Sather Gate.
- Rowland: As an undergraduate and a law student at Cal, you must have seen Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul on campus.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: And I wondered if you could describe him. I understand that he was a very strong and vigorous man who had a very deep voice.
- Caldecott: Perhaps my experience is a little different. When I was a kid-- in fact, going to grammar school--Bob Sproul lived across the street from us. This was when he was controller, and for several years he lived across the street, and so I knew him in those days and, of course, his family and Mrs. Sproul. Then he moved a couple of times after that before he became president. So, I had known him since 1922 or 1923. So, my relationship was a little different than maybe a student just coming into Cal.
- Rowland: I guess the next question I was going to ask is: had you worked with him in the university in any way, or when you left the university had you--?
- Caldecott: Well, of course, I did do quite a bit of work with him when I was in the legislature. Actually, Jim Corley was the man on the scene in Sacramento for the university, but we did meet with Bob Sproul on many occasions and talked to him on matters.
- Rowland: Why don't you give us a profile on Jim Corley.
- Caldecott: Jim was an excellent man for the job. He technically knew the work of the university. He had an excellent background in not only the financial picture of the university but all of its problems. He was a very likable person. He was highly respected in Sacramento. I think every legislator really liked Jim and enjoyed being with him and was willing to go along with Jim any time he could. He was an ideal person to represent the university.

Early Political Involvement

- Rowland: Turning to your early involvement in politics in Alameda County, the first question, a rather general question, is: why were you drawn to politics?

Caldecott: Well, I don't know. I might say, when my dad first ran for the city council in '23, I covered our home precinct and rang doorbells and passed out election cards, which was no great operation. And then when he ran for county supervisor, I worked with him in the campaign, largely the envelope stuffing and that sort of thing.

After the war, I came back early in November of '45. About a week later, my dad said that a group of men from Berkeley wanted to come and talk to me. So, I asked him what it was about, and he said, "Well, it's about running for the legislature." So, I asked him, "Well, what do you think about it?" He said, "Well, it'd be up to you, if you want to do it." So, this group came down and asked me if I would run.

Rowland: What group was it?

Caldecott: Basically the downtown Berkeley group; you might say, the group that actually was active in politics and business in Berkeley.

Rowland: Merchants?

Caldecott: Merchants and university representatives. Berkeley didn't have any real full-time politicians. They were all either business or professional people in town.

Rowland: Turning to your father, I was wondering what base of groups supported your father while he was--

Caldecott: He cut right through the whole group. He had strong labor support, merchant support, university support--there really wasn't any particular group that didn't support him. Of course, he was a Republican. But he always held a nonpartisan office. City and county were nonpartisan.

Rowland: Did you have any previous political campaigns and political activities in Alameda County?

Caldecott: Prior to that? No. Not that I had ever run for, no.

Rowland: We had a note in our office that you were deputy district attorney.

Caldecott: No. My brother was.

Rowland: Your brother was?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Okay. [laughter] That's Chester.

Caldecott: Yes. He was a deputy district attorney under Earl Warren and Ralph Hoyt.

I might say that before the war, after graduating from law school and before being called into the army, I served in the state attorney general's office under Earl Warren for a little less than a year.

Rowland: What was your position there?

Caldecott: The position of all young attorneys was special agent. We weren't deputy attorneys general as they are now, because a deputy attorney general got a fantastic salary of \$300 a month. We got \$100 a month. Once in a while, we'd do a little investigative work, but I guess that was to keep the title and the job together. But actually the young attorneys in the office were carried as special agents.

Rowland: What were some of the activities you had done?

Caldecott: Mine was doing legal work, writing appellate briefs. Some of the investigative work would be going out with Oscar Jahnsen, who was chief special agent, while he contacted an undercover agent--that sort of thing.

Rowland: And this was just after the war?

Caldecott: This was before the war, in 1940.

Rowland: Oh, right, because Earl Warren became governor in 1942. Then you were in the attorney general's office during the Olson administration?

Caldecott: Yes, Olson was governor at that time.

Rowland: I was wondering if you had done any investigation of the State Relief Administration.

Caldecott: No, no. We were not trained investigators and, as I say, our investigations were of a very minor character. As I say, as I recall, our big deal would be that Jahnsen or one of the real special agents--most of them were ex-FBI agents, had been in investigative work for years. The staff was very small, maybe half a dozen--that's all--and they were professionals. But it would be a situation of contacting a special agent, and it was real cloak-and-dagger stuff, you know. Oscar would say,

Caldecott: "Get the car," and I'd drive, and he would be in the back seat, and he'd tell me where to drive. I'd drive down to downtown San Francisco, and he'd say, "Stop at this corner." So, I'd pull over and stop, and the door would open, and some creature would jump in the back seat, and we'd take off and drive around for a while while he talked to Oscar. Then Oscar would say, "All right, stop at the next corner," and the door would open, and this creature would get out.

Rowland: So, you were more or less an errand boy?

Caldecott: Yes, but that carried us as special agents, you see. [laughter] So, we had no training in police work or investigative work actually. Maybe we'd be gone an hour and then come back and go back to legal work again.

Rowland: So, this had nothing to do with the investigation of the State Relief--

Caldecott: Nothing to do with the investigation of anybody. [chuckles]

Rowland: Those early years, the late '30s, was the beginning of the hunt for communists in the New Deal programs.

Caldecott: No, no, nothing--in fact, it was no secret as to what they were investigating with these undercover agents. It was largely, I think, bookie stuff--this sort of thing. But we really took no part in it except to that extent.

Rowland: How did you get that position working with Earl Warren?

Caldecott: Oh, there's no question; my dad got it for me.

Rowland: Your father was a close confidant of Earl Warren?

Caldecott: Yes, because Earl Warren had been district attorney of Alameda County when my father was on the board of supervisors, and the district attorney then was the attorney for the board of supervisors.

Rowland: In working for Earl Warren, did you develop a great deal of respect for Warren?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: And followed him, supported him throughout his gubernatorial campaigns?

Caldecott: Yes, all of his campaigns, and in the legislature. He was a very interesting person, and he was basically a very good person, a good family person.

I remember--this you might call in the way of investigative, except all I went over was reports; I didn't go into the field at all. I remember a fellow from Albany was up for a pardon. He'd been convicted previously, which meant that the supreme court had to concur with the governor in the pardon; the governor could not pardon a person who had more than one conviction. The attorney general would appear before the [California] Supreme Court. He would do the investigative work for the supreme court and make his appearance before the court.

So, I got together all the reports for the attorney general and then made my recommendation, pointing out that since this man had been released from prison he had gotten a job, and he was active in certain civic organizations and this and that, and seemed to have reformed completely, and was doing a really good job. So, I gave it to Earl Warren--went to his office and gave it to him--and he read it over a few minutes. He said, "Tom this is all eyewash. The man is not right with his family. Now, when a man is not right with his own family, he's not a good man." He said, "He's two-timing his wife, he's not treating his children properly, and all of this is just a record he's built to get a pardon." He said, "Always look to how a man gets along with his own family if you want to know what he's like." And I thought that was a very good description of Earl Warren.

Rowland: He himself had such a large and devoted family.

Caldecott: Yes, yes.

Rowland: Now, turning to your first campaign for the assembly in 1946, I have a group of questions there. We do know that Gardiner Johnson had for many years been the assemblyman from the eighteenth district in Berkeley.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: I wanted to know if some of the people who had supported Gardiner Johnson turned to you to be his successor.

Caldecott: Yes, I would say ninety-five percent. A few had committed themselves to another candidate. In fact, they either came to see me or they telephoned to tell me they had gotten the other candidate to get into the campaign and they could not run out on him.

Rowland: Who was the other candidate?

Caldecott: Arthur Harris. Arthur and I were in college together and we're still very good friends.

Rowland: This is in the primary, isn't it?

Caldecott: This is the primary, yes, the Republican primary.

Rowland: And Arthur Harris had some of Gardiner Johnson's support?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: What kind of legislation did Gardiner Johnson follow in the assembly? If you could label him, was he labeled conservative or moderate or progressive?

Caldecott: I would probably say a moderate conservative.

II PERSONALITIES AND ISSUES IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

A Political Portrait of Goodwin Knight

Rowland: Tell us about your relations with Goodwin Knight.

Caldecott: As I said, I was not as close to Knight as I was to Warren. We at no time were unfriendly; at no time did we have any battles between us. He was, after becoming governor, very interested in the Washington scene. I would go in to talk to him about the budget, some matter in the budget that had come up when I was chairman of Ways and Means, and the first thing he'd say was, "I understand you just got back from Washington." I'd say, "Yes." So, he'd ask me a number of questions about what was happening in the party and the setup and that sort of thing. Actually, nothing ever developed for him out of the Washington scene, but he was very interested in it.

On matters of budget, he didn't follow them too closely. Jim Dean was director of Finance most of that time that I was chairman, and so I just arranged with the governor that I would check with Dean on budget problems that I knew were developing.

Rowland: This was before John Peirce?

Caldecott: Yes. And the same with Peirce. As I recall, most of my time was with Dean, but Peirce was also in, and I worked with the director of Finance really more closely than with the governor.

Rowland: Going back to Goodwin Knight's lieutenant governor period, what can you tell us about Goodwin Knight's ambitions to be governor in 1950?

Caldecott: You mean in the campaign?

Rowland: In the campaign.

- Caldecott: I think, unquestionably, he just found out there was just no support to run against Warren. Warren was so strong that it would have been a waste of time for him to try it, and he would have lost out as lieutenant governor.
- Rowland: Did he have feelers, or did certain people come take him aside and--?
- Caldecott: Yes. Groups in Los Angeles County were not happy with Warren.
- Rowland: Was this mainly the L.A. Times group and the Chandler family?
- Caldecott: I don't know actually whether it was within the L.A. Times group or not, but I would say (and I may be wrong in this) it was probably within the Republican Finance Committee in Los Angeles County. I don't mean to say the whole committee, but certain members. It's a long time since that, and I don't recall the names now.
- Rowland: This is a subcommittee of the Republican State Central Committee?
- Caldecott: No. This is the Los Angeles County committee. They were looking for someone to run against Warren. I think they kind of latched onto Knight as the possible candidate. He was a good conservative (in their mind) dependable candidate and he looked like the one to take Warren on. I think then, as time went on, it became very obvious that he couldn't touch Warren.
- Rowland: Had Whitaker and Baxter also volunteered to--?
- Caldecott: I don't remember now.
- Rowland: Well, offered their support to his running?
- Caldecott: Well, I don't image they'd be offering their support. It would be a matter of someone employing them. I wouldn't be surprised if Whitaker and Baxter were somewhat inclined to line up with Knight, now that you mention it, because Warren had come out for his so-called--not that he called it, but what was dubbed his "socialized medicine program" about this time. This was just after his daughter had polio and he had been through the expense of the polio treatment and felt something had to be done, and then he came out with--he had his bill introduced for his medical program. Whitaker and Baxter, as you remember, were retained by the physicians' group just--
- Rowland: The California Medical Association?

- Caldecott: I'm not sure it was the California Medical Association, but it was the physicians, yes. So, I think that they probably were fairly close to Knight as the possible candidate to run against Warren, but it became obvious very soon that there was no support for a candidate against Warren.
- Rowland: Now, turning to Knight's assumption of the governorship when Earl Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court, I wonder if there were any expectations of major changes in the governor's office when Knight came in?
- Caldecott: Yes. Well, I think, as far as the staff is concerned, there were very few changes. On the other hand, there were some changes made there. Warren's executive secretary, Verne Scoggins, and Knight did not get along at all together.
- Rowland: How come?
- Caldecott: I don't know, but they had had a number of disagreements. I don't recall whether Warren had--[pauses to think] Yes, Warren had Scoggins appointed to the Public Utilities Commission just before he went out of office. Helen MacGregor, who was Warren's private secretary, was appointed to the Youth Authority. Jim Welsh was appointed to the municipal court in San Francisco. I don't recall any of the others.
- Rowland: So, he made some midnight appointments just before he went to Washington.
- Caldecott: Yes, yes. Jim Welsh, I think, was appointed a few weeks before. But most of his group had received appointments. And then Knight brought in, of course, his own executive secretary and private secretary. Much of the outer office staff, the secretarial staff --and I say that in the normal term, secretary/typist/receptionist staff--stayed on regardless of governor, through Olson, Warren, Brown, Reagan--no civil service, but they come in and they're just loyal to who's ever the governor.
- Rowland: We've found out that Maryalice Lemmon is still working; she's now working for Governor Jerry Brown.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: She's been there since Earl Warren.
- Caldecott: Yes. You see, the rest of the staff just stays on. As to department heads, they, of course, change anyway because most of them enjoy a few years of it and then step out.

- Rowland: Turning to Goodwin Knight's campaign in 1954: I'm wondering if you could tell us why Goodwin Knight spent millions and millions of dollars to defeat Richard Graves in the '54 primary. Up until, I think, just recently, that was the most amount of money that any governor had ever spent in a primary campaign.
- Caldecott: Yes. I don't recall why he did it in the primary, but the usual reason is for name recognition. There is a little psychological point in a campaign that if a person comes through very strong in the primary, that will carry over into the general election; that if people vote for you in the primary, they feel that they will follow right along and vote for you in the general election. A second reason is that the money was there.
- Rowland: Where did Knight get this support?
- Caldecott: I don't know where it came from. He went into the campaign as a conservative, but following that campaign he was a liberal-- not a liberal, but a moderate.
- Rowland: As lieutenant governor how did Knight get a label as a conservative? The lieutenant governor really doesn't have much--
- Caldecott: About the only way he would get a label as conservative was by what he said when he was making speeches; he made a lot of speeches as lieutenant governor.
- Rowland: Oh, I see.
- Caldecott: He was a very good speaker. In fact, he really enjoyed campaigning. He really enjoyed campaigning. He was very available for clubs or organizations or Republican groups to come and appear and be the speaker at the dinner or the meeting.
- Rowland: Briefly, back in the early part of this interview, you talked about Knight's interest in Washington, and I wondered what ambitions he did have for national office.
- Caldecott: I think probably (and this is only my guess) that he figured that there may be the chance that Nixon would be dropped on the second Eisenhower election and they'd be looking for a new vice president.
- Rowland: This is in '56?
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: Did he try to play any role in that?

Caldecott: No, not that I know of.

Rowland: With the delegates--?

Caldecott: No, not that I know of. It was just that he was maintaining a rather high profile and was available if called upon. As you remember, There was the talk about Nixon and a good bit of talk of the dissatisfaction with him at the time, not that Eisenhower expressed it. But I guess Knight figured that it's just possible that Eisenhower, as many presidents have done, would want another vice president on the second term.

Rowland: Eisenhower, at that time, was very ill. Didn't he have a heart attack? And it was questionable as to whether he would run for a second term.

Caldecott: [pauses to think] I was just trying to think of when that occurred. I remember the heart attack, but I don't recall when that occurred.

Rowland: We have a note in our chronology file that there was a question as to whether Eisenhower would run again for the second term of the presidency in '56 and that various people were--

Caldecott: I don't recall, really. I remember there was speculation, but, as I recall, in Washington there was none.

Recalling the Race for Lieutenant Governor, 1954

Rowland: I'd like to turn to the lieutenant governor's race in that '54 election that [Butch] Powers won against [Frederick F.] Houser. What did the Butch Powers versus [James] Silliman and Houser battle for lieutenant governor tell us about divisions and alliances within the Republican party?

Caldecott: I think that--really, nothing. Butch Powers was a very wonderful person to know and to meet. If he could have personally met and talked to each person in the United States, he could have been elected president.

Rowland: [laughter] I've interviewed him twice, and he's a delightful man.*

*See interview in progress with Harold J. "Butch" Powers, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley.

- Caldecott: Yes. But he had no platform presence, and he was very fortunate that TV wasn't a factor in campaigns in those years. He was not a public speaker. Of course, he had assumed the lieutenant governorship when Knight went to governor. Then, early in '54, he was doing nothing; he had no campaign committee, he'd raised no funds, and he was doing no campaigning. He was just leaving a vacuum, and I think that's what drew the opposition in.
- Rowland: Now, would Silliman, as the assembly Speaker running for governor, obligate assemblymen to throw their support for Silliman?
- Caldecott: Silliman had a group in the assembly that was supporting him, yes.
- Rowland: If you could paint a picture of how Silliman worked the assembly as assembly Speaker, maybe it would give us a bit of a profile.
- Caldecott: I think he ran for Speaker before he ran for the assembly. What I mean by that is that he had in mind running for the speakership very early. He went into districts where a Republican was likely to win and there was not much organization; he put money into the candidate's campaign, helped them get organized, with the result that when they were elected they were obligated to him. Silliman was a very strong personality, a very energetic person, and he had many assemblymen committed to him before they arrived in Sacramento.
- Rowland: What group of assemblymen supported Silliman?
- Caldecott: They were Republicans, of course. I don't know how you could term them particularly as to any group, except to say they were really nonmetropolitan.
- Rowland: Were you a Silliman supporter?
- Caldecott: I was not taking part in that campaign at all, no. I was a good friend of Silliman. I supported him for Speaker. We got along very well. I was not happy to see him run for lieutenant governor. I didn't work for him for lieutenant governor. But he had, I would say, about six or eight assemblymen that were his very close followers.
- Rowland: Now, when he lost the lieutenant governor's race, he lost his speakership too?
- Caldecott: Yes. You see, the assembly is elected every two years. So, if you run for anything else, state or national, you're automatically out. You couldn't also run for the assembly.
- Rowland: He must have had some good advice or some good predictions that he would win the lieutenant governor's race.

Caldecott: Well, I think it came down to the fact that Butch wasn't doing anything in the way of campaigning, putting together a committee, getting out and making speeches, or appearing anywhere, [and he] wasn't raising funds. And he [Silliman] felt that he was just going to really win by default.

Rowland: What individuals in the assembly became prominent in Silliman's campaign?

Caldecott: Oh, I think, Francis Lindsay. Lindsay is the only one that comes to mind. I was trying to think of a few others. Generally speaking, the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Mountain districts. I don't recall, really, any strong supporters he had in the metropolitan areas in the assembly.

Rowland: Now what about the Los Angeles Times? Who did they endorse?

Caldecott: To tell you the truth, I don't remember. Once Butch got underway with the campaign, he began to pick up strength very well.

Rowland: How about the California Republican Assembly? Who did they support?

Caldecott: I believe they supported Butch. I'm not sure, but I think so. The Republican Assembly at that time was a moderate group; it wasn't a conservative group. The Republican Assembly had been formed in the '30s, because the state committee was very, very conservative, and there were a number of active Republicans that felt the state committee didn't speak for them, and they formed the Republican Assembly as the moderate organization within the party. It remained that way, I'd say, till the late '50s and perhaps early '60s.

Rowland: Now, what about the Oakland Tribune? What position did they take in that lieutenant governor's race?

Caldecott: I'm pretty sure they supported Powers. You have two situations. One is that Powers was the incumbent; there's no reason to dump him. And Bill Knowland had served with Butch Powers--I believe, in the senate.

Rowland: So that was the reason for support.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: And the [San Francisco] Chronicle? Do you recall their position?

Caldecott: I'm inclined to believe they supported Butch Powers too. I think, as it developed, almost all the papers went with Powers by the time that the election arrived.

Rowland: We have a note that Eisenhower had backed Silliman. Eisenhower came to Palm Springs once and he met with Silliman after embarking from the plane and Powers was there at the back of the crowd. It was the image that Eisenhower was backing Silliman. Do you recall that?

Caldecott: Yes, I do recall something about that. Eisenhower did come to Palm Springs. I guess I was vice chairman of the state central committee, at the time. Ron Button, I believe, was chairman. Of course, we all had to have secret service clearance to go up to be in the party to greet the president when he got off.

It does come to mind now that Silliman either got into the group, or just as soon as the president had come off the plane and was walking towards his car, Silliman was able to get close to him and get a picture, or something of that type.

Butch Powers, at that time, of course, was not putting on any type of campaign and didn't ask to get clearance, with the result that the secret service were very polite but very firm on the point that he couldn't be in the group to come close to the president.

Rowland: Now, speaking of Silliman again, was Silliman a Warren supporter during his years as assembly Speaker or was he antagonist to Warren? Where did he stand in terms of the Warren/Knight schism?

Caldecott: I would say he was not a warm Warren supporter. Warren was a little too on the liberal side for Silliman. There were no actual breaks with him that I recall, although in the back of my mind it does strike me that there was a little antagonism there. As Speaker, he was not anti-Warren, and I think one of the reasons was because much of his support was pro-Warren. Warren took no part in the speakership fight, none at all. But I would say that almost all of Silliman's supporters in the speakership fight were Warren supporters.

Rowland: Like yourself?

Caldecott: Yes. Well, there would have been [Luther] Lincoln, [Caspar] Weinberger, [Francis] Lindsay. I'm just trying to think of the-- [pauses to think]

Rowland: These were considered the Young Turks in the assembly?

Caldecott: Well, no. The Young Turks, really, were the group that came in in '47. There were the "Dirty Seventeen" who didn't vote for the Speaker. They didn't vote for Sam Collins.

Rowland: Oh, Sam Collins.

Caldecott: Yes. We stayed together very well, with one or two exceptions, through the whole time that we remained in the legislature. I was going to say "Lock" [Laughlin] Waters, but "Lock" Waters had left by this time. "Lock" was not a strong supporter of Silliman's anyway. "Lock" was a U.S. attorney in Los Angeles by this time.

Rowland: When Silliman took the speakership, was that considered a revolt against Sam Collins?

Caldecott: No. What happened was, Sam came in and then a group that supported Sam's own group began to undercut him, led, I would say, by Randy Dickey.

Rowland: That's the assemblyman from Alameda?

Caldecott: Alameda, yes. And actually, by, I'd say, the '51 session, Sam had really come over and joined our group. Perhaps that was putting it a little strong, but--

Rowland: Why did they undercut Collins?

Caldecott: I don't know. Something within their own group that--or perhaps those who were supporting that group had become disillusioned with him. But they were attempting by that time to get rid of him.

Rowland: What were the expectations of assemblymen when Silliman became assembly Speaker? Would there be some major changes like on the Ways and Means Committee?

Caldecott: Well, no. Marv Sherwin was a Silliman supporter.

Rowland: Who was this?

Caldecott: Marvin Sherwin. He was chairman of Ways and Means and he was a Silliman supporter. He had been named by Sam Collins as chairman of Ways and Means. He did not vote for Sam for Speaker, though. But Sam was beginning to pick up--I did not vote for Sam, but he made me chairman, about two or three years later, of a minor committee, Civil Service and State Personnel Committee, and he was picking up a number of the Young Turks and giving them chairmanships in an attempt to hold his support. So Marv Sherwin, of course, stayed on as chairman of Ways and Means when Silliman came in.

Caldecott: Silliman put me in as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. There was a pretty good change in chairmanships at the time that Silliman came in. Silliman had no compunctions about relieving people of their chairmanships and putting in his own people; it didn't bother him one bit. So there were a number of changes.

Tension within the Republican State Central Committee

Rowland: Moving on to the Republican party and your activities in the Republican State Central Committee, I'm wondering: why did you seek the position of vice chairman of the Republican central committee and eventually the chairmanship of the committee?

Caldecott: Well, after I went into the legislature, I became active in the party statewide. Of course, as you know, a member of the legislature is a member of the county central committee, and I also became active with and a member of the state central committee. I became active and then, following the '48 campaign, if I remember correctly on the dates, I was appointed to the executive committee of the state committee. Then, in '52, "Lock" [Laughlin] Waters was vice chairman, and he would then go in as chairman, and he asked me to run for vice chairman. So that was the reason I did it.

Rowland: Did you intend to have some influence in the party, perhaps as a stalking horse for someone like Goodwin Knight?

Caldecott: No. I was considered, actually, of the Warren/Knowland branch of the party. They're two people with rather different political philosophies, but they had been together for so long that they--

Rowland: How did that label fit on you, anyway? [laughter]

Caldecott: [laughter] Well, for most of the time, it was the dominant phase of the party.

Rowland: The dominant one?

Caldecott: Yes, it was the dominant faction in the party. Nixon was not actually openly fighting the group. Knowland did not fight Nixon. So Nixon felt that as long as the party was not opposing him in California, he didn't have the time to come in really and do his own organizing and attempt to take over. I think he just decided to let it stand as it was.

Rowland: We have a note that Nixon played a role in the vice chairmanship battle of the Republican central committee, the battle between Arbuthnot and Ahmanson. Do you recall that in any way?

Caldecott: As I recall, much of the time that I was vice chairman, I was acting chairman of the state central committee because "Lock" Waters, a few months after he went in, was appointed United States attorney. So, then there was a period of trying to find the candidate who would be the state chairman. The state chairmanship rotates north and south; so if there is a vacancy in the chairmanship, the person who comes in to take the chairmanship is not the vice chairman but is a person from the same end of the state that the chairman was from. This is set up so that in the presidential campaigns the chairmanship is in the south. That's where the vote is, and they get the chairmanship.

Rowland: [laughter] Who set that up?

Caldecott: It was set up before my time. But they were very definite that it was not going to be changed, and there was no question that when "Lock" Waters resigned as chairman to become U.S. attorney I would not move in as chairman.

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Caldecott: When Waters left the state chairmanship to become U.S. attorney, I as vice chairman would not move up and become chairman because I was from the wrong end of the state. The chairman would have to come from the southern end of the state again. It took a few months to decide on who that would be, and A. Ronald Button was selected.

When Ron Button came in, he served a short time and then became Republican national committeeman. So, again, there was a vacancy, and I served then as acting chairman until they could find someone that everyone could agree on to become the new chairman.

Rowland: Who was that? It wasn't Alphonso Bell, was it?

Caldecott: No, no. Alphonso Bell came in later. It skips my mind right now, but I'll think of that [name]. So, I served a good bit of the vice chairman's term as acting chairman.

In the '54 campaign for vice chairman of the state committee, Goodwin Knight asked me if I would meet a friend of his who was coming up to Sacramento, Howard Ahmanson. I had heard of Howard Ahmanson, but never had met him. Knight didn't say why, but I could pretty well imagine what he had in mind. So, we met, and Howard and I were two of these people who just hit it off from the time we first met, and we always were very good friends until his death. But Knight asked me if I would help get Howard elected vice chairman. He was very afraid of the Nixon group.

Rowland: Knight was?

Caldecott: Yes. So, I did undertake that and got the legislative group lined up very well behind Howard, and there really was no contest --not just because of my doing, but I mean that group plus other support that Howard Ahmanson had. He went in without any trouble.

Rowland: What group of people were supporting Arbuthnot?

Caldecott: That would be the Nixon group.

Rowland: The Nixon group. Do you remember some prominent names of--?

Caldecott: Gee, I was just trying to think. Of course, Murray Chotiner. [pauses to think] John Kreibel, who was chairman of the Los Angeles central committee. [spells name] Another fellow was sort of a big, good-looking, outgoing person. I was just trying to think-- he's with one of the insurance companies in Los Angeles. His name escapes me right now. But he [Nixon] had a very definite group that had been around him ever since he first got into politics. But that really didn't develop into a campaign at all.

Rowland: Why was Nixon trying to get this man as vice chairman?

Caldecott: I think it was a question of--he wanted the support of the party. It would strengthen him in Washington if he had his own state party behind him.

Rowland: Would it be that the vice chairman would become chairman?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: In '56 there would be a campaign for the presidency.

Caldecott: Yes, yes. And it would be a sign of his strength in his own state if the party was staffed with his people.

Rowland: What was Knowland's position on this?

Caldecott: Knowland, as I recall, supported Ahmanson.

Rowland: What was the position of the Chandler family?

Caldecott: Exactly, I don't know. But I think they probably were with Ahmanson.

Rowland: And Henry Salvatori?

- Caldecott: He wasn't really a big figure in those days. However, the Los Angeles Finance Committee was fairly strong behind Ahmanson. If they weren't very strong behind him, at least they were not going to oppose him.
- Rowland: Who were some prominent people on that [committee]?
- Caldecott: Oh, Asa Call. I don't recall if Salvatori was active then; I don't think so. He may have been active, but he was not as prominent as he later became. I don't offhand remember who the other people were there. They were very prominent people in financial circles in Los Angeles.
- Rowland: Was the L.A. Finance Committee predominantly represented by Chandler people, L.A. Times people?
- Caldecott: I would say they were not all L.A. Times people but they didn't have any great differences of opinion.
- Rowland: Why did you seek the chairmanship of the Republican state committee.
- Caldecott: I'd gotten very interested in the party politics, having served for two years as state vice chairman and previously been on the executive committee. So, I was interested in becoming chairman to carry on the work and--
- Rowland: What do you mean by "carry on the work?"
- Caldecott: --basically to keep our group in control.
- Rowland: The Warren/Knowland group?
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: And was Knowland at this time feeling out California as a base of support for any national political move?
- Caldecott: Well, he always had his finger on the pulse of California, yes. Obviously, I don't think a person can last as senator without being very close to his own state and his own party.
- Rowland: Well, what I'm saying is: did he have ambitions as early as '54 for moving up to higher office?
- Caldecott: I don't recall any time that he said so, but I'm quite sure he did.

Rowland: Your relations, then, with the Knowland group and the Knowland family were quite close.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: What were the beginnings of this relationship?

Caldecott: Well, actually, I got to know J.R. Knowland--that is, the father--when I first ran for the legislature.

Rowland: Through your father?

Caldecott: Well, through my father and the fact that I was a candidate, I went in to see him. His paper had the largest circulation in my district. It always had more than the Berkeley Gazette in Berkeley. I got to know him at that time, and he became a very good supporter of mine, a very strong supporter of mine. I got to know Bill Knowland at the same time, although Bill was in Washington most of the time. I also knew members of Bill's family, and we traveled socially together with some of the members of his family. So, I knew most of the Knowland family quite well.

Rowland: Why did Butch Powers oppose you for the Republican state chairmanship?

Caldecott: Well, I think he was peeved because he felt that I was instrumental in getting Silliman into the [lieutenant governor] race against him. No one had to get Silliman into the race; he was all ready to go by himself.

And you mentioned the Palm Springs incident. He felt that I had worked Silliman into that situation, when actually I had had nothing to do with it. But he knew I was close to Silliman in the assembly. We were on, you might say, the same team in the assembly, and he just assumed that I was supporting Silliman against him.

Rowland: What position did the Nixon forces take in your bid for the chairmanship of the Republican State Central Committee?

Caldecott: As I recall, none.

Rowland: They were just active in the vice chairmanship, then? They weren't concerned about the chairmanship?

Caldecott: They weren't--I don't recall there was any candidate even mentioned against me.

- Rowland: We talked briefly about the 1956 Republican national convention delegate slate. There seemed to be a battle going on between Nixon, Knowland, and Knight, from our research, over the delegate selection for that '56 national convention. I wonder if that jogs your memory in any way.
- Caldecott: Well, what they did in both the '52 election and the '56 election was--it was, of course, understood from the beginning that all factions would be represented in the delegation. And the only, perhaps, difference of opinion was: how many delegates does each faction get?
- Rowland: Who made this decision?
- Caldecott: I would say Nixon and Knowland.
- Rowland: They made the decision that all factions would be represented?
- Caldecott: Oh, I never heard any question about that. That was understood, that the party would be kept together.
- Rowland: Did Knight agree to that?
- Caldecott: Well, in the '52 campaign, Knight was not included, no.
- Rowland: Right, yes.
- Caldecott: And, of course, he was not a delegate. He would have to stay in California when Warren went back, so he was not a delegate. I'm quite sure that if he suggested a few people to Warren or to Knowland, they were taken care of. And many of the people that were his supporters were also Warren's supporters, so there was no problem. Knight wasn't fighting Warren or Knowland at all in those days. They both were too powerful figures for him to take on.
- Rowland: He was fighting Nixon?
- Caldecott: His personal fight was with Murray Chotiner.
- Rowland: Murray Chotiner?
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: Could you go into that?
- Caldecott: Well, he felt that he had been slighted on several occasions intentionally by Murray. I don't know if he had. Chotiner and I never had any long heart-to-heart talk, so I don't know. But he felt that Chotiner was very antagonistic to him.

- Rowland: Why? Were there some particular incidents that he remembered?
- Caldecott: Oh, it was another one of these greetings; greeting the president at an airport. It wasn't the Palm Springs incident. It was another one, in which Knight got pushed into the background, and he laid the blame on Chotiner for it.
- Rowland: Oh. You mean, the governor wasn't there to meet the president at the airport?
- Caldecott: As I recall, he was there but didn't get to greet the president. He was very outspoken in his opinion of Chotiner.
- Nixon didn't fight any of the group. You never saw Nixon coming in and opposing or actually openly fighting any of the group. He didn't want to. He had nothing to gain by it.
- Rowland: He would send his lieutenants then?
- Caldecott: Yes. And very often they got out of line. I think they got a little over zealous and wanted to show their loyalty to Nixon by taking on some of the other California politicians. It actually caused trouble for Nixon and didn't help him one bit.
- Rowland: Now, with that delegate battle in '56, did Knight eventually back down and then have to agree to this division of delegates for the convention?
- Caldecott: As I recall, yes. It was a full ticket. The idea was to bring everybody in, yes. This was not a solely Knight slate, no.
- Rowland: Well, this kind of leads up to my big question here. I'm wondering why did Knowland and Knight switch in 1958?

Knight and Knowland Skirmish for Governor

- Caldecott: You sound as if they'd gotten together and agreed to exchange jobs; they didn't. As I see it, Knowland felt that there was no place for him to go in the [U.S.] Senate and that it was, in effect, dead end; and if he was to run for president, the best thing for him to do would be to pull out of the Senate, go for governor, get elected governor, and then he'd be in a position to go for president.
- Rowland: Did he discuss this with you?

Caldecott: No. By this time, Knowland wasn't discussing anything with anybody. I talked to [Chief Justice] Warren about some of these things, and Warren said that Knowland hadn't talked to Warren in several months about matters of this type. They had been fairly close.

Rowland: You had communications with Earl Warren and Knowland in Washington?

Caldecott: After Warren went on the bench, I did not have established communications. I would see him every once in a while--this sort of thing--but I didn't communicate with him regularly. Actually, he'd come out to California twice a year and I'd see him in that time. He always had lunch with the superior court in Alameda County when he came out; it was just one of those things he did at times, and I would talk to him.

In one of the cases where Bill Knowland--I forget what it was that Bill did--well, a statement he made, and I asked Earl Warren why he did that. Warren said he didn't know. That's when he said: "He hasn't talked with me for several months about politics."

Rowland: --and his California ambitions.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Even though Warren was on the Supreme Court, he still had some force and some influence on Republican politics in California?

Caldecott: No. As far as I know, he never attempted to exert any influence in California after he went on the court.

Rowland: Did he have any ambitions for the presidency even though he was the Chief Justice?

Caldecott: As far as I know, no, and I don't think he had any. I never saw any signs of it.

Rowland: Well, how did this exchange occur between Knowland and Knight?

Caldecott: Well, I think, as I said, Knowland felt that the governorship would be a better stepping-stone to the presidency than the Senate, and so he decided to withdraw from the Senate and run for governor. Knight was in the position of--

Rowland: Excuse me. Let me inject this question: where did Knowland get his financial support for this bid for the governorship?

Caldecott: Oh, I don't think he had any trouble with finances, with the Republican finance committees.

Rowland: What particularly prominent people were supporting Knowland in his bid for the governorship?

Caldecott: I don't recall the names now, but there's no question--the Los Angeles County Finance Committee and--

Rowland: Again, the L.A. Times?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Even though Goodie Knight had strong support in Los Angeles?

Caldecott: Goodie Knight, by this time, was a liberal, remember. He was going along with labor almost one hundred percent, and the conservatives in Los Angeles had dropped him completely.

So, now, another thing with Knight--Knowland knew, and a lot of the political leaders at the time knew, that if they put the pressure on Knight they could squeeze him out of running. If Knight had been the type of person that would stand by his guns, Knowland never would have tried it. But they knew that once they put the pressure on him he wouldn't run for reelection. He also found that there was no money. There was no money for him to run for governor; there would be money if he'd run for the U.S. Senate.

Rowland: What role did Kyle Palmer--he was a particularly influential person in the Los Angeles region.

Caldecott: Yes, yes.

Rowland: What role did he play in the turnabout?

Caldecott: In this particular project, I don't know of any particular role. I used to see Kyle every once in a while and talk to him about who was he going to support and what was he going to do. And he would, of course, completely deny that he did anything but report the news. But he always knew what was happening. But just exactly what role he had in this, I don't know.

Rowland: What role did Newt Stearns play in the turnabout too? Newt Stearns was Knight's press secretary.

Caldecott: Yes, yes. I don't know that Newt had any particular part in it. I think he was just caught--the fact that Knight just found he was in the position [that] there was no money in his campaign for governor.

- Rowland: You do know that Stearns eventually worked for Whitaker and Baxter.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: And that Whitaker and Baxter supported Knowland's campaign for governor?
- Caldecott: I think that was it, yes. An interesting sidelight.
- I asked Neil Haggerty--I don't know if you knew Haggerty. He was the president of the AFL-CIO. I said, "Neil, who is labor going to support if Goodwin Knight and Brown both run for governor?" And he said, "I don't know what we'll do." They're both good friends of ours." And he said, "I don't know how we could dump Knight after all he's done for us in the last four years."
- Rowland: Did you see this as disastrous for the party? What were you thinking at the time of this turnabout?
- Caldecott: To some extent, I was glad I wasn't in the middle [chuckles], but aside from that I could see it was a disaster, that both were going to get defeated.
- Rowland: You had been a loyal Knowland supporter.
- Caldecott: Yes, and I had worked with Knight. I, of course, was out of it by this time. I was out of all of it by this time. The party leadership either did not want to or wasn't able to take any part in straightening it out. There's no question, if Knight had held his guns and said, "I'm going to run for reelection as governor. I may be defeated, but I'm going to run," in my mind there's no question; Knowland would not have filed against him.
- Rowland: Did you campaign for Knowland in his governor's race?
- Caldecott: No. I was on the bench. I did no campaigning.
- Rowland: Was your appointment to the bench in any way connected with this turnabout in the party?
- Caldecott: No, no. It took place before any of this developed.
- Rowland: We have in our research files a note about a meeting in Arizona with Kyle Palmer and Knowland and Goodwin Knight and several other people. I wanted to know if you had any more information on that or could shed any light on that, on what transpired in that meeting in Arizona.

Caldecott: No.

Rowland: Do you know if Nixon played any role in this turnabout in the party; that is, did he capitalize on the battle between Knowland and Knight?

Caldecott: As far as I know, he didn't. But, you see, by this time, at the time I went out, which was in--actually, I left, I guess it was, the Fourth of July in '57 and went to Europe on vacation and then came back and went on the bench. So, I actually was not active in the party. I intentionally stayed out of party politics after I went on the bench, so I was really out of things from the first of July of '57.

Rowland: As someone who was a vice chairman and [who held] the chairmanship of the Republican State Central Committee, you must have had premonitions of a major battle looming in the picture between Nixon and Knowland.

Caldecott: Yes. [tape interruption as visitor comes in] There was always that possibility of the fight between Nixon and Knowland, but, looking back, I don't see any great feeling in the party that there was any fight as far as Knight was concerned. Knight never came up to the stature or the prominence within the party that Nixon and Knowland had. And Knight also by this time, as I say, was fairly liberal and had lost a lot of party support, very important party support. I won't say that he lost the voter support, but he lost--

Rowland: Where did he lose this support?

Caldecott: Basically, in finance committee groups.

Rowland: Particularly down in Los Angeles?

Caldecott: Particularly in Los Angeles, yes.

Rowland: Again, this was Asa Call and--

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Kyle Palmer too?

Caldecott: Well, probably. But Kyle, of course, always maintained that all he was doing was reporting the news. [laughter] But Knight had pretty well lost all of that support by then. He was a good vote-getter, and a lot of Republicans that didn't like some of his policies recognized that he had good vote-getting possibilities or abilities. Among rank-and-file Republicans he was strong, but not among leadership Republicans.

- Rowland: If Knight had stood his ground for the governorship, if you had not been appointed, would you have backed Knight for reelection for governor in '58?
- Caldecott: If Knight had stood his ground, Knowland wouldn't have filed.
- Rowland: Knowland wouldn't have filed?
- Caldecott: No.
- Rowland: And his financial supporters would have remained with him?
- Caldecott: Yes. He would have had probably not as much money as he had in the past, but he would have had ample funds and I don't think he'd have had any problem on reelection.
- Rowland: Had you seen Goodie Knight after he had lost the battle within the party and the U.S. Senate race? Many people have said he was a defeated man; he was out of politics completely.
- Caldecott: Yes, I saw him at a social function about a year or so after the election, and he seemed to be about his normal self, a little quieter than he had been before. But this was a fairly brief matter, and I didn't have an opportunity to really do much talking with him except to say, "Hello," and, "How are you?", and, "How are things going?"--that sort of thing. I think, unquestionably, he was very hurt.
- Rowland: There were some people like Donald Doyle, for instance, who rose up in the party like yourself--
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: --and went down along with Goodwin Knight.
- Caldecott: Yes, yes. Doyle was a Knight supporter rather than a Warren. Of course, he got along with Knowland, because Knowland was a very big factor in his area. Yes, he went in as vice chairman the same year I went out.
- Rowland: Was that amove organized by Goodwin Knight to try to get a strong Knight supporter in as--?
- Caldecott: Yes. Knight was supporting him, yes. Howard Ahmanson was to go in as chairman, and then Howard had a heart attack just a short time before.
- Rowland: Then Doyle was chairman then?

Caldecott: No. Then came the matter--you see, it had to be south. See, I was north, and my successor had to be from the south, and so it was agreed on that Alphonso Bell, [Jr.] would go in.

Rowland: Was there some opposition to Alphonso Bell?

Caldecott: Not an awful lot. There was--

Rowland: We understand that Bell was involved with oil interests in southern California.

Caldecott: Yes. There was a little opposition to the extent that they felt he was a little new, that he hadn't really been active. They didn't know him. But, aside from that, I don't recall there was any real strong opposition to him. Yes, I think, unquestionably, the oil people were behind him. He was in the oil business. His father was--

Rowland: The independent oil support, or was it major oil backers?

Caldecott: Actually, I don't know too much about his support. His father was in the real estate business; in fact, [his father] was the developer of Bel Air in Los Angeles and also owned considerable property in Orange County and around, some of which came in very well for oil. So, Al was quite well off.

But he was in the field of an oil producer. I don't know whether he actually did any oil producing at the time or whether he just leased property. He had two oil companies. I know he was having--some lawsuits were going on, which were rather a technical problem. Union Oil had bought a lease on a certain property that he owned, and they were drilling fairly shallow wells, and the issue came up of whether or not that lease gave them the right to go down to a deep well. If they had leased the property for the shallow well, did that also include exploration rights on a deep well, which also came in? There was oil at two different levels on the property. I mean, some people just have it tough. It's not enough to have oil at one level on your property; they have to have it on two levels.

So, he was in the process of some litigation during much of this time. I think that there was some criticism on that. But, I mean, there was nothing wrong with it; it was just a good legal question.

Rowland: What were Alphonso Bell's preferences in terms of the Knowland-Nixon-Knight divisions in the party?

Caldecott: I don't know.

Rowland: What were your relations with Alphonso Bell?

Caldecott: Oh, he came--as I say, he was not an oldtime party worker--
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Caldecott: But, actually, I don't think I had seen Al Bell more than a dozen times.

Rowland: He was an outsider, then, to the party?

Caldecott: To the party. And that was basically the objection to him, yes. Afterwards, he later ran for Congress and served in Congress for many years.

Rowland: That's interesting. He had his most loyal support from southern California and his oil interests?

Caldecott: I don't know that the oil interests--the oil interests really never had much effect in the party. I never saw any evidence of them getting into party fights at all, and they were not very good contributors, if at all.

Rowland: We have briefly touched upon the subject of the Chandler family and the Knowland family and the [San Francisco] Chronicle. I was wondering how these three groups affected party politics during the years when you were in the central committee. In other words, endorsements, I imagine, must have been of prime importance.

Caldecott: Yes. Earlier (just what year it ended--maybe in the early '50s, but it ended) the L.A. Times, the S.F. Chronicle, and the Oakland Tribune normally went together on political issues.

Rowland: Up until when?

Caldecott: It's pretty hard to give a year on that, because I don't think there was any formal falling-out on it, but I'd probably say up to the early '50s.

Rowland: And they were generally supportive of Earl Warren's politics?

Caldecott: Yes. Of course, they supported Warren throughout his whole time in California, from the time he ran for attorney general. Of course, the Tribune supported Earl Warren as district attorney, and from the time he was appointed district attorney in, oh, the middle '20s until--including his last gubernatorial campaign.

Rowland: Why did this newspaper breakup occur? Was it due, again, to the frictions within the party, the Knowland-Nixon-Knight camps?

Caldecott: I don't think so. I think there's no question the Times supported Nixon during the '50s. The Chronicle did not like Nixon. The Trib, of course, was with Knowland. Whether that was the reason for the split or not, I don't know.

Rowland: Northern California-southern California friction, perhaps?

Caldecott: I would say no on that, because I don't think there was any real problem involved there. People in southern California's attitude was, "There's no need for any friction on that issue. We have the votes in the south, and we'll use them." Whether it was the fact [of] the Nixon split-up or not, I don't know.

Rowland: The Nixon split-up?

Caldecott: Well, whether the three papers split over the Times supporting Nixon; and the Chronicle not supporting him; and then the Trib going, of course, for Bill Knowland.

Rowland: I was wondering what role Sam Yorty played in Republican politics. Even though he was a Democrat, he was an anti-communist and a leader of that campaign in southern California. I wondered if he had any influence on Republican politics in those years. Would Sam Yorty people have supported Republicans?

Caldecott: I don't recall any effect at all that Sam Yorty had on the party politics. I served with him in the legislature. I think he was only in one term while I was there, and that's where I got to know him, but I saw absolutely no connection with him in the party politics.

Rowland: I have a group of questions here. I don't know how much time we'll have left. We have a little bit more of this last tape.

Caldecott: All right, yes.

Rowland: Do you want to finish this up?

Caldecott: Sure.

III PERSONALITIES AND ISSUES IN THE LEGISLATURE

Maneuverings in the Assembly

- Rowland: Okay. I have a bunch of questions here on the assembly. We talked about Silliman and Silliman's relations with Knight. I'm wondering--when Silliman left, we had Luther Lincoln now assuming the speakership.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: And I wondered who was in support of Lincoln's assumption of the speakership of the assembly.
- Caldecott: Yes. Lincoln's support was basically the same as Silliman's, and I think he picked up a few more that couldn't go for Silliman for personal reasons. Silliman was a very aggressive and, I might say, abrasive person. He was a doer, and he trod on some toes at times, with the result that there were people who normally would have gone along with the Silliman group but would not go along with Silliman. Abe [Luther] Lincoln was not that way. He was very soft-spoken, a very considerate person, and they were able to join with Lincoln and the Lincoln group.
- Rowland: What campaign did Lincoln run on when he was seeking the speakership of the assembly?
- Caldecott: I've never heard of a Speaker running on a campaign, other than that he would like to be Speaker.
- Rowland: Well, that is, what did he promise to do that was different from Silliman?
- Caldecott: Nothing. Silliman, of course, was not running; Silliman was out. So, the point was just the Silliman group meeting together to decide who would be the best candidate.

Rowland: Who was also running for that position?

Caldecott: I don't recall who the other group put up.

Rowland: Ernest Geddes?

Caldecott: [pauses to think] Possibly. I think, as you mention it, that Ernest Geddes or Jonathan Hollibaugh would be a likely person, but I don't recall there was really any real contest on that. They felt that the Silliman group, plus the members who would like to be with the Silliman group but could not support Silliman--when they combined, that would end it. There was no use getting into a fight.

And, you know, what they do in the speakership fight is contact the members before January and get the commitments lined up. And, as I recall, Lincoln had well over forty-one votes--something like forty-six, forty-seven, firm commitments--around November. Just after the election is when they start working, and by the end of November he had firm commitments in the high forties, with the result that no one else was going to be a candidate then. Now, there is a lot of talking about--

Rowland: This was bipartisan support?

Caldecott: Oh, yes, yes.

Rowland: Do you recall who the prominent people in both parties were?

Caldecott: [pauses to think] In the Democrats, Julian Beck, Jesse Unruh, Bill Munnell. I offhand don't recall--I think, Vince Thomas. I'm not sure of Vince, but I think so. Jesse Unruh did not have an organization at this time; he was an individual. But that group of Democrats were with Silliman and with Lincoln.

In the Republicans--I was just trying to think of the group. Let's see. Tom McBride, who was a federal judge of late; in fact, [he] just retired last month. Gordon Fleury, also from Sacramento. I'm not sure about the years these people served, but they were part of a group. The Alameda County delegation was--with the exception of Randal Dickey--but the rest of the delegation was with Lincoln. I don't recall whether Bob Crown had defeated Dickey by this time or not; but if he had, he was with Abe Lincoln. Cap Weinberger. Francis Lindsay. Bert Loomis.*

*Bert W. Loomis was a Republican assemblyman from the 57th District from 1947-1948.

- Caldecott: Lloyd Lowry. I don't recall any of the others. The names would come over a period of thinking about it, but--
- Rowland: We haven't really talked about the third house and their influence on the legislature. I wondered if they sought consultation over the selection of the Speaker and the committee members.
- Caldecott: Yes. I would say it would be very difficult to be Speaker without having some understandings with the third house. This is one reason I was never a candidate. I also much more enjoyed my job as chairman of Ways and Means; I didn't have to bother with them. I never had financial trouble in my campaign because I ran my own type of campaign. The first time I ran, I put up all the money myself, with the exception that my father paid the filing fee. He wanted to pay the filing fee. The rest of the money I put up. The last time I ran, in 1957, my primary campaign and general campaign ran \$1,320. People are now spending \$25,000, \$50,000, \$75,000 for election. It's just ridiculous.
- Rowland: Yes, with the media.
- Caldecott: Yes. Well, I never had problems with raising money, and I soon learned that you do take money from the lobbyists to show you're not antagonistic, but not more than \$100. In my day, all a lobbyist got for \$100 was good government; he wasn't entitled to anything else. So, I would take a little to show people that I was not fighting them; I wasn't antagonistic.
- Rowland: Do you recall what lobbyists were frequently offering--?
- Caldecott: Just almost right across the--everyone you can think of.
- Rowland: Liquor and horse track?
- Caldecott: I didn't take liquor money. Horse-racing money I didn't take.
- Rowland: Labor?
- Caldecott: Labor doesn't give money, at least not to people like me. Some unions supported me.
- I remember the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers did. I was interested in legislation on grade separation of highways and railroads.
- Rowland: How about some oil companies? Did Standard--?
- Caldecott: I never saw Standard or Shell or any of those big outfits make any contribution. Their lobbyist I knew well.

Rowland: Al Shults?

Caldecott: Yes. He had come up in the '47 session and worked in the legislative counsel's office. Just following the war, the office was very understaffed, and they got commitments from the large law firms to send one or two men up--each one did--to staff the office just during the session. He was a very close friend of George Miller, Jr.

I used to pick George up Monday morning, going through Richmond, and we'd ride up together. Those were the days, you know, when you only had one car in the family. So, George would leave the car with his wife, and then I'd pick him up, and then Friday afternoon I'd bring him home. I'd known George a little bit in college, and after that George and I got to be very good friends. He was a part of the "Dirty Seventeen" or Young Turks, on the Democratic side of the fence.

Oh, Bob Kirkwood was another one of our group. I don't know if you knew Bob Kirkwood.

Rowland: He was controller, wasn't he?

Caldecott: Yes, he was controller, and previous to that he was in the assembly.

Rowland: You mentioned Al Shults. I was just wondering if you could talk about him more and how he worked the legislature.

Caldecott: He worked the senate.

Rowland: He was the senate lobbyist?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: So, there were senate and assembly lobbyists then?

Caldecott: There may have been assembly--yes, there were a few assembly lobbyists, but mostly they were senate. You see, the time I got there in '47, Artie Samish really couldn't get a bill through the legislature.* He could kill a bill, just because of the senate committee system. By getting a bill assigned to a certain

*Arthur H. (Artie) Samish represented liquor interests before the state legislature. Reputed to be a powerful lobbyist, Samish met his downfall when he announced to a Collier's magazine reporter that he was the secret boss of California and the governor of the legislature. He was indicted and convicted of federal tax evasion in 1954.

Caldecott: senate committee, the committee could kill the bill. And, of course, they had that rule to some extent in the assembly: you don't withdraw bills from committee, it's a reflection on the committee, and it's a reflection on the Speaker, and they built up all that malarkey. But that was a way of burying a bad bill, to get it into a certain committee and then it would be killed.

Rowland: What assembly committee would be the graveyard committee for unwanted bills?

Caldecott: Public Morals was the normal one.

Rowland: In the assembly?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Who was the chairman of that committee?

Caldecott: John F. Thompson. He was a farmer, a nice fellow. [He was] not really one of their people, but they put him in as chairman because he really wasn't part of the group and he made a good front. I had two or three bills in that committee which were not good for the industry. He would always tell me beforehand, "Your bill is going to be taken up this afternoon. Don't come. It's going to be killed," or else he'd say, "Do you really have to have this bill?" But we always got along very easily.

Then, as I recall, either late in Sam Collins' time as Speaker or in Silliman's time, the committee was abolished. It had a little too much publicity after the Samish story in Collier's Magazine, so the committee was abolished in the late '40s or early '50s.

Rowland: What third house advocates were interested in the Speaker's race, and were trying to give consultation?

Caldecott: Basically, I'd say, all lobbyists were that were full-time professional lobbyists. You know, they speak about the fact that there are three times as many lobbyists as there are legislators. Well, that, of course, is sort of a misconception because, I'd say, two-thirds of those lobbyists are people who are interested in just one bill. They weren't lobbyists in the normal sense of the word. They, of course, wanted to make sure that the lobbyist was not antagonistic to their interests.

Rowland: Meaning the Speaker?

Caldecott: Yes. The Speaker was not antagonistic to their interests. To most of the lobbyists, that was the extent of their interest.

- Rowland: And [James D.] Garibaldi, as the liquor and horse track lobbyist, did he give consultation in the nomination of a Speaker?
- Caldecott: I don't recall that he ever played a big part in selecting a Speaker. He wanted to make sure that the Speaker would not be antagonistic to race tracks and that the bills concerning race tracks would take the normal course.
- Rowland: How about the CTA lobbyist, Bob McKay? Was he very prominent in this too?
- Caldecott: Yes, he was very active, very prominent. Of course, that was a group that did not put money into campaigns. What they talked about was [that] they had 70,000 members.
- Rowland: [laughter] Well organized, no doubt.
- Caldecott: Fairly well organized, yes. I don't know that he played a great part in that. If he did, his interest would be in who was appointed chairman of the Education Committee, that sort of thing.
- Rowland: Now, when I was talking to you on the phone, you mentioned that there were some changes that occurred in the assembly in the years that you were there, and one of those was a rise in partisanship.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: I was wondering if you could describe that some more.
- Caldecott: Yes. In the '47 and, I'd say, the '49 sessions, the only time party came into it was on the selection of the Speaker. The majority party got the Speaker. But, aside from that--both Republicans and Democrats split and voted for their own candidate on Speaker, without regard to party. Chairmanship of committees went a little heavy on the Republican side. Both houses were Republicans up until the early '60s. The Ways and Means Committee, which handled the governor's budget, of course, always went to a Republican and it always had a Republican majority. No big point was made of it; it was just understood, and the Democrats were the first to say, "Well, that's the way it should be." Most other committees had no party significance. The Rules Committee was Republican. I recall, I think, it was five members, of which the Speaker was one, and two would be Republican and two Democrat, giving the Republicans majority. But the other committees, that made no difference; and the chairmanships made no difference.

Caldecott: Then the Democrats began to organize the--we'll call [them] the Julian Beck Democrats. These were the non-lobby-controlled Democrats. And [they began] to take a little more interest in the party side of it.

The first time I can now remember of party activity--concerned a bill up to increase judgeships in Los Angeles Superior Court. This was during the middle 1950s. The Democrats felt that if they were able to elect the next governor then a Democratic governor would make the appointments to fill the new judgeships. Governor Knight, however, was reelected and the Democrats withdrew their opposition to the bill.

There always was a little--shall we say, the Democrats' position on the budget, but that was mostly talk. There were a few amendments offered. They always had a few amendments that it was necessary for them to put in for appearance's sake, but they would be voted down, and then they'd vote for the budget. But it was, I'd say, around '55, '56, before you began to see the party caucuses organized.

Rowland: And then you had minority and majority leaders?

Caldecott: We had a majority leader and a minority leader, and it had little or no effect.

Rowland: That was instituted on the request of the Democrats in the assembly?

Caldecott: I believe they'd always had a majority leader and minority leader, but they had absolutely no effect at all.

Rowland: But the caucuses came about through the Democrats?

Caldecott: I would say the Democrats organized the caucus first. The Democrats that actually worked with Silliman and with Lincoln were the Democrats that organized the Democratic caucus. As I say, even at the time I left, the parties were not a major factor.

Rowland: Turning particularly to Lincoln, did he begin to select Democrats for chairmanships that were different from Silliman's preferences?

Caldecott: I don't think so. As I recall, there was always an understanding with the candidate for Speaker that in lining up the Democrats' votes with them that they would get either certain committee chairmanships, or certain people would be appointed, or they would have a certain number of appointments, or that the Speaker would be interested in learning their preferences for committee assignments, with the exception that the Ways and Means and the Rules Committees would both be Republican controlled.

Rowland: Turning to your appointment to Ways and Means, why were you selected to become chairman of Ways and Means, or had you sought that position?

Caldecott: No, I hadn't, except for the fact that I was on the Ways and Means Committee and it was important to me to be on the committee and also to be chairman because of the university. And, needless to say, Jim Corley was not opposed to my appointment.

Rowland: Corley fought for your appointment to the Ways and Means Committee?

Caldecott: I won't say he went out and actively campaigned, but I will say he certainly was not opposing it in any way.

Rowland: So, you had an excellent working relationship with Corley?

Caldecott: Oh, yes, yes. We were close friends. But that was one of the major considerations.

Rowland: What was Knight's reaction to that?

Recalling Executive-Legislative Relations

Caldecott: The governor's office was in the position of not wanting to get into the internal organization of either house. It was not like it is these days, and I don't just mean the Jerry Brown administration.

Rowland: Yes, that's an interesting point, because I've talked to Paul Mason about that. Legislative-governor's office relations seem to be totally different from the Pat Brown administration. Pat Brown's administration was very actively involved with the legislature.

Caldecott: Yes. You see, by that time party politics had come into it, and it was necessary to have the legislature organized to support the governor.

Rowland: Right. And there was a party record that he had to run on.

Caldecott: Yes. You see, you had that sort of thing, which did not exist during Knight's time. And the Knight's office just took the [position] that they had absolutely nothing to do with the internal organization. Now, they had their preferences, yes, but they would not do any campaigning or raise a finger to help somebody or hurt someone.

- Caldecott: Now, Warren and Sam Collins were not of the same branch of the party, but Warren did not oppose him, and Sam went down and saw him afterwards and talked to Warren and said he wanted to cooperate with him and work with him.
- Rowland: Did Knight, though, in adopting that laissez-faire attitude--did that tend to make a weaker relationship between the legislature and the governor's office?
- Caldecott: Yes, in one way it did. In another way, it didn't, because there was no resentment in the legislature towards the governor's office.
- Rowland: Did Knight have some problems with certain members of the legislature?
- Caldecott: Oh, yes. Always.
- Rowland: Randy Collier in the senate, and Bud Collier in the assembly. Do you recall that in any way?
- Caldecott: I remember now that Bud Collier did have a difference with the governor; I don't recall over what. Bud was a part of the Young Turks, but maybe he had his own young Turkish revolt rather than [being] part of ours. Bud never programmed.
- Rowland: Programmed?
- Caldecott: Yes. I mean, the caucus would get together, or you'd caucus a group of the legislators who normally worked together on a program or on how we were going to stand on a bill, and Bud would never be part of it. He always went his own way. Bud and I are very good friends, and I saw him a couple of months ago in Sacramento and enjoyed talking over old times with him and all that, but he was a loner, went his own way. Now, why he split with Knight, I don't recall now. It possibly was over an appointment of some kind. That's the only thing that comes to mind, but I'm not sure.
- Rowland: In speaking of Knight's relations with the legislature, I think Paul Mason was his legislative secretary. What do you remember about Paul Mason's influence in the legislature?
- Caldecott: As I recall, Paul was director of the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Rowland: Right.
- Caldecott: He helped out in the governor's office. I don't know whether he formally had the title of legislative secretary, but he was also parliamentarian of the senate--sort of one way of getting a lobbyist on the floor. [chuckles]

[Interview 2: June 29, 1979]##

Rowland: I wonder if you might comment on what you saw of Butch Powers' role in this shift between Knowland and Knight and what part he might have played.

Caldecott: On the relationship between Nixon, Knowland, and Knight, most all of this was done by the three of them personally. I think probably Nixon did use some of his very high associates to some extent. Knowland did not. Knowland, I think, did all of the discussions personally himself.

Rowland: Discussions with whom?

Caldecott: With Nixon or with Knight.

Rowland: And do you have any idea what they might have discussed?

Caldecott: This would be on the delegation.

Rowland: In '56?

Caldecott: In '56, which was the principal subject that they did meet on, and there were some differences of opinion in putting together the delegation and how the delegation would be made up.

Rowland: Do you have any idea what those differences of opinion might have been?

Caldecott: Well, I think it was just basically that each one wanted to be represented in the delegation, and each of the three had certain people that were part of their supporters that were interested in being delegates, so that it was the problem of how that would be taken care of. Tommy Kuchel, as I recall, did not take any major part in this.

Rowland: He was U.S. Senator at that time.

Caldecott: Yes. He was named by Warren. I don't recall the year, but it would, of course, have to have been before Warren went on the Court in '53.

Rowland: I think he was named to replace Richard Nixon when Nixon became vice president.

Caldecott: Yes, yes.

Rowland: That was '52.

Caldecott: Yes. And then Kirkwood was named controller to take Kuchel's place.

Rowland: Bob Kirkwood?

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: But getting back to the shift between William Knowland and Goodwin Knight in 1958, I was again wondering--

Caldecott: '58 or '56?

Rowland: The '58 one, when Knowland ran for governor, and Knight turned around and said he wasn't going to run for governor and ran for U.S. Senate.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: The article I sent you from the Sacramento Bee [June 11, 1958] commented, and of course this was a Democratic theory, that Butch Powers had played a role in that he had tried to get Knight out of the governor's race so Powers would have a shot at the governor's office.

Caldecott: I was on the court by that time, and so I had no part in those dealings or discussions.

Rowland: Could you just generally comment on Butch Powers' role in the Republican State Central Committee. Was there a group of supporters of Butch Powers in the Republican State [Central] Committee, and did he have quite a bit of influence in the state committee?

Caldecott: He had, of course, a good deal of influence, particularly with the senate members of the state committee and, of course, through them, [with] their appointees. He also had influence, a personal influence, because he was so well liked with the assembly members and their appointees.

Rowland: He was just a charming, gracious--

Caldecott: Yes. As I stated at our last discussion, if Butch Powers could have talked to every voter in the United States personally, he could have been elected president [laughter] because he's a very delightful person and a wonderful person if you know him personally. But he's not the type of person that has a strong platform presence.

Rowland: Right. One other clipping I sent [Sacramento Bee, July 29, 1958] accompanying the one on Powers and the Knowland/Knight shift was Powers commenting on the right-to-work initiative in the '58 campaign.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: He sought to take that out as a platform issue in the Republican State Central Committee. I wondered, again, what role he might have played in that.

Caldecott: Well, you see, by that time I was out of it. I was not dealing in it, and so I don't actually know. I went on the bench in '57, and from the time I went on I had nothing to do with the '58 or '60 campaigns. I intentionally separated myself.

Role of Lobbyists in the Legislature

Rowland: Going on to the assembly and to general legislative operations, we had last just gotten into that subject and talked about changes in the assembly and the Speaker's position.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Since I had talked to you, I had read a thesis at UC Berkeley on the Samish years in California politics. The author of that thesis stated that it was the Silliman "good government group" that you were a part of [that] elected Silliman, but when Silliman came in he reorganized and changed the composition of assembly committees. And [he] appointed only eight out of twenty-one assemblymen. Now, the author of this, Elmer Rusco, said it was to break Samish's hold on the assembly. I wonder if you might agree with that.*

Caldecott: Well, I think that probably was one reason for it. I think also that when a Speaker comes in he normally rewards his friends, those who voted for him. And when you say that only eight of twenty--you mean chairmanships.

*See Elmer R. Rusco, "Machine Politics, California Model: Arthur H. Samish and the Alcoholic Beverage Industry," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1960.

Rowland: Chairmanships of the committees, yes.

Caldecott: Yes. So, he would normally give the chairmanships to those who had supported him.

Rowland: So, this didn't really play a role, then, as you saw it, in the battle between the Samish--?

Caldecott: At the time I went to Sacramento in '47, Samish could block a bill in the legislature simply because of the committee system, but he could not necessarily get a bill passed. He did get some passed that he wanted, and there was, in my opinion, nothing wrong with the bill[s]. He represented his clients, and his clients had legitimate bills. But he really had to depend on people that were not his people to get a bill through.

Rowland: This was the way he operated, then. He would work with lieutenants, you're saying, that would work with assemblymen?

Caldecott: Well, he had, oh, I guess it was about three assistants up there. This would be normal because one of the functions of a lobbyist, of any lobbyist, is to check the bills as they're introduced to see whether or not they affect that lobbyist's clients.

Rowland: Do you recall the names of those assistants?

Caldecott: One was named Jasper. One was named Flynn.

Rowland: I think he's called Porky Flynn.

Caldecott: Yes. I don't recall what his given name actually was.

Rowland: He was from San Francisco, wasn't he?

Caldecott: I think most of these people were--well, I think he probably was San Francisco, but I really don't know. And the other was a chap by the name of Dwight. I don't recall whether that was his first name or last name.

Rowland: I have a list of names I piecked out of that Samish thesis, and one of them was Emil Hoerchner.

Caldecott: Yes. I believe Hoerchner was an attorney. Yes, I'm quite sure he was an attorney. He actually did not do any lobbying; at least I don't recall him ever doing any lobbying. He might have.

Rowland: Who drafted Samish's liquor bills?

Caldecott: I don't know. Samish's real power was gone by '47.

Rowland: And why was it gone?

Caldecott: I think change in membership. Following the war, in the class I went up with in '47, there were twenty-two new members in the assembly, and this was too big a change for any of the lobbyists to really know where they would stand. It made quite a change in the operation.

Rowland: That was also true about senate reapportionment in '65.

Caldecott: Yes. You see, that happened again, yes.

Rowland: The third house was against senate reapportionment because of the dramatic change it would bring in the state senate.

Moving on to the alignment of special interests in the Speaker's race between Luther Lincoln and H. Allen Smith in 1954, I wonder if you might recall the alignment of the third house in that Speaker's race. Rusco, in that thesis again, mentioned that that Speaker's race was a--he felt there was a battle between northern California and southern California.

Caldecott: I think, unquestionably, there was a feeling of that. However, I think the northern California/southern California argument is used more by lobbyists to get the southern California members to go along with their candidate, if he's from southern California. If the candidate is from Los Angeles County, they would then attempt to sell the Los Angeles County assemblymen on the basis of, "It would be very advantageous for our county to have the Speaker." That wouldn't be much of an argument in any other county because no other county has enough legislators to make any difference on that basis, but in Los Angeles County that type of argument would be used. And there were some assemblymen that actually honestly felt that the senate was northern California and the assembly should be southern California; it would give a good balance.

Rowland: What third-house interests supported H. Allen Smith? Do you recall?

Caldecott: [pauses to think] I don't know. But I would guess, from the assemblymen supporting him, it would be Superior Oil.

Rowland: That would be Harold Morton?

Caldecott: That would be Harold Morton, yes, Superior Oil. Monroe--

Rowland: Butler?

Caldecott: Monroe Butler would be the actual person who was normally in Sacramento. Harold Morton came up only on special occasions. As to other individual lobbyists, I don't recall specifically any other group.

Rowland: It was mainly, then, independent oil backing Smith?

Caldecott: Yes, but I don't think independent oil was actually antagonistic to Abe Lincoln either. Lincoln really had no enemies, and there really wasn't any bitterness towards him or feeling against him at all.

Now, in the Sam Collins fight in '47, it was a very bitterly --a lot of real strong feelings on that fight.

Rowland: Was that Hollibaugh?

Caldecott: Hollibaugh was supporting Sam Collins and I was just trying to think of some of the others. [pauses to think] There was quite a group, basically a Los Angeles County group, that was supporting Sam. Sam was from Orange County actually, but it was largely a Los Angeles County group, plus some others.

Rowland: What about the influence of labor in the assembly?

Caldecott: Labor's influence would be largely by district. Districts in which the average voter would be close to labor--then labor would have quite an effect on the assemblymen. There were a number, of course, that are strictly from, you might say, labor districts, and as far as those people were concerned they went right along with labor.

Rowland: Luther Lincoln came from Contra Costa County.

Caldecott: No, he came from East Oakland.

Rowland: Oh, East Oakland?

Caldecott: After he left the legislature, he moved to Contra Costa County. But he represented the East Oakland district at the time he was in the legislature.

Rowland: Well, that would be predominantly a labor district, would it not?

Caldecott: The lower part of the district--that is, towards the estuary--would be labor; the upper part would not be.

Rowland: What backing would he get from labor, such as Neil Haggerty of the [California Labor] Federation?

Caldecott: I don't recall whether he was endorsed by the Alameda County Central Labor Council or not. I think he was endorsed by the Teamsters, and possibly by the Railroad Brotherhoods. He was not antagonistic with labor, and I think labor wasn't worried about him getting elected even if they didn't support him. He certainly wasn't anti-labor, as Silliman was.

Rowland: Silliman was anti-labor?

Caldecott: Oh, yes. Silliman was an employer of--he was a farmer. He was very much with the farmers and employers. I think you could very well say he was anti-labor. However, there were a number of good labor votes that supported him.

Rowland: From where?

Caldecott: One that comes to mind--such as Julian Beck. I think, Bill Munnell. Many of the other Democrats that voted for Silliman would be normally with labor.

Rowland: The Rusco thesis implies that Luther Lincoln influenced--because Lincoln had support from labor--that he influenced Knight's good labor record in Knight's administration because of the excellent relationship that Knight had with Lincoln. I wonder if you might comment on that.

Caldecott: I don't know. I know that following Knight's taking the office of governor, he did change. He, of course, had run for lieutenant governor in '46 and in '50 as a conservative, and very much a conservative, and had the conservative support in the assembly. He had the support of the conservative Republicans.

Rowland: That is Sam Collins and Silliman.

Caldecott: Yes. And also in, you might say, the central committee and the Republican Assembly and various Republican groups, the people who could be termed conservative.

And then after he became governor and prior to the '54 election, he then became fairly liberal and had a very good relationship with labor.

Rowland: Do you think that was due to his close relationship with Luther Lincoln?

Caldecott: I really don't know.

Rowland: I think we talked about this earlier, that Knight regularly held weekly meetings with assembly leaders, including Lincoln at all times, but also other assembly leaders including yourself. Do you recall those luncheon sessions with Governor Knight to talk about legislation?

Caldecott: Knight had a very good relationship, I'd say, with Lincoln and Don Doyle and, I think, with Lindsay. I was trying to think of any others that--[pauses to think]

Rowland: Gordon Fleury?

Caldecott: They got along very well, I'd say, but I would not say the same as the three I have mentioned.

I would see Knight several times a week on budget matters. He also would talk to me a good bit on the national political picture. The upcoming national election in '56 he was very interested in.

Rowland: He would consider you a close confidant, then?

Caldecott: I wouldn't say it quite that way, because he never disclosed to me what his thoughts or his plans were. He would be asking me what the feeling was or what was happening in Washington on a certain matter--this sort of thing.

Rowland: I'm sure he knew of your close relationship with the Knowland family.

Caldecott: Yes. Oh, there's no question about it. He knew that I was very close to Bill Knowland. He knew that I was not close to Nixon. He never mentioned to me at any time that he was interested in the vice presidency, but maybe he didn't have to.

But, as I say, I wouldn't say I was a confidant of his on political matters. On legislative matters, yes, particularly on the budget and matters of finance; he talked very freely about how he felt about certain bills or the budget or this sort of thing or some item in the budget that he was very interested in seeing it stayed in and was not amended or anything of that type. But on the political end of it, he didn't confide with me on any of his future plans.

Relations with the Director of Finance

- Rowland: Going to the subject of relations with the governor and the governor's office, I wondered: with whom did you work most closely in the governor's office?
- Caldecott: Actually, I worked most closely with the director of Finance, who, of course, is not actually in the governor's [office].
- Rowland: John Peirce?
- Caldecott: That was John Peirce, and earlier Jimmy Dean. But within the governor's office itself, it would be, I'd say, Newt Stearns probably. Paul Mason covered the senate, actually, rather than the assembly. So, though Paul and I got along very well together, the problems I had to take up with the office normally went through Newt Stearns rather than through Paul Mason.
- Rowland: When it came to decision-making on legislative matters in the governor's office, who do you feel had the closest relations with the governor in the governor's office? Who played the major role in decision-making with the governor on legislative matters?
- Caldecott: The problems I had were almost entirely on Finance, and that would be with whoever was director of Finance at the time.
- Rowland: He wouldn't go through other members of the governor's office who would also relay? He would directly go to the--?
- Caldecott: Yes, yes. The director of Finance would meet with the governor directly on those problems of budget and finance, perhaps some bill that would require a good deal of financing--getting the governor's view on that.
- Rowland: I have a list here and I sent you a list of governor's office people. I wonder what you could tell us about the following governor's office staff. First, I have John Synon, who was one of the executive secretaries.
- Caldecott: Knight brought over with him his executive secretary from the lieutenant governor's office. It wasn't Synon.
- Rowland: Was that a woman?
- Caldecott: No, no. He was a public relations man before he was with the governor. [pauses to think of name] I'll think of the name-- Bob Alderman. Then there was a parting of the ways between the governor and Alderman, and then he [Knight] replaced him with Synon, as you say.

Rowland: Yes. [hands list of names to Mr. Caldecott] I have this list here that I gave you.

Caldecott: [begins to read list] Alderman was in originally, and I don't recall now just how long he was executive secretary, but then he left and, I believe, went to Hawaii.

Then John Synon, I think, was the next. I got along with John very well, but never had anything particularly to do with him. My problems were not problems that he would be handling.

[continues reading list] Doug Barrett was in the office. We got along very well, but, once again, he was not in, shall we say, the chain of command that I was working through.

Rowland: Right.

Caldecott: Actually, most of these matters--as I say, I worked with the director of Finance, and the director of Finance and I would go in and see the governor and get matters straightened out, rather than using any of the governor's own staff on it.

Rowland: What can you tell us, then, about the directors of Finance that you worked with? Jimmy Dean was the first.

Caldecott: Yes. They were all excellent. They were all just excellent people, very dedicated, very competent. They were easy to work with. They knew their job. It was really a pleasure working with them.

Rowland: What were the differences between Dean and Peirce?

Caldecott: Well, Dean had much more of a state government background. He knew Sacramento a good bit more than John Peirce did, with the result that sometimes things were a little easier to work with because of that. But I can't say there was really any great difference in their operation. They're both basically quiet people, which you'd expect a director of Finance or a controller to be.

Rowland: Yes. I think Peirce had a reputation as a very austere-minded director of Finance who was very concerned about expenditures and the state budgets.

Caldecott: Well, I've never heard of a director of Finance that wasn't that way. You immediately take on that cloak of--as long as it doesn't cost money, they're not against it. [laughter]

Caldecott: And then from there they sort of back up and take another look at it. But I don't think he was more austere than any other director of Finance that I worked with or know of [at] the time I was up there.

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Rowland: In talking about the governor's office, I have a question here that you might shed some light on about Knight's relations with some senate leaders.

Caldecott: The leadership of the senate when I was there--that is, during Knight's administration--George Hatfield unquestionably was number one. There was Butch Powers. Of course, he was lieutenant governor by this time, but still part of the inner circle in the senate. Ben Hulse. [pauses to think] There's Tony Delap. Jess Mayo had been, but, as I recall now, Jess Mayo had died by this time.

Rowland: He died in '53, and Senator Steven Teale replaced him from that district.

Caldecott: Yes. He died, I think as you say, just before Knight became governor--an excellent man.

Ralph Swing. Now, Ralph dropped out--I don't recall just when--and Jim Cunningham took his place in the middle '50s sometime.

Rowland: We have a note about Ralph Swing in our office, and I would like to ask you this question. We have a note that there was a relationship between Ralph Swing and Artie Samish, a rather interesting relationship in the sense that Samish was in fear of Ralph Swing and his interests in San Bernardino County.

Caldecott: I didn't know Samish well enough to know who he feared, if anyone, and Ralph Swing and I were not particularly close. I mean, there was just no occasion why we should be. We weren't by any means enemies. We had different interests, with the result that I really never got to know Ralph very well. I don't recall when he dropped out, but he was quite a power in the senate.

Rowland: He was chairman of the Government Efficiency Committee.

Caldecott: Yes, the Government Efficiency Committee that, of course, would hear all of Samish's bills and any other bill that the Rules Committee decided to send to them. So, he was quite a power in the senate.

Caldecott: Another one who was--Randy Collier was quite a power, to some extent because of seniority, and the senate gave a great deal of weight to seniority. I would not say, however, he was one of the inner circle. He was somewhat by himself.

Rowland: Why was that?

Caldecott: By nature. By nature, I think, more than anything else, not that he was antagonistic to the other group. He worked with them, but I think he was really by himself more than part of that group.

George Miller was becoming a factor. Because he was a Democrat, of course, he was not a part of the, you might say, inner circle, although he worked with them and they worked with him.

Clarence Ward was another, from Santa Barbara.

Rowland: It seems like there, with the election of Hugh Burns as pro tem of the senate in late '56, we had two switches of votes to the Democratic side: one was Randy Collier and the other was Louis Sutton.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: I wonder how that affected Knight's relationship with the new pro tem, Hugh Burns, if that might have played--?

Caldecott: I don't think so. Of course, Hugh was a Democrat all the time and there was no switch on his part. The party situation was not particularly strong at that time.

Rowland: The Democratic party?

Caldecott: Yes. They were in the minority in the senate during the '50s. They were beginning to gain votes, but they weren't coming very close to control in the early '50s, with the result, of course, that the Democrats didn't stress party in the senate because it would only defeat themselves to do it. And as far as I know, Hugh got along very well with Knight.

The Issue of Highways

Rowland: What major differences did the assembly have with the senate during the Knight years on specific legislation?

Caldecott: Generally speaking, the assembly was more pro-labor than the senate, and there were some labor bills that there was quite a difference of opinion on. By that time--

Rowland: These were also bills that Knight supported?

Caldecott: [pauses to think] I don't recall Knight getting into any of those fights.

The water problem, of course, had a difference between the senate and the assembly. The assembly [had] more interest in getting water to the metropolitan areas, and the senate was representing counties of origin. So, you had that difference of opinion.

[On] highways, you always had a difference of opinion, because the senate, being northern California dominated, was trying to keep a larger percentage of the highway money in northern California.

Rowland: This is what's called the gas tax split?

Caldecott: Yes. The forty-sixth percent division of gas tax revenue to northern and southern California, respectively.

Rowland: How was that brought about?

Caldecott: Well, originally I think it came in pretty much on a population basis, but the south kept growing faster than the north. So, the south was always offering a bill to change the percentage, to make it more closely follow the population percentages, and the senate, of course, was resisting that.

Rowland: Who were the principal forces behind that population determination of the gas tax division?

Caldecott: I don't know who in southern California actually was the motivating factor. It could well be--

Rowland: Was it the Southern California Auto Club?

Caldecott: Well, I was going to say, probably the Auto Club would be, the Chamber of Commerce--groups of this type. Who they would use on the bill, I don't recall now. It would vary from time to time.

The chairman of the senate committee that had the highways was Randy Collier and, of course, those bills never got out of committee.

- Rowland: Do you recall a J. Allen Davis, who was the attorney for the Auto Club in southern California?
- Caldecott: Vaguely, yes. I couldn't tell you whether he was tall or short or thin or fat [chuckles], but--
- Rowland: We have a note that he drafted quite a bit of highway legislation for southern California.
- Caldecott: Yes. With the exception of the split of the money there really was no difference between north and south on the highway money; it was on that basic split. Otherwise, the pro-highway people, north and south, were pretty much together.
- Rowland: I picked up in my research a conflict between Luther Lincoln and Randy Collier over highway legislation, in that Lincoln rewrote a Collier highway bill and got it approved by the senate and assembly, and then Randy Collier tried to retaliate against those senators that voted for the now-Lincoln highway bill. I wonder if that--
- Caldecott: Yes, I vaguely remember. I don't recall the details of it. But Collier was very jealous of anybody having a highway bill other than himself, unless it was strictly a local bill. Of course, there were a number of local highway bills. Naturally, they would be introduced by a local legislator. But as to any highway plan or statewide highway tax or anything of that type, Collier really felt that he should be the author.
- Rowland: Now, on the highway question, I wonder what Knight's influence was on the legislature, he being from southern California and representing southern California's interests in highways and demand for highways.
- Caldecott: I don't recall that he took any part in it. Governors of that time--Warren and Knight, I won't say [they] took little interest, I'm sure they had a lot of interest in legislation. But they did not attempt to influence legislation. They would, of course, have their own programs, in which case their legislative secretaries would contact the respective houses. But on other matters of legislation, it was unusual for them to really get involved.
- Rowland: Well, then, talking about the governor's legislation, do you recall any Knight highway legislation favoring southern California?
- Caldecott: No, I don't. I don't say there wasn't any. I just don't recall any.

Rowland: Now, there was a gas tax increase proposed in Goodwin Knight's '55 budget, and I believe there was quite a bit of reaction in the legislature over that. Do you recall that?

Caldecott: [pauses to think] No, I don't. Actually, as far as the gas tax problems, I remember the '47 session primarily. That was the big fight, the Collier-Burns Act, and really any highway legislation after that was pretty second-rate compared with it.

The oil companies always opposed an increase in the gas tax. They opposed the original gas tax in the '20s, which built the highway system and made the oil companies millions.

Rowland: Why would the oil companies be against it?

Caldecott: They just felt that it would, I guess, either decrease the consumption of gasoline or else it would restrict or at least inhibit their practicality of increasing the price of gasoline.

Rowland: Was there any interplay between majors and independents in the oil industry?

Caldecott: Normally, any interplay would have been in San Francisco or Los Angeles; it wouldn't have been in Sacramento. They would have presented a unified front in Sacramento, although on many of the highway matters the major oil representatives did not get involved.

Rowland: Why was that?

Caldecott: They didn't feel it was going to hurt them one way or the other.

Rowland: So, this was mainly the independents who fought the Collier-Burns Act?

Caldecott: The so-called independents, yes.

Rowland: Superior Oil?

Caldecott: Yes.

Actually, some of the independents were larger than some of the majors, but apparently those lines were drawn in previous years, and some of the independents had grown more rapidly than some of the majors.

Rowland: I wonder what you could tell us about Richard Graves' role in highway legislation. He was the lobbyist for the League of California Cities.

- Caldecott: Well, he was the manager of the league and did some lobbying. Bud Carpenter was normally up there in Sacramento and did most of it. He was attorney for the league. And Gardner--I don't recall his first name--also did a good bit of the lobbying for the league.
- Rowland: What impact did the league have on highway legislation?
- Caldecott: They were very effective. They and the other highway groups were quite effective in the highway legislation. The league normally worked through the local mayors, councilmen, city managers, rather than through the league themselves. But I think they did a very good job, and it was a good organization. I don't know of anything they ever asked for that wasn't very fair.
- Rowland: Where was their principal strength in the legislature? In which house?
- Caldecott: I would say probably in the senate, because the senate was very pro-highway.
- Rowland: Even though the assembly was representing more metropolitan areas?
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: Odd.
- Caldecott: But the highway acts came out of the senate rather than out of the assembly.
- Rowland: And out of Collier's committee?
- Caldecott: Yes, out of Collier's committee.
- Rowland: I wonder what the role was between Randy Collier and Richard Richards. Richard Richards was vice chairman of the Transportation Committee, and it seems that a lot of the legislation favoring southern California must have come between a close relationship between Collier and Richard Richards, but I haven't been able to find any evidence of that.
- Caldecott: Of course, you are assuming that there was a close relationship between Collier and Richard Richards.
- Rowland: That's true. [laughter] There might not have been, I'm sure, knowing Senator Richards who was very liberal.

Caldecott: As far as I know, there wasn't. They were on the same committee, But I don't think there was any close relationship between the two, and I don't think there was any actual antagonism that I know of between them either. They represented different interests and they respected each other's position.

Rowland: How did the League of California Cities work as an interest in the legislature?

Caldecott: Well, of course, they had no money to make campaign contributions, very limited funds at all to spend, being actually government supported, and I would say much of their work was through people like Bud Carpenter, who was their man in Sacramento and did an excellent job for them. They would work very much in the same manner that the university works. They would just have to sell a program on its merits.

Rowland: And was it Carpenter's charm and graciousness?

Caldecott: Yes, he was well liked. He was well liked by everybody, and everybody would listen to him, and I think the league had a good program, and that was a method of selling it.

Rowland: And how about the league's impact on the assembly, or influence on the assembly?

Caldecott: I would say it was very strong, yes.

Rowland: But stronger in the senate?

Caldecott: Well, I think, stronger in the senate because the senate had been the house that had really always concerned itself with highways. The original highway bill in the 1920s was from the senate, and the 1947 highway bill was out of the senate. I'd say all that close-knit leadership in the senate was pro-highway.

Rowland: Going back to the senate-assembly relations, I have a question: What kind of relation did the assembly Speaker have with the senate pro tem?

Caldecott: I'd say the leadership of the two houses got along well. There were situations where individual members in the house had some differences of opinion. Maybe one of their bills got killed a little faster than they thought it should have. Maybe a member felt that because he had a number of constituents present at the hearing in the other house that they should have given him a little more time to present his bill and have treated him with a little more respect in front of his constituents--that sort of

Caldecott: thing--and then you get a fight. He runs back to the presiding officer or the leadership of his house and makes a big complaint. And the leadership, of course, to remain leadership, has to go along with him for a little while, and so you have a situation of, "No senate bills will be taken up in assembly committees," or, "No assembly bills will be taken up in a senate committee"--this sort of thing.

Rowland: Do you recall any particular incidents?

Caldecott: I don't recall, because the bills were never themselves important. They were to the author and, I'm sure, the people that had asked to have them introduced, but they weren't big bills. This would hang on for a week, and then the leadership would decide that that's enough, and so everything gets straightened out. It's pretty much a case of the leadership has to take care of their constituents too, their constituents being the members of their house.

Rowland: Again, I'm wondering [about] the changes that were brought about when the Democrat pro tem came in, Hugh Burns, and his relationships with Luther Lincoln and the Republican majority in the assembly.

Caldecott: As far as I know, Hugh got along with everyone. And Lincoln was the same type of person. I don't think there was any difference of opinion there. They got along very well together.

Rowland: There weren't any partisan issues that you recall that--

Caldecott: No, no. Occasionally you do get partisan issues. Really, the only real partisan issue that comes up is reapportionment. There are times when everyone votes their party, and there are times when everybody votes their own district--this sort of thing--and reapportionment is one where you vote your party. So, there really isn't the hard feeling that comes up on that. Everybody understands it.

Rowland: I think we talked about this a little on our last tape, but again I'd like to find out why you were asked to chair the Ways and Means Committee by James Silliman in 1953.

Caldecott: You see, I was chairman of Judiciary Committee at the time, and then Marv Sherwin was chairman of Ways and Means. Just before Governor Warren left to become chief justice, he appointed Sherwin to the superior court in Alameda County. So, there was the vacancy, and I was on the committee, and Silliman asked me if I would take it then.

Rowland: Was there anything more to this? Was it your good record with Silliman, or Silliman's attempt again, like the Rusco thesis states, do dilute Samish's influence in the assembly?

Caldecott: Well, Silliman and I had come up to Sacramento together at the same time, in '47. We were both members of the "Dirty Seventeen." In the '47 session and, to some extent, the '48, the "Seventeen" were the outcasts. Then by '49 we had--

Rowland: The outcasts--?

Caldecott: As far as the powers that be in the assembly were concerned. This was somewhat over the speakership fight, and it was somewhat over the Collier-Burns Highway bill.

Rowland: Maybe you should tell us more about that. That does seem like a recurring theme.

Caldecott: Yes. It went through the senate without any trouble, and the senate was very interested in it. It was their big bill. And then it came--

Rowland: What were the provisions of the bill?

Caldecott: Well, it increased the taxes and then provided for the allocation of monies by county. It's basically the same bill we're operating under now, or had been until recent years. It greatly increased the amount of money that would be available for highway construction. As I recall, it also had money in it that--of the gas tax, part of it would go to the cities and part would go to the counties for highway purposes. So, the cities and the counties also were very interested in it.

The opposition was largely from oil because of the increased tax. I believe that the oil interests didn't spend much time fighting it in the senate. It's not hard to count up to twenty-one, and that bill had a lot more than twenty-one votes in the senate. So, they were smart; they didn't waste their time. They started very early in the session, working on the assembly.

Rowland: What were the arguments for this bill?

Caldecott: Well, the arguments were that during the war there had been very little construction because of priorities, the great increase in population that was coming to California, the great increase in the number of motor vehicles, the fact that our highways were in poor conditions, and that we now were moving after the war from public transportation really to individual transportation. The

Caldecott: idea of freeway didn't come in till a little later, but they were using the four-lane divided highway, and it was felt that a real modern highway system was necessary for the economy and the growth of California. And, unfortunately, if you want to build a highway system, you're going to have to have money, and the state is committed to the idea that the money for the highway system will come out of the user taxes, motor vehicles and--

Rowland: Was there any interplay between the federal government and the state?

Caldecott: As I recall, in '47, there wasn't big federal money for highways. That came in a little later. Actually, the federal money has never been the big consideration in California anyway because we spend so much otherwise of our own funds. But, no, that wasn't a consideration then. The opposition was basically laid to the tax.

Rowland: And in the assembly--we're again talking about how you were labelled as the "Dirty Seventeen."

Caldecott: Yes. [chuckles] This was the group--the "Seventeen" were basically new members, the class of '47, with a few exceptions of those who had left and switched over.

Rowland: And you were opposed to the bill, or--?

Caldecott: No. We supported the bill.

Rowland: Were you mainly from metropolitan areas?

Caldecott: No. The assembly author was Burns from Eureka.

Rowland: Michael Burns?

Caldecott: Mike Burns from Eureka. Mike was not too well. He was getting on in years. And it got down to a question of finding other assembly members to carry the bill, and the senate picked George Miller Jr. and myself. We had other help too. Basically our own group all stayed together. George was one of the "Dirty Seventeen" too.

Rowland: Why did they pick you?

Caldecott: I think for maybe two reasons. One is that we, of course, were not part of the group in the assembly the senators knew were opposing the bill, so that left them with the other group. The other group were largely more experienced members who didn't really want to stick their necks out and get in a fight.

Rowland: What was their fear?

Caldecott: It's just easier not to take on big fights.

Rowland: And especially against oil interests, I imagine.

Caldecott: Yes. So, I wouldn't be surprised if some of the older members hadn't suggested George and me. Marv Sherwin was some help to us too, and there were others.

Rowland: Was it that you were from Alameda County, and George was from Contra Costa County?

Caldecott: This was one reason, because Alameda County was very strong in favor of the bill. As they pointed out, "You certainly are not going to make any enemies at home by supporting the bill," and the same with George. He wasn't going to make any enemies in his county, which was growing rapidly and needed highway money.

The Issue of Tidelands Oil ##

Rowland: I think you were a member of the Lindsay committee and (and correct me if I'm wrong) that was the committee on discussing the tidelands oil revenue problem.

Caldecott: With Long Beach?

Rowland: In Long Beach, right.

Caldecott: Yes. That was an interim committee appointed to work out a bill, a compromise on the Long Beach tideland oil.

Rowland: Oh. This didn't deal directly with revenues? It dealt with the contract?

Caldecott: This dealt with the division of the monies between the state and the city of Long Beach. I was not on that committee originally. Then a vacancy occurred in the committee. I don't recall who it was or why it occurred, but there was a vacancy which left an even number on the committee, and the committee had been rather carefully picked so that it wouldn't be committed to either side.

Rowland: By whom?

Caldecott: By the Speaker and the parties concerned, because the function of the committee was to come up with a compromise bill that could be accepted because we'd spent the whole session in a fight trying to reach an agreement with Long Beach as to how the money was divided, and the session ended, and still no bill could get passed.

Rowland: Who were the parties concerned?

Caldecott: The city of Long Beach was the party on one side, and the state of California on the other. So, as I recall, the Speaker, in naming the committee, made a point in speaking both with the state representatives and the city of Long Beach that the committee would be evenly balanced so that it would be a fair committee for them and, at the same time, that the bill that that committee would bring back would be acceptable to the legislature and could be passed and get the problem settled for once and for all.

As I say, I was not on the committee originally, and then the vacancy occurred, which somewhat caused the problem of who was going to fill the vacancy. This dragged on for a little while, because one person would not be acceptable to one side and another person would not be acceptable to another, and so the Speaker called me one day and said that both sides had agreed on me.

Rowland: Did he give reasons why?

Caldecott: They felt, as far as division of the money was concerned, that I wasn't committed one way or the other and would be fair about it.

Rowland: I'm wondering if your committee influenced Attorney General Brown to tear up the Long Beach contract. He said that Long Beach was getting too much money because of that original contract and that the contract was null and void because the state was sovereign, and I think the state supreme court backed him up on that.

Caldecott: Yes. I think that probably was the reason why it was necessary to have a new bill, a new agreement with them.

Rowland: Now, getting to the question of tidelands oil money and revenue that the state would get, we know that there was a battle in both houses over the distribution of that money to the state and whether it should go to Beaches and Parks or to the general fund. And I think this is the Lindsay committee I was describing before.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: That committee was studying whether that money should be given to Beaches and Parks or put in the general fund. I was wondering what your position was on that question.

Caldecott: I actually don't recall. Right now, I'd say it probably was that I'd be for putting the money into the general fund, because the beaches and parks were not a source of the money in any way and, generally speaking, I always believe that money should not be earmarked unless you're taking money from a certain group and therefore you're giving it back to them. If you build a toll bridge, the people who are going to use the bridge pay for it--that sort of thing. But otherwise there's no reason to earmark money, unless there's a direct connection between the taxpayer and the user.

Rowland: What was the argument for Beaches and Parks?

Caldecott: Well, during this period, the state wanted to acquire a great deal of park area and the beaches (and I agree with them on this) for the reason [that] the state was growing very rapidly and they were afraid within a few years the price of land would be so prohibitive that the state just couldn't acquire sufficient acreage. The thing to do would be go in and buy it up now. In fact, we did put the money into acquisition and not development. Everything that possibly could be used was used to purchase the sites rather than developing them. There was some criticism of this, but I think it was a good plan because within a few years you couldn't touch beach land at all, particularly--the important beaches were those that are close to metropolitan areas. Those are the ones that are going to get used. And it was a very short time after this, that any available beach property was just out of the question of purchasing. So, what they wanted to do was to put money into the fund to obtain as much property as possible.

Rowland: We have a note in our office that the Knowland family favored tidelands oil money for Beaches and Parks.

Caldecott: Well, Mr. Knowland, Sr., J.R. Knowland, was chairman of the State Park Commission and very interested in parks. The only legislation he ever personally got involved in were parks and historical monuments. He would never contact a legislator on any other type of bill.

Rowland: But this one he was concerned about?

Caldecott: No, I don't recall that on the oil matter he actually got personally involved. I think the State Park Commission went on record as favoring the use of tideland oils for park purposes, but he did not actually get involved in it himself, or put it this way: he didn't personally lobby it, no.

Caldecott: He had a theory, by the way, that was rather interesting. Someone told me that they [State Parks Commission] had called him on a matter and asked if he would telephone or write to me and to Abe Lincoln, asking us to support this bill, and he said he never contacted legislators, even those they support. He said, "We support people we think would do a good job, and when they're on the scene, they know what's happening. We should never bother them."

The only time he ever contacted me was [when] he came up one day. We had a measure in Ways and Means Committee to appropriate \$200 for a plaque commemorating an historic event. He came up to see me on it and wanted to talk on it. That's the only time I ever heard him on a bill.

Rowland: I wonder what other plans there were for the tideland oil money that the state would acquire.

Caldecott: Oh, I think, basically, of going into the general fund to be used for general support.

Rowland: Into the general fund. This brings up the question of education, because education was expanding and certainly the CTA was a strong force.

Caldecott: Well, yes, but, you see, the difficulty you have is that some money will come in from a fund, say, \$25 million a year. You can allocate it to education and please the educators. But, you're putting \$100 million or \$200 million a year into education anyway. So, what difference does it make if \$25 million comes out of one special fund?

The bad part about allocating funds of that type is that they're usually only a small percentage of the total amount needed, so all you're doing is--it's merely window dressing--Or, in some cases, the fund is far too large, with the result that we have money to waste.

In the case of district fairs and county fairs--they had a source of funds that was far greater than they needed, and handing out money to these fairs. They couldn't find ways to spend it.

Rowland: "They" being--?

Caldecott: The state, I should say, was handing--because the money was allocated to fairs and had to be spent on fairs and there was more than they needed. You'd go into an area and they'd have a run-down firetrap schoolhouse, but they'd have a beautiful, reinforced, concrete cow barn that's used for two weeks out of the year. So, that's one of the faults of allocating money to a special use.

Rowland: It can be misappropriated.

Caldecott: Yes. As I say, you can have too much or too little. It's far better to put it in the general fund, and then let them submit a budget, show their need, and then appropriate money on that basis.

Rowland: Were there other interests in the state hoping to acquire tideland [oil money]?

Caldecott: Oh, yes. I don't recall them now, but I know that there would be lots of interests that would like to have a little piece of it, yes, but I don't recall that they were seriously considered.

Rowland: Turning to the question of Proposition 4 in the '56 election, you might recall that was the billionaires versus the millionaires, the oil proposition, and I have a question here that we generally throw out to all our interviewees. What attempts did Proposition 4 make to bypass the State Lands Commission leasing regulations regarding tidelands oil drilling? Now, the State Lands Commission is made up of the lieutenant governor, the controller, and, I think, the Director of the Department of Finance.

Caldecott: Yes. As I recall, the fight there was on the bidding. The large oil companies wanted a provision that there would be a cash down payment running into several million dollars, plus they then would bid on the percentage. This, of course, would have the effect that unless you had a million dollars to make a down payment, you couldn't even get in on the bidding. Of course, their argument was [that] that was true, but on the other hand, unless you had a great many millions of dollars you couldn't afford to develop the field anyway, because these were not proven fields.

Rowland: The reason I've asked that original question, though, was because in the research I've been doing I picked out a memo from Assemblyman Allen Miller to Attorney General Pat Brown asking whether the tidelands can be drilled without a lease from the State Lands Commission under Proposition 4, and I wanted to know if that was a question that--

Caldecott: Allen Miller, by the way, was one of our group. I don't know whether he came in '47 or a little afterwards.

Rowland: Possibly.

Caldecott: But that measure was really a hot one. It was very hard to figure out just what was right in a very technical field, and neither side would give you any of the technical background. They would only give the arguments that were favorable to themselves, and you really had nothing to--you'd have to almost become a petroleum geologist to be able to figure out which was best under the bill and actually know the industry.

Rowland: Yes. The Shell-Cunningham Acts. I wonder if the Shell-Cunningham Acts--I don't know if you recall those. They were--I'm not sure of this, but if you could clarify this--it appears that the Shell-Cunningham Acts were an attempt to legislate Proposition 4 provisions after Prop 4 failed in the election.

Caldecott: I don't recall Prop 4 and the wording of those acts enough to say whether that's the case or not. This was part of the whole oil conservation deal in which no facts are ever presented. I won't say no facts, but I'll say not enough to really understand how things should be done.

Rowland: The last question I have is on the Ward bill. I sent you a copy of--from the [S.F. Chronicle {April 19, 1950}, I believe, on the Ward bill.

Caldecott: Clarence Ward?

Rowland: Clarence Ward. That bill was an attempt by oil producers to regulate themselves.

Caldecott: Yes. This is another bill. I remember that (not from your article, but before, even without it). The oil companies could form a committee to regulate themselves. We tried, in questioning on the assembly floor, to find out why they wanted the committee. I remember I asked the question of Joe Shell on the floor, "Is this to get around the antitrust act?" and I got a very nice answer, but I don't know whether it was to get around the antitrust act or not. In fact, I don't think Joe knew either. But we kept trying to figure--just to hit the point. But apparently that was not it, because antitrust was not a sensitive subject. Just what they were trying to accomplish, they wouldn't say, and they gave lots of explanations, none of which answered the question. Apparently it has never hurt anything. At least I've never heard of any great complaints with it.

The oil companies favored unitization of the field. I think that was part of the act [Ward bill]. Unitization is used in an oil field that is owned by several parties but is developed as a single unit. If you had two percent of the acreage of the field, you would get two percent of the oil, even though you do not have a well on your property. As near as we could find out, this is a normal practice in states that are well organized for the oil industry, so that instead of having a whole mass of oil wells they only have as many as they actually need. It's cheaper to develop that way, and everybody is treated equally under it. That was about the only part we could really understand about all of this oil legislation.

- Caldecott: Interestingly enough, the newspapers never had much in the way of explanations on it. And apparently once the bills were adopted, we never heard of them again. There didn't seem to be anything particularly wrong with them. The industry seemed to operate under them quite well, and no one had any complaints with them that we ever heard of.
- Rowland: Knight sought an opinion from the attorney general before signing the bill. I wonder if that had to do with the question over the oil producers trying to get around the antitrust suit. Do you recall?
- Caldecott: I don't recall, but it's normal during the session to get an opinion from the attorney general on a bill. There's always one from the legislative counsel. If it's a financial matter, there's one from the controller. I don't recall when this bill came up, but towards the end of the session when the bills begin to pile up, then the legislative counsel and the attorney general and to some extent the controller just take the bills and they divide them up and they all write opinions on them for the governor as to what they do, the constitutionality, and the effect--this sort of thing. So, that's not an unusual situation.
- By the way, often if I had a bill that might be questioned on legality--for instance, a financial bill--I would ask the attorney general for an opinion, the legislative counsel for an opinion, and the state controller for an opinion, and authorize them to consult with each other, so that the one opinion would be presented then to the governor on the legality of the act.
- Rowland: I have another question on the tidelands or on oil companies in general. In 1957, Bruce Allen introduced a bill, an amendment to Tom Rees' bill to prevent oil companies from making campaign contributions. What might have influenced Bruce Allen to introduce--?
- Caldecott: I don't know. My guess would be, and it's only a guess, that--a feeling that perhaps much of the weight and effect of the oil industry on the legislature has come through campaign contributions. So, I guess he figured that that would sort of curb their influence if they couldn't make campaign contributions. It wasn't unusual to have individual bills offered aimed at one particular industry. I don't recall that any of them ever passed, and it's questionable whether they were constitutional.

Handling the Governor's Budget

- Rowland: turning to the budgets that Governor Knight introduced when you were in the assembly, I wonder if you just might generally give us a perspective on Knight's handling of the budget and the legislative reaction to the budgets when they were introduced.
- Caldecott: Well, at the time the budget is introduced, there really is little or no discussion. There is a budget message, and the normal comments depending on which party you belong to. If you are a member of the majority party, the governor's party, [the comment] is, "This is a very tight budget. It adequately covers the needs of our state and our people without the wasting of any taxpayers' funds." And the opposition party [comment] is, "This budget is very austere as to those people who actually need state help. It has overlooked their needs and is beneficial to the vested interests of this state." And apparently as the party control changes, the members switch speeches. Those are the normal statements given to the press following the introduction of the budget.
- On presentation to the floor, it's normally about the same, year in, year out. Individual members would offer amendments on items that they had wanted and had not been accepted or had been deleted, usually not accepted. There sometimes are a few members [who] would get together--of course, it takes a two-thirds vote, so they'd try and get one-third of the members together to block the budget if they couldn't get a certain matter in. Half of the matters offered are for election purposes only, but I would say ninety percent of all of the amendments offered to the budget from the legislative floor are really doomed to defeat before the author of the amendment even finishes his presentation.
- Rowland: Just from my perspective, it would appear that Knight didn't have a clear idea of the pressures that the state was facing in the '50s with the increase in population, the demand on school districts, the demand on other social services in the state, and the demand on highways. His attempts to keep an austere budget later became a problem in the '60s in the Brown administration. I wonder if you might reflect on that.
- Caldecott: Well, I think, on the highways, of course, we were limited to the highway fund, so there's really no problem there. That money was spent. I don't mean to say that everything that was taken in the previous year was spent the following year, but it goes into the pipeline on acquisition of right-of-way and planning and the rest of it. So, that money was spent.

- Caldecott: On schools, we began to work into the problem that the state was contributing a smaller and smaller percentage each year, and the local school district, of course, in effect then had to pick up and contribute a larger percentage each year. As I recall, the state started out in the late '40s by contributing about fifty percent and that began--
- Rowland: This was ADA, average daily attendance?
- Caldecott: Yes, it was called ADA, but, I mean, the money appropriated was about fifty percent of the support, and the school district about fifty percent. And then the state's share began to decline about one or two percent each budget.
- Rowland: Under Knight?
- Caldecott: Under Warren, under Knight, and right along. Basically, this was not under a budget matter as much, I'd say, as it was by a specific bill setting up the ADA apportionment and how the money was to be distributed. The wealthier districts wanted the money to be distributed to a greater extent on a per capita basis or, you might say, an ADA basis. The poorer districts wanted a set amount, plus an ADA basis. So, you have that fight between the two groups.
- The governor's office really never got into the public school fight too much. The bills came out of the California Teachers Association, and then it was a matter of the director of Finance commenting on how much money actually would be available.
- Rowland: It appeared from talking with Bob McKay in the CTA that the CTA was, in the '50s, scrambling for money and for money sources and was trying to tap various state funds.
- Caldecott: Well, that was to some extent correct, but I think if you left out the "during the '50s," you'd be a little more accurate. I can never remember the time they weren't scrambling for money.
- Rowland: [laughter] Yes, I guess you could say that. Well, I'm talking about the '50s here.
- Caldecott: The '50s here. [chuckles] As any government agency, they never have enough, sure. At least they think they don't have enough.
- Rowland: Well, they were putting in the argument in the '50s that because population was increasing so rapidly, there was a tremendous demand--the story of the school doors bulging, and not enough money for teachers.

Caldecott: I think their problem was that they had to construct new schools, and another problem they had was with the development in the suburban areas. You had areas that had been wheat fields or orchards, and suddenly now thousands of people are living there. The only tax base is the home. A good percentage of the people moving out there were young people. They were veterans. The first thing they did was get a veteran exemption on the home from taxes, which wasn't one hundred percent, but it was partial, with the result that these districts were poor districts to start with. Then they have to come in and build a complete new plant. So, they did have problems because of that, and that existed throughout the late '40s, and particularly during the '50s, when the suburbs began to really build up. So, they had a very difficult problem for that reason.

Rowland: The assembly, being based on population, would be closer to those demands of those--

Caldecott: I think the assembly was far more educationally minded for the reason that the members were younger and they had children in school. I don't mean to say all of them did, no, but a good many of them did. They were really personally familiar with the problems, just as much so as the CTA officials were.

Rowland: Yes. Was this also reflected in the budget appropriations?

Caldecott: Well, the budget would appropriate the money that the bill provided. In other words, a bill would be enacted this year and provide the money. Then, next year, that law is still in effect, so it appears in the budget. The budget does not pick up money that a bill that has been introduced would require. The budget is introduced only to finance what is legally now required. The bill would either carry its own financing or be picked up in the budget the following year. When the financing is included in the budget, the appropriation is based on caseload. It's purely mathematical--there's really no great decision to make.

The same thing with, say, mental institutions. It costs so much money per patient to operate a mental institution, you have so many patients, and that's how much money they get. All you need is to compute the amount.

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Caldecott: Mental health is a good comparison because the state has actually control over how much to appropriate per patient, whereas in education most of that money is set by an education bill that's been previously adopted.

- Rowland: I sent you this little clipping [San Francisco Chronicle March 7, 1954]. [shows Mr. Caldecott clipping] I got this from Bob McKay when I interviewed him. [reads title of clipping] "CTA Snaps Whip and Knight Jumps." It was talking about Knight trying to balance his budget by tapping the teachers' retirement fund.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: I wonder if that might jog some old memories of battles over the budget.
- Caldecott: Well, what we were running into was that the teachers' retirement fund was having problems. Following World War II, salaries and benefits had been increased.
- Rowland: That salary increase came about through a proposition, didn't it, in 1947, I think, or '46?
- Caldecott: I think so, yes. So, this caused a shortage in the reserve funds, and the teachers' retirement fund was not actuarially sound, and this required--I won't say it required, but that there was the problem of appropriating monies from the general fund to support the retirement fund. I believe this is still a matter before the present legislature. This keeps cropping up, and it's not unusual, with retirement funds that are not actuarially sound. How much money should be put in, whether the fund should be made actuarially sound, are problems that have to be determined by the administration and the legislature. To make the teachers' retirement fund actuarially sound, because of the huge number of members in the system, would run into hundreds of millions of dollars. So, that fight or that problem has gone on for years, and I guess it will continue to go on for years.
- Rowland: Yes. Now, I sent you some clippings from the Sacramento Newsletter. Those are clippings about the budget, talking about your bill, which is the budget bill.
- Caldecott: Yes. The '56 budget, yes. [looking through clippings]
- Rowland: And the '56 budget. That's talking about the assembly upping the ante, as it was mentioned there.
- Caldecott: The budget normally is increased in the assembly, and it's increased in the senate also.
- Rowland: What were the primary considerations behind increasing it?

- Caldecott: It would depend on the year, what the particular problem was for that year. I wouldn't say there was any set problem or set item that would be increased each year.
- Rowland: Well, in 1954, we have the creation of the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission. That must have increased the budget.
- Caldecott: Well, that would increase the budget, yes, but it also would decrease the State Board of Equalization budget. What they did was just transferred everybody over. Then you had, in addition, the Alcoholic Beverage Appeals Board, which is a fairly small item as the budget goes, but that would have to be added. There probably was a little more money involved, yes.
- Rowland: I think that '56 clipping talks about the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Commission.
- Caldecott: Yes. That was a fight. Basically, the fight wasn't on the money, though they did talk about the money. The fight was: Does it do any good? Is it a proven aid to alcoholics? These alcoholic rehabilitation studies and commissions were coming in during the '50s, and there were pros and cons to them. Some people said they helped, some said they didn't, and that's where you began to run into the problem.
- Rowland: There's also an appropriation there, an increase for the Mental Hygiene Department.
- Caldecott: Yes. This has always been one that--some of this is just increasing the appropriation to the department to give it a little better standard--more staffing. I remember one of the things that was done during this period. The orderlies in the mental hospitals were changed to psychiatric technicians, and the office of orderly was done away with, and they also were given some intensive training over a short period. Then the qualifications for the job were increased, and along with that there was an increase in salary.
- You also had the problem coming up of pilot programs. When a person comes into a mental institution, the proposal was to give him an intensive treatment program for two or three months. The doctors were saying at that time that if a patient's going to be cured, he's going to be cured within a matter of a few months, six months at the outside, and that what we should do is be giving the patients a very intensive program of treatment for a few months so they can be released. Pilot programs on that were being set up.
- Rowland: Might the influence of the Short-Doyle community mental health act [have] affected the larger appropriation for the mental health?

Caldecott: I'm sure, unquestionably, it would cost more money because the state was financing it, and there is, of course, some resistance to increasing the appropriation. Some legislators would vote against any increase. Others would say, "Well, if you can show me it's money well spent, I'll go for it."

Rowland: What was your general view as chairman of Ways and Means on increasing the budget?

Caldecott: Well, I don't think it was the matter of a general view. We'd run into several things. One is, we were in a period of inflation at the time. I understand that just after the war, in '46-'47--I wasn't chairman then, but our inflation then was running eighteen percent a year, higher than it is now. We had inflation all during the '50s. As I recall, construction costs were going up four to five percent every year. In addition, increased population.

Now, conditions were good. Economic conditions were good. We had the money. And as long as there's money in the treasury, there's always someone with an idea to spend it. This is where the real budgeting comes in, of weeding out, the idea of, "Well, this program would do some good, but when you consider the money it'll cost, is it worthwhile?"

I remember one program we bought was aid to the totally and permanently disabled, and it was figured that that program the first year would run around \$600,000 and may go as high as \$900,000 when it was in full operation. Now it's up in the hundreds of millions. Of course, the definition of "totally and permanently disabled" was changed. Now it's a person who, because of his physical condition, cannot pursue his occupation. His occupation may be a defensive tackle on the 49ers. Of course, there they have their own pension system and financially they would not qualify, but physically they would qualify. Muhammed Ali, who is retiring from boxing because he's too old, would qualify as totally and permanently disabled, except, of course, he has money.
[laughter] But, I mean, physically--

Rowland: [laughter] That is an example, yes.

Caldecott: But this is how programs grow, and this is what you have to watch in the budgeting to keep them under control. And every time there is a surplus in the state funds you begin to get these bills to lower the requirements, increase the amounts. But, in addition to that, I said we had inflation; we had growth in population.

Rowland: Did you feel that agencies and special appropriations should be held accountable?

Caldecott: Oh, absolutely. In fact, the basic rule that the governor's office would lay down and the legislative analyst would check on is, is there any enrichment in the program? If it's merely an increase in the caseload, there'd be no problem. But is the program being enriched?

Legislating Judicial Reform

Rowland: I have a final group of questions, mainly on legislation dealing with judicial reform. Could you chronologically go through what areas you tried to work for in judicial reforms and your communications with members of the state supreme court [from] whom you sought opinions or information on judicial reform--

Caldecott: I think the major judicial reform when I was in the legislature was the establishment of the municipal court. There were a few municipal courts in the larger cities. But, for instance, in Alameda County, as I recall, there were eleven different kinds of inferior courts.

Rowland: By "inferior," you mean--

Caldecott: Inferior to the superior court. "Inferior," actually, is taken from the French. It doesn't mean "lower." It means "limited." And the courts below the superior court have a limited jurisdiction. They can only hear certain types of cases.

But there were eleven different kinds. There were two kinds of city justice courts. There were two kinds of township justice courts. There was a justice court in cities of the fifth class, justice courts in cities of the sixth class. All of these had different jurisdictions. There was a Whitney Act court in Oakland, which was the only one of its kind in existence. I don't remember all of them now, but it was just a hodgepodge. And then, on top of that, certain courts would only hear criminal matters, and other courts would hear only civil matters. Even though they had jurisdiction to hear both, the judges had made an arrangement that they'd just hear either civil or criminal and not both. I guess Alameda County probably had as bad a situation as anyone.

So, the establishment of the municipal courts, I think, was the biggest judicial reform of the '40s and the '50s and probably even of the '60s or '70s. Nothing has equalled that.

Rowland: Whom did you seek for consultation on the courts?

Caldecott: Well, this basically came out of the Judicial Council and Chief Justice Phil Gibson. Gibson was always a very easy person to talk to, and I still see him. I guess he must be close to ninety now, just as sharp as can be, and he still kids me about the old days [chuckles]--a wonderful fellow.

But the municipal court reform plan required a compromise. It originally, as introduced, did away with the justice courts, but to get it through the senate a provision had to be made for the justice court.

Rowland: The justice court--you do not have to be a lawyer to get on the justice court.

Caldecott: No, no.

Rowland: Were you concerned about that?

Caldecott: Yes. In Alameda County, most of the justices were lawyers. The justice courts became courts with two exceptions, but in those two exceptions the judges were lawyers. But some of the rural counties did not have lawyer judges. Now, of course, the state supreme court, in the Turner case of a couple of years ago, held that a nonlawyer could not sit in a criminal case. I sat on the state supreme court on that particular case under assignment. So, in any criminal case now there has to be a lawyer judge, and in civil cases there doesn't have to be, but they are being phased out.

Rowland: Further on the subject of judicial qualifications, did you touch on that at all in any of the legislation you handled on judicial reform?

Caldecott: No, I don't recall of any--oh, yes. The one thing they did on justice courts, I believe, was in that same bill. It was to provide that if a candidate for judge of the justice court--justice of the peace became judge of the justice court--was not a lawyer, he had to take an examination given by the Judicial Council.

Rowland: That was your legislation?

Caldecott: No. This was a constitutional amendment. But that was part of the reform. I don't recall any really startling judicial reforms other than that particular municipal court act that went through.

One of the principal judicial bills relating to the courts during this period was the increasing of the number of judgeships.

Rowland: Yes, and a political question.

Caldecott: And political. The Democrats once or twice tried to block it-- it requires a two-thirds vote of the legislature to increase the number of superior court judges--feeling that they were going to win the next election and then they'd get the appointments. It didn't work out that way, and so they would let them go through then.

Rowland: What year was this? '54?

Caldecott: Oh, this was during the early '50s, middle '50s.

I also had the bill to standardize salaries of the judges. We had a study on that with a committee of three assemblymen, and came up with a bill to standardize the salary of the municipal and the superior courts. Of course, the supreme court and court of appeal were all standardized anyway. The bill had the superior court in three classes, on a population basis, but was defeated in the senate.

Rowland: Why?

Caldecott: Well, one of the senators told me, "We just like to kind of keep our finger on this, you know."

Rowland: Keep their finger on it?

Caldecott: Yes. In other words, they want a little control over the courts.

Rowland: Oh, I see. Politics in the courtroom. [laughter]

Caldecott: Yes. So, that was defeated. Two years later, George Miller, Jr. took up the same idea, and it took him about two or four years, and he finally was able to sell it to the senate. We had no trouble in the assembly with it.

Rowland: One question that I've passed by many of our Pat Brown era people, and that's the influence of the District Attorneys Association to limit the appeal procedure. This came out of the death penalty controversy that raged around the Caryl Chessman case in 1960. I wonder if that had emerged when you were in the legislature.

Caldecott: No.

Rowland: Was there an attempt to limit the appeal procedure?

Caldecott: No. The problems on appeal came up after I had left the legislature. There wasn't any particular problem in the '40s and '50s. The appellate courts were not overworked. The problem was in the trial courts because of the great increase in population, and the number of judges was not being increased, or when it was it was always two to four years behind time.

BEYOND LEGISLATIVE TENURE

Appointment to the Superior Court

- Rowland: I've got a question here on your appointment to the superior court. If you could tell me, why were you appointed to the superior court by Goodwin Knight?
- Caldecott: Well, two new positions had been created in Alameda County, and I wrote and asked him for an appointment and went in and saw him and talked to him on it, and a number of my friends from the legislature also went in and spoke to him on it, and he just said, "Sure."
- Rowland: The press was saying that this took a very loyal Knight supporter out of the assembly (yourself) and left Knight more vulnerable to the inner-party intrigue that later came out in '57-'58.
- Caldecott: Yes, I think that's true.
- Rowland: Surely Knight must have considered that as a possibility when he did appoint you or considered your appointment. Did he talk about that with you?
- Caldecott: No. No, he didn't mention that. You see, as I said, I was very close to him and a confidant with him on financial matters of the state, the budget, the financial condition of the state, and that sort of thing. But he never actually disclosed to me his position on political matters. Occasionally, he made some remarks about certain people he didn't like. But I wouldn't consider that in the same vein because those were pretty general and open, and he didn't even mind telling the press about them.
- Rowland: How did your good relations with the Knowland family influence your appointment to the superior court?

Caldecott: I don't think it had any real effect. This is not the sort of thing they would get particularly involved in. I'm sure they had no objection to it at all.

Rowland: One might speculate that your appointment was an attempt by Knight to neutralize the Knowland influence in the party and the assembly.

Caldecott: One might speculate, but I somewhat doubt it. You see, I don't think by the time I was appointed that he had any inkling that Bill Knowland would come back--I certainly didn't--and run for governor. I think he felt that he would be running for governor again and that it would be the same ticket; Knowland would be running for U.S. Senate, he'd be running for governor.

Advancement to the Court of Appeal

Rowland: Now, you moved to the appeal court, I think, under Governor Reagan.

Caldecott: Reagan, yes.

Rowland: I wonder if you had any consultation with the Reagan administration. I believe you were an advisor to Governor Reagan?

Caldecott: I went up there during a vacation to spend a little time with him, and also, off and on, it's quite a usual thing for a governor to have a judge or a couple of judges as advisors, and I spent a good bit of time with him. When Byrl Salsman said he was going to retire, I asked the governor for the appointment and went through the usual--several letters--a couple of past presidents of the State Bar sent letters in my behalf, and two past presidents of the Alameda County Bar.

Rowland: Did Governor Reagan seek your consultation on any appointments to judgeships?

Caldecott: Occasionally on local Alameda County matters, yes. He had a committee in every county, which consisted of normally the senior superior court judge, regardless of party; the president of the county bar association, regardless of party; and then one other person who was active in his campaign. If the three of them had listed the same name as number one, then he made the appointment and that was it. If they came up with three different names or something of this type, he often then would make other calls. Warren did the same thing. Warren didn't call me in Alameda County because he knew the lawyers in Alameda County better than I did, having been raised with them.

- Rowland: When did the senate begin to confer on governors' appointments, governors' judicial appointments? Was that an ongoing thing when you entered the--?
- Caldecott: No, no.
- Rowland: Was that something that began--?
- Caldecott: As I recall, they began to talk about getting that power that the United States Senate has. I don't recall when that came in. Then the time came [when] they began to write that provision into bills, that they would have the power to confirm. Particularly as a new office was created, the bill provided that the director shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.
- Rowland: Was this under the new senate led by Burns?
- Caldecott: Yes, it would be under that senate.
- Rowland: So, this was perhaps a Democratic--
- Caldecott: I think so, but I don't think it was limited to the Democrats in its support.
- Rowland: What was the assembly reaction to it?
- Caldecott: The assembly to some extent felt it was customary that the senate confirms, not the assembly. The assembly had not been too interested in it. They, of course, always could have amended the bill creating the new office to provide that "he shall be confirmed by both houses," but they never bothered to do it. It was just never felt to be appropriate for the assembly to do it. I was just trying to think of the year that that came in. It might have been in the late '50s, but, I think, probably during the '60s.
- Rowland: Oh. It was after you were on the bench.
- Caldecott: Yes.

As an Advisor to Governor Reagan

- Rowland: Getting back to Governor Reagan, I was wondering if you had worked in any campaigns, in any campaign capacity.
- Caldecott: No, no. I was on the bench at the time, so I didn't work in his campaign at all.

Rowland: Now, how about your working relationship with Governor Reagan? Did you have a good--?

Caldecott: Yes, very good. He is a very delightful person to work with. I had lunch with him quite often. In fact, normally when I was in Sacramento I had lunch with him, and the lunches were not business. We were just talking, you know, just about anything.

Rowland: Was there talk about another appointment that you might assume for the administration, for the governor's administration?

Caldecott: Yes. When I originally came in contact with the governor, as I say, I had had no part in the campaign and was not a supporter out working for him or anything of that type. Then just shortly after he came in in the spring, after he took office, he asked a number of people--some from business, and representatives of the League of Cities and Supervisors Association and various groups like this--to sort of go through the office and make some recommendations as to how it should be reorganized. Which they did. One of the things that they suggested was that there should be created an office of policy and planning to develop his administration's program. He said that was great. That's exactly what he felt he needed and wanted.

So, he then asked them when they made the report, "That's a great idea. Where do I find the person--?"

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Caldecott: Well, they recommended me. So, he called me and asked me to come up and talk to him, which I did, and I said, "Well, that would be an appointment to an actual state office, and under the constitution I cannot accept any appointment other than judicial appointments." So, the matter was dropped at that time. Then about six months later he phoned and asked me if I would come up and help out on a few matters in an advisory capacity, which I did.

Rowland: Which was not an appointment?

Caldecott: Yes, was not an appointment. In other words, I received neither salary nor expenses nor any per diems, nor had any actual authority.

Rowland: And you worked at the pleasure of the governor.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: I think that's about it. I think we've done an excellent job here, and I'm more than pleased that you've given us your time to go through it.

Caldecott: Well, I don't know how much I've put together on it.

Rowland: Let me just ask you a few questions here about some more lobbyists.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: Elmer Bromley of PG&E and Southern California Edison.

Caldecott: Yes.

Rowland: I wonder if you might tell us a little bit about him and which house he favored.

Caldecott: He worked the senate almost entirely. He was always very pleasant to the assembly, and he was a very pleasant fellow, a very able person. But his clients really didn't want any legislation passed. They just were really watching to see anything that would be detrimental to them, and so it's always easier to work the senate.

Rowland: Would that be the tendency of the third house: status quo?

Caldecott: Yes, with a few exceptions.

Rowland: They primarily worked with the senate to squash legislation?

Caldecott: If they're interested in squashing legislation, they normally work with the senate because it then comes from eighty members to forty members, and the senate has a strong rule against withdrawing bills from committees, so they then were down to maybe nine members as all they had to really work with.

Not all lobbyists, of course, were interested in killing. Some were interested in getting bills passed. The CTA is a good example.

Rowland: Yes, right.

Caldecott: It would be rare that the CTA would be interested in killing a bill. But if they were interested just in--not necessarily killing the bill, but maybe just seeing an amendment into it, they would normally work the senate.

Rowland: And Cornelius Haggerty of the AFL-CIO. Do you want to describe him and how he operated?

Caldecott: He was another very, very pleasant person to be with, and we got along very well together. I was not what you'd call a labor member, though I did carry some minor labor bills. He did an excellent job. He did an excellent job for labor. He was a good lobbyist. I think everybody, even those who were anti-labor, liked him and would go along with him if they could.

- Rowland: What was the greatest influence that labor had on legislation? Would it be through their constituent power, like the CTA?
- Caldecott: Yes, yes. Voting power, yes.
- Rowland: I think the labor group was one of the first groups to develop a political action committee, which is more prominent today.
- Caldecott: Yes. I think, probably, to marshal their membership. I think it probably was--
- Rowland: And the CTA also, in political action--
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: What about Charles E. Gibbs of the Associated Farmers. I wondered if you had come across the Associated Farmers and Charles Gibbs.
- Caldecott: Oh, I guess I saw Charlie Gibbs a dozen times when I was up there. I don't have a farm district, and he very seldom talked to me about any bills. As I recall, his interest really was farm labor, rather than agriculture itself.
- Rowland: Aha. So, he and Haggerty then--
- Caldecott: Yes. Actually, the AFL did not have much in the agricultural industry. The closest ones to the agricultural industry were the Teamsters, and the packing houses, I believe, were mostly Teamsters. I guess meat packers are probably AFL, but the fruit packers and vegetable packers, I think, were Teamster unions.
- But his interest, as I recall, was largely agricultural labor and the labor problems connected with agriculture.
- Rowland: One other one--Dan Creedon of the Brewers Institute.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: Who was also, I believe, a former legislator.
- Caldecott: Yes, he was. We served together for many years before he took this job with the Brewers [Institute].
- Rowland: What privileges did former legislators have as third house representatives?
- Caldecott: None. [laughter] A former member has the privileges of the floor, which would sort of imply that they can walk down on the assembly floor and perhaps speak and this sort of thing, but it

- Caldecott: doesn't. It merely means they can go in the spectator section. [laughter] However, once they register as a lobbyist, they couldn't do that.
- Rowland: Oh, I see. So, Dan Creedon was like any other--
- Caldecott: Any other lobbyist, yes.
- Rowland: We have Charlie Stevens and Al Shults of Standard Oil and the other major oil companies.
- Caldecott: I think Charlie Stevens was General Petroleum, wasn't he?
- Rowland: Oh, General Petroleum?
- Caldecott: I'm not sure, but I think so, yes. They both worked the senate.
- Rowland: You had little contact with--?
- Caldecott: I knew them both very well, and good friends, and all that, but they both worked the senate. I can't remember any time they actually worked the assembly.
- Rowland: Judge Garibaldi, who's still in Sacramento today.
- Caldecott: Yes, yes. Gari.
- Rowland: A very prominent man. He handled liquor, horse tracks, billboards, and Highway Patrol. I was wondering if you had come across Judge Garibaldi.
- Caldecott: Oh, yes. I know Gari very well. He worked the senate too.
- Rowland: He was primarily a senate--
- Caldecott: He and Hugh Burns were old friends back in the '30s. In fact, they both worked on the desk in the assembly. And there's a friendship that grew up back in the '30s between the two of them.
- Rowland: Just like Al Shults and George Miller?
- Caldecott: Yes. Al Lefevre was the third member of the group. Wait a minute. They didn't work the desk, no. Garibaldi and Hugh Burns were both in the assembly, and Al Lefevre was working the desk. They roomed together back in the '30s, so that then [there was] a very close relationship with the three of them. Al Lefevre died a short time ago.

- Rowland: We've generally talked about some senate and assembly leaders, and one of them we've mentioned throughout both interview sessions, and that's been George Miller.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: Unfortunately, George, like Governor Knight, is no longer with us, and we don't have that first-person story of the Knight-Brown years.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: I wonder if you could give a portrait, a profile, of George Miller, a personal profile as a legislator, as you knew him in and out of the legislature.
- Caldecott: Yes. I first knew George at Cal. That was back, I guess, [in] 1936. Then we both went up to the legislature in '47 and just after the war.
- Rowland: How did you develop your friendship at Cal?
- Caldecott: We were in the same class. We were in law school together, and the classes were very small, so you knew everybody.

Then, in '47, we met again in Sacramento. George lived on my route to Sacramento every Monday morning. In fact, he lived just two blocks off of San Pablo. So, I would just turn off and pick him up, and then we'd drive up to Sacramento together. Then Friday afternoon I'd bring him home and drop him off. So, we got to renew our friendship and got to be very close friends and good friends, and we often went out together in Sacramento.

Then we got into this highway bill--the first major legislation we encountered in the '47 session, and George and I worked that. [Oliver J.] Carter, who was later U.S. district judge here in San Francisco, was also one of the leading senators on the bill. He came over and actually coached us on the bill. So, George and I worked that together, and we were close friends the whole time we were up there.

George was a very wonderful person. He was sort of a complex personality. He was a hard worker, very dedicated, and yet he could relax and have a good time. He'd get along with any group, whether it [was], you might say, unskilled, uneducated, or whether he was talking to university professors. He had that knack. He loved politics. I think he loved the political side of the office more than he liked the actual legislating side.

Caldecott: He did most of the planning in the senate for the growth of the Democratic strength there. He was a strong partisan Democrat, as I was a Republican, and yet we got along beautifully. We appeared on a number of television programs and debated each other, and then [we'd] go off and have dinner afterwards.
[laughter]

He developed interests, certain interests, one in education, in which he did a lot of work. He really prepared himself. He'd do his homework and put together a good bill, and then when he did he would really fight it through and get it enacted. He also carried a lot of legislation for the judges. I don't recall his other fields. But he was a person that was always well-prepared, both as to the bill itself and also as to working the floor to get it enacted. I think if they ever picked an all-American state legislature, he obviously would be one of the members.

Rowland: Did his relationship with Al Shults become an issue with his detractors?

Caldecott: Not that I know of, no. I don't think so. I think, for a couple of reasons. One is that his district had most of the oil refineries. I won't say most of the oil refineries, but a great many oil refiners of the state, in Contra Costa County there. So, it's not unnatural that he would be interested in the welfare of the industry, if not for the oil companies themselves at least for the employees. He certainly wasn't trying to hurt the oil industry. He had a lot of employees in his district, constituents, who worked in the refineries. It unquestionably was the largest industry in his district. As far as I remember, he never carried any of the oil industry bills.

Rowland: Like Joe Shell, for instance?

Caldecott: Like Shell did, or Ward, or some of those people, yes. Another man who became very prominent in later years but also might have been prominent in the '50s, and that's Senator Teale.

Rowland: He came in, in '53.

Caldecott: Yes, when Jesse Mayo died, he came in, in '53. I didn't think it was that early, but, yes, I served with Steve. He was somewhat of a new senator. An assemblyman with two years of seniority is on his own; he's flying. But a senator in those days with two or three years' seniority was seen but not heard. So, he was not taking a really active--I won't say he wasn't taking an active part, but he wasn't taking a vocal part at that time.

- Rowland: Another very prominent senator, and that's Jack McCarthy from Marin, who was in your party.
- Caldecott: Yes.
- Rowland: I was wondering if you could give us a profile of Jack McCarthy and how he worked.
- Caldecott: I didn't know Jack as well as I knew his brother who was in the assembly, Bob. Bob and I were very close friends, and I actually knew Jack through his brother, but while in Sacramento I really had very little to do with Jack McCarthy.
- Rowland: Now, we've also talked about Joe Shell in relation to the tidelands. I was wondering if you could give us your perspective of Joe Shell and how he worked in the assembly. He was another very prominent man.
- Caldecott: Yes. He actually was not close to our group. He was not in the '47 session, so he did not get into the Collins-Field fight. He did not support Silliman. I don't know whether he supported Lincoln or not; I don't recall now. We were friendly, but not close friends.
- Rowland: He represented the southern California conservative--
- Caldecott: Yes, I would say that's very true. He represented the southern California conservative block there, yes.
- Rowland: Well, I guess that's it.
- Caldecott: All right. [laughter]
- Rowland: [laughter] I'd love to go on, but I think we have run out of tape. Thank you again for your time and patience with our project.

Transcriber: Marilyn White
Final Typist: Marie Herold

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Along with the other legislative leaders included in this volume of the Goodwin J. Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. oral history series, Hugo Fisher's career in California state government and politics has been a long and active one. Presently a superior court judge in San Diego, Fisher's political past has included two terms as Democratic state senator from San Diego (1958-1962), and three years (1963-1965) as head of the Resources Agency in Sacramento.

Judge Fisher was initially contacted by the Regional Oral History Office because of his position on several key senate committees between 1958 and 1962. Taking time out from a crowded court calendar, Judge Fisher enthusiastically agreed to meet with the present interviewer-editor for an interview on 20 November 1978. Over lunch we discussed the kinds of questions which had developed from my research. We then adjourned to a unique tape recording niche--Judge Fisher's handsome thirty-nine-foot sailboat which was docked in a marina situated across from San Diego's Lindbergh Field.

Throughout the long autumn afternoon, Judge Fisher wove an unexpectedly detailed picture of his early youth and political activity in San Diego, his campaign to become state senator, and the years in Sacramento which resulted. The decision to meet on his boat allowed Judge Fisher to focus on the interviewer's questions without any interruptions from telephones or other concerns. Perhaps because of his early years as a judge, Fisher deliberated deeply and answered each question put to him in an analytical and thoughtful manner, describing fully the circumstances and situations each experience brought.

Judge Fisher opened this interview with a brief look at his intriguing family political history. From this vantage point, he then described his view of the Democratic party in California in the 1950s and his own role in it. He also gave his personal survey of the Caryl Chessman case of 1960 from the perspective of a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee; of the 1960 senate reapportionment scene as a senator from San Diego; and, of the 1959-1960 chapter of the turmoil surrounding the California Water Plan.

James H. Rowland, another interviewer-editor for the Regional Oral History Office, recorded three additional interviews with Judge Fisher on 17 and 18 January, and 18 February 1979. It was impossible to transcribe these interviews because of dwindling funds. However, the ten tapes which resulted from these interviews are deposited in The Bancroft Library and may be listened to there. An excellent written index accompanies them. Among the topics which Judge Fisher discussed on these tapes are anti-communism in San Diego, the Master Plan for Higher Education and the Fisher Teaching Credential Act, and Judge Fisher's years as head of the Resources Agency in Sacramento.

After the present interviewer-editor had edited the transcript of the 20 November 1978 interview, it was sent to Judge Fisher for his review. Several months later he agreed to our additional light editing of the transcript and publication of it in its present form. Judge Fisher's interview is a good example of what oral history can retrieve--personal views and feelings about important historical episodes.

Dr. Sarah Sharp
Interviewer-Editor

26 August 1980
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I GROWING UP IN SAN DIEGO

[Date of Interview: November 20, 1978]##

Sharp: Let's start with some family background. I'd like to ask you first about your parents, and who they were, and what their occupations were, and then we'll go from there.

Fisher: My father's name was Mark Fisher, with no middle initial. He was born in Neola, Illinois, raised in a lot of places, including St. Louis, where at the age of about eighteen he met my mother, whose name was Cecily--and, I think, no middle initial--Bitner, or Bittner, and she never was sure which. She was one of, I think, fourteen brothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters. My parents were married there, moved to California during the First World War, as I recall. As I don't recall, I have to say; I've been told.

Sharp: And what did your parents do?

Fisher: Well, my father was most of his life a salesman. He was in the stock and bond business, and in his later years was involved in the oil business, mainly in the development of certain fields up in the Kern County area, and also in the Los Angeles area near Newhall.

Sharp: Was your mother a housewife, or did she work as well?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 61.

Fisher: Yes. They were divorced when I was in high school, when I was fourteen or fifteen years old. My mother never remarried. My father did remarry and spent most of the time after their divorce in the Los Angeles area.

My mother worked during the Second World War, I think for the school system. Or it may have been for Convair, working in the tool crib in the place for training of defense workers, but did not, except for a short time after the Second World War, again work. She still lives and owns property here now. She has been living the last six months in Florida with my sister. My father died here about four or five years ago.

Sharp: So you grew up in California?

Fisher: I was born and raised in San Diego.

Sharp: Could you name your brothers and sisters?

Fisher: I'm the oldest of three of us. My sister is about eighteen months younger than I. She's married to a man who's now retired from the State Department, lives in Sarasota, Florida. My brother was in and out of the service, first went into the navy, later re-enlisted, I think, in the air force. He left that, went to art school, became a fair artist, painter mainly, and went into the air force again. After his retirement, he lived with my mother for a short time, shot and killed himself.

Sharp: And who are you closest to in age in your family?

Fisher: My brother was seven years younger than I, also born in San Diego, and has now been dead ten or eleven years.

Sharp: Were you closest to your sister or to your brother or more to your parents?

Fisher: I think I was probably closest to my mother in early life, and later to my father, but since my own marriage in 1942, really not very close to any of them.

Sharp: The next set of questions concerns you as a child and as a young man. What kind of schools did you go to when you were a young child, and then later?

Fisher: I went to public schools here in San Diego, started at the Jefferson Elementary [School] for a semester, then went through Florence Elementary School, Roosevelt Junior High School, San Diego High School. Then I went out to San Diego State College for the better part, or the worse part, of two years.

- Fisher: It seems to me December of '40 I became disenchanted with school, dropped out during the Christmas vacation, never went back to undergraduate school. Went to work in the aircraft industry, got married, and spent the war [World War II] in the aircraft industry.
- Sharp: When did you go to law school?
- Fisher: I went to law school. Isn't that funny? I think it started in September of '47. I went to what is now Cal Western, California Western University Law School, which was then Balboa University Law School. I graduated in spring of 1950, took the bar in the summer of 1950, and was admitted in January, 1951.
- Sharp: When you were very young, who was your favorite teacher? Or do you remember anything like that from your early days?
- Fisher: Oh, my first teacher I was very fond of but described to my mother as being middle-aged. I since learned she was all of twenty-two and very beautiful. But in 1925 I didn't have that kind of discretion.
- I can remember two or three excellent teachers in grammar school, a Mrs. Hager, whose first name I do not recall. Later I became a good friend of her son, Ben Hager, who works for the city of San Diego. She [Mrs. Hager] taught social studies.
- Sharp: Do you think your interests in the law and in working in society came from those early years?
- Fisher: I suspect in part from people like her, also a Mrs. Clark in the early days of the New Deal, 1933, '34, at Roosevelt Junior High School was quite influential with me. She also taught history and social studies.
- Sharp: Was Roosevelt Junior High School named for President Roosevelt?
- Fisher: It was established long before President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt came in.
- Sharp: Oh, President Theodore Roosevelt?
- Fisher: Yes.
- Sharp: Oh, okay. I wondered if that was a Depression building, or anything like that.
- Fisher: No. The San Diego Unified School District, insofar as I know, has never named any school after a president or deceased president since Herbert Hoover.

Sharp: Okay.

Fisher: Which indicates what kind of a community I had to grow up in.

Sharp: Yes. It does. What kind of reading matter was around at home? What kind of things did you like to read when you were a young boy?

Fisher: Well, my mother was an inveterate reader and still is, everything from Shakespeare to the latest novel of any substance. She got no further than the third grade [in school], but I know no person who's better read in American and English literature, and some other European literature. I'm named after Victor Hugo, incidentally.

Sharp: Oh. Did she talk to you about the things that she read when you were young?

Fisher: Oh, I can remember the terrible times during the summer vacations when I had nothing else to do, her insisting that I, amongst other things, read and memorize [Alfred Lord] Tennyson and [Henry Wadsworth] Longfellow.

Sharp: That's a great way to grow up!

Fisher: No. Trying to memorize about the Arabs folding their tents and stealing away at night still confuses me! Poetry is something that I've never been able to deal with very well, but historical matters and scientific things have always intrigued me. I was never able to get through a summer vacation without an adequate list of books that I'd read, and reported to my mother on, not just to the school when I got back.

Sharp: Was your family involved in any particular church?

Fisher: My mother was born and began her life as a Catholic, then became, I think, an agnostic. My father was an atheist, but interestingly, he was always willing that I go with friends of mine, if I wanted to, to church or to Sunday school. He figured that when I got old enough, I'd make up my own mind.

Sharp: I see.

Fisher: Not so much my brother, but my sister and I were always part of the family discussions. We were always engaged in talking about current events or history or business or politics during dinner. Dinner was always a reasonably formal sort of thing, except on Sundays. We were always engaged in it. [tape off briefly]

Fisher: Excuse me. I probably ought to add one other thing.

Sharp: Fine.

Fisher: My father had been active as a member of the Socialist party in St. Louis when he was a teenager and, I suppose, up until he was twenty or twenty-one. In fact, I can recall as a kid a wonderful picture of him on the front steps of--it may have been the library or the city hall of St. Louis, with lions or something of the sort on each side of the steps. It was a group of distinguished-looking men, I thought, when I was a kid, although I understand he was only eighteen. My father had a Hamburg hat and an overcoat on. It was a picture of the executive committee of the Socialist party of St. Louis.

He remained either a socialist or a radical liberal most of his life. He was often accused of, but I don't know whether he may or may not have been, a member of the Communist party when he was in his mid years from the early thirties. He always denied to me that he was, but there's no question but what he was considered a radical in the thirties as far as San Diego was concerned, which was a very conservative, conservative community.

He had an interest and a general bias in favor of social rights, in favor of political rights for people of all sorts. I can recall a startling book that he gave me that showed a picture of black children and white children. Some anti-religious tract that was involved. I can remember being startled at the picture of this black boy, which sounds like nothing like in 1978, but if you think about 1928, it was a startling thing fifty years ago. It went way back in our families.

One of my great-grandfathers, whom I did not meet, dead before I was old enough to have met him, had been active in the underground railroad before the Civil War. I can remember some abolitionist tracts that were still just drifting around the house, part of the impediments that the family has with it. I remember the picture of the black woman. Obviously, in those days she had to be half nude, pulling on the skirt of her clothed black sister and saying, "I am your sister."

It's all influences toward a liberal outlook on politics, and it dates my own personal knowledge of it. All this is filtered in on me, so I thought before I got away from the family, I ought to mention that.

II FIRST POLITICAL EDUCATION

Sharp: Well, that's great. That was a very fascinating episode, and I think it probably leads right into our next section, which contains general political questions from your life before 1958. How did you become interested in politics to begin with?

Fisher: Well, I think when I first got interested in politics was, oh, hazily, in the 1940 election. I was by that time a person of more sound years and discretion than I had been when Mrs. Hager had been my teacher of social studies in grammar school. This would be maybe fifteen years later. By pure happenstance, I lived across the street from her. Her husband was a very engaging man with a lot of fairly right-wing individualistic opinions about government and so forth. I can remember him, talking about this great man coming down the political pike, Wendell [L.] Willkie. I was going to San Diego State College at the time, and Wendell Willkie didn't loom very large on the horizon in the early days of that political year as somebody to be contended with. Of course, I was wrong. But that was my first awareness of it.

I can remember that summer. The fraternity to which I belonged rented a house out over La Jolla cove, one of the famous houses they're trying to save. But it was a run-down place, I think, that we rented for \$35 a week. Most of the kids in the fraternity had part-time jobs. I didn't, so I became housemother and did the cooking and the cleanup for the two or three weeks we rented the house. I remember being in long, long political debates with my fraternity brothers, most of whom came from Mission Hills or La Jolla or Point Loma, which were then, as to some extent they still are, the highly Republican areas of San Diego County, and being involved in many political debates during that summer of 1940. My present recollection is that I not only couldn't vote that year, but I did not register and vote for the next election in 1942. I may be wrong about that, but it was the year of my marriage, and I may have been too tangled up in that to register to vote.

Fisher: I thereafter did register to vote. It was in 1944, when I, before having not been enamored of Wendell Willkie, by then was convinced that Wendell Willkie would be the appropriate replacement for [President Franklin Delano] Roosevelt. I registered as a Republican and went out to campaign for Wendell Willkie, only to discover that Earl Warren was going to be the only person on the ballot in California. I got so incensed about that that after the Republican convention, when they didn't even invite Wendell Willkie to participate, I went down and made my first contribution to the Democratic headquarters. It's hard to think of \$5 being a big sum of money in these days, but when you made \$200 a month, and you had at that time a family of three, it was a lot of money.

I went down to the Democratic headquarters, which was the second floor of a seedy old building off the plaza on Fourth Street, and made my first campaign contribution of \$5. I thought I ought to have a hero's medal. The central committee chairman, whose name was Henry Churchman, thanked me, handed me a receipt, and walked out talking to somebody else. I thought: Here I am making a big thing of my life, and I'm practically ignored.

But I kept at it. That's when I first got interested in politics.

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But I kept at it. That's when I first got interested in politics.

III EARLY POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- Sharp: What were you doing then before you started to run for a state senator from San Diego County?
- Fisher: Practicing law.
- Sharp: Did you have your own firm, or were you with some other people?
- Fisher: I went in with my father-in-law, who was a second-generation San Diegan. First generation, maybe, but [probably] second generation. His father had come out here from Sedalia, Missouri, where he'd been an editor. How he got to be a lawyer, I don't know, but he wound up holding every judicial office in the state except chief justice. He served on every court. He practiced law, I think from about 1879 forward. His son was a partner of his, and after the war, when I went to law school, I law clerked for him through the late forties, and became an associate in the office, and later a partner in the office, of Sloane and Fisher.
- Sharp: What was his full name?
- Fisher: Harrison Sloane.
- Sharp: Why did you decide to run for a state senator then?
- Fisher: Well, I had been involved in a lot of politics before that time. I'd been a delegate to a [Democratic] national convention in 1952 for [Estes] Kefauver, and I had run Adlai Stevenson's campaign in 1952 in the thirtieth congressional district, which is most of San Diego County. It is everything south of Oceanside essentially.

In 1956, I was then a full delegate to the [Democratic] national convention in Chicago. I didn't go the first time; Buchanan, who was a congressman, went as my alternate. In 1956 I met a number

Fisher: of state senators for the first time during that convention trip. The head of the delegation to the national convention in 1952 had been George Miller, Jr., who was senator from Contra Costa County. I became very fond of him. I think he may have been at that same time also chairman or vice-chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, and he had just been defeated in 1950 for lieutenant governor.

The Democratic party throughout the state was pretty appalled at the state of politics in San Diego and of the Democratic party. I remember George saying to me one day, "Hugo, why don't you go down there and lead all those people in San Diego?"

I said, "George, I haven't got any followers."

He looked at me for a minute and said, "Don't ever look over your shoulder."

[laughing] The first time a state senator had given me any political advice.

In 1956, I can remember coming back from the stockyards one evening with Stephen [P.] Teale, who was a [California state] senator fairly recently elected. I think he was elected in '54 from Calaveras County, representing Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne Counties, as I recall. He and his wife were both doctors and practiced together. He and Barbara and I came back on the "el" [elevated railway] one night, strap-hanging together. He said to me, "Hugo, why don't you run for state senator? It's the greatest job in the world. It's the most interesting thing you'll ever do."

I think I told him the story about George Miller, and he said, "Well, George is right. Don't look over your shoulder."

In 1954, I had been very active in Young Democrats, though had never held an office in it. I persuaded them to establish a headquarters here. We even bought us a little offset press. We got one of our members to run for state senator against the incumbent, Fred Kraft. A very respectable campaign was run by our member by the name of Jim Edmonds, who was a little younger than I. He has, incidentally, been appointed to the bench by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. So I had gone through all the mechanics of the campaign and felt I knew many of Fred Kraft's weaknesses. I was unable to persuade Jim to be as tough and mean as I thought he ought to be in light of the kind of the incumbent he was running against. Jim was a very decent, unaggressive young lawyer, and he was defeated, but not that badly. So in 1958 I had become fairly well entrenched in the workings of the bureaucracy of the Democratic party here. My involvement was not that extensive.

IV RUNNING FOR DEMOCRATIC STATE SENATOR FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY,
1958

Fisher: The chairman of the Democratic central committee was a man named G.K. Williams who was the editor of the Coronado Journal. He had fallen in with a man named Pike Hodge, a rather estimable man who at least in those days I thought was fairly old for the job. Pike was partially blind, and he was the mayor of National City. He owned the big dairy here, and he had one real problem for a Democrat: he ran an open shop, and had been fighting with the Teamsters' union in his dairy operation, which included retail business.

At one point in time, I was convinced that G.K. Williams was no longer pushing Pike Hodge to run for the state senate. A couple of weeks before the Democratic Council held its nominating or endorsing convention, I discovered that G.K. and Pike were still urgently campaigning. I confronted them with it, and decided the hell with it: if they were going to do that, I was going to run. So it was a spur-of-the-moment decision, no doubt reinforced by these things I've gone back over with you.

Sharp: Did you then have the support of the CDC, the California Democratic Council?

Fisher: Yes. I had the support of the local CDC, although even that was somewhat divided. One of the active members of the CDC who had been involved in helping form it locally had been backing somebody else who came in a bad third. At that nominating convention, which was divided, I think Pike Hodge and I got fifty-two and fifty-three votes respectively, or fifty-three and fifty-four, something like that. I don't remember what the bad third got. I think I beat Hodge by one vote in that nominating convention, which was, if I remember correctly, weighted by club delegates.

Sharp: Was there an anxious feeling in 1957 that the California Democratic party was in a lot of trouble because the Republicans had been in power for so long?

Fisher: As I recollect it, that was not my impression. Now, I think if you were talking about 1956 and back a couple of years previous, that certainly was the feeling.

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Fisher: At least during a campaign, we tried to bury the hatchet a little bit and put some effective organization together. But it was not, in present-day terms, very effective. You know, if on election day we could put three or four hundred workers in the field, we thought we were doing great in San Diego. It was a lot more than we had ever done before. We had begun, it seemed to us, to run better candidates, people who were better able to campaign, who were my age--now I hate to think of it--younger and more appealing to the general public. They were less likely to have been just old--what we used to call the old hacks. Maybe they still call them that, but I don't think so.

But I really think we had a feeling in 1958 that we were going to make the grade. We felt quite sure of it when it became obvious, as it was to us reasonably early, that [William F.] Knowland and [Governor Goodwin J.] Knight were going to blow the thing and leave us with a golden opportunity of driving the wedge in there, and picking up the [U.S.] Senate seat to boot that was being vacated by a man, Knowland, who had shown himself unbeatable up to that time.*

Sharp: Did the "Big Switch" have a good effect on the Democrats' chances, then, as far as you were concerned?

Fisher: Oh, I don't think there's any question but what it was determinative of that election. I'm sure that it had a great deal to do with my own election. Keeping in mind that California's senatorial districts were divided up by counties in those days, this was the second largest district in the state.** Of all of the senatorial

*Judge Fisher refers here to the "Big Switch" which occurred in 1958. William F. Knowland, a U.S. Senator, decided not to run for re-election to his Senate seat. Instead he challenged Governor Goodwin J. Knight for the governorship. Knight decided to run for Knowland's Senatorial seat instead of running for re-election for governor.

**Judge Fisher here refers to San Diego County, the fortieth state senatorial district, from which he was elected in 1958.

- Fisher: districts, it was the most conservative, in terms of registration of Democrats. That's what the Democrats always measured by--how many Democrats they have--what percentage they have. The only district in the state that had less of a percentage of Democrats was Marin County, which was then held by Jack McCarthy. We even beat Santa Barbara County in terms of having more Republicans.
- Sharp: Alan Cranston, who was the first president of the CDC, said that the Democratic sweep in '58 was due to the unification of the forces of the CDC, the state central committee, and the county committees, and the fact that the "Big Switch," and the right-to-work issue, were present as well.*
- Fisher: Oh, I have no question but every one of those things was a major element. Whether they're the only ones or not, I don't know. I've thought about it enough, but certainly, you'd have to say that those were the three big things. It occurs to me there was also one other political issue: was that not the year that they had on the ballot also the issue relating to parochial schools?
- Sharp: I don't know.
- Fisher: It seemed to me it was in that year, too, that there was an issue relating to taxation for private schools.**
- Sharp: I'll have to look that up and see.
- Fisher: There was no question but what that issue had a lot of Catholics in California bothered. Now, Democrats in California, at least in my view, are more likely to cross over here than they would have been in their home state. Their attachment even to their own church is much less strong than it was in Boston or wherever. An issue such as the taxation of parochial schools will have a strong influence of bringing that group of voters back together again in the party which supports their position, which the Democrats did, whether it

*Alan Cranston, "Democratic Politics," in Eugene P. Dvorin and Arthur J. Misner, (ed.), California Politics and Policies, pp. 28-52, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1966, p.47.

**In 1958, Proposition 16 advocated the return of parochial school property to the public tax rolls.

Fisher: was in that election or one of the immediately preceding ones. I can recall that [issue of taxation] having an influence on the scores and scores of little coffee klatches I went to. This still had an underlay. I think it was in the same election.

Let me give you another illustration of it. I'm sure that in several elections after the repealing of the Rumford Act, which was Proposition 14 some years later,* this thrust of the fact that the Republicans were either overtly or covertly behind that, along with the big business interests, would have a residual effect in several succeeding elections. Blacks who had not theretofore been strongly attached one place or another went back to the Democratic party. It would be a while before that effect is attenuated. That's what I'm saying about the problem of the parochial school thing in the fifties.

*Proposition 14 on the 1964 statewide ballot struck down the Rumford Fair Housing Act. In May, 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court declared this action unconstitutional. A year or so earlier, the California Supreme Court had done the same thing.

V PROBLEMS IN THE CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1953-1962

Financing

Sharp: Oh, I see. That's very interesting. What can you tell me about the financing of the CDC and the Democratic party in the 1953 to '62 period?

Fisher: Well, after the '52 election, there were a number of proposals eventuating. One proposal put forward by a number of officeholders was a dollar a day for Democrats, and a variety of such things. And there was a statewide organization in which Clint McKinnon locally was involved and in which there would be a commitment of so much money a week or a month, or what have you, into the Democratic coffers. The CDC really was in part an offshoot of that sort of thing.

There was, I recall, a meeting up in Monterey which was intended to engender several things. It was to get the people who had been brought out by Stevenson who were more likely to be intellectually inclined, who had not been involved in party politics together, and the party people, and money people together. [We wanted to] get them solidified into some sort of an organization which would put muscle into the Democratic party, something which it [the party] had not had in the past, at least within my ken.

The CDC is what eventually came out of this after several false starts. Unfortunately, it very soon became enamored of the whole thing that destroyed so many organizational efforts in the past, namely that you were entitled to come and talk, but you really didn't have to put up much money. There were lots of fights about how much were going to be the dues, and how the split on the dues was going to be, and so forth. The CDC never did, in a real sense locally, and really didn't statewide, put a lot of financial muscle

Fisher: in. But their enthusiastic work and the fact that it [the Democratic Council] represented, at least in those early days, tens of thousands, if not fifties of thousands, of people who were either ardently attached to the party or at least semi-attached to it, gave them some direction in which they all felt they had some say-so.

I think that was its [the CDC's] real great thrust. It was not the money angle, because the money had still had to be collected in the tough ways of those days. [You had] to go out and pound on people's doors and ask your friends for fifty or a hundred or two hundred or five hundred bucks. [They would respond] because they liked you, or because they thought that your ideas comported with their ideas, or their industry liked the way you'd voted.

Sharp: Can you name any of the larger donors who gave to the Democratic party either before you ran for state senator, or while you were in office?

Fisher: Well, I would have to go back and look at my list of campaign contributors. Maybe you've done that, but my recollection is that in my election countywide in 1958--I'm talking, I think, about the combination of both primary and general election--I don't think I spent more than \$18,000 or \$20,000. It cost me two or three times that to get defeated four years later. But San Diego was always known as a very, very difficult place to raise money.

I recall in 1952 when I was running [Adlai] Stevenson's campaign in the metropolitan area of San Diego County, we had one woman who felt herself a great intellectual and a great liberal who sent reputedly \$5,000 to Stevenson, but wouldn't give a five-dollar bill to the local campaign. I can remember calling up a lawyer friend of mine in absolute desperation to get any money just to keep the office open here because everybody was putting the money either into the national campaign, where they get recognition for having done it, or into some local campaign, where they thought there was a good chance of winning it. But to just put money in the local effort to keep Stevenson's campaign going and the office open, nobody particularly was interested. I called up a lawyer friend of mine, with whom I later became a partner, and I remember going out and collecting about \$1,800 one afternoon. That was an awful lot of money in 1952. In fact, it was almost all the money that was ever spent which was locally raised in San Diego for Stevenson's campaign, 1952.

So it's hard for me, in today's money market and today's organization market, and also with today's kind of limitation, to really put this--what I just told you--in perspective. I'm sure the biggest contribution we had was maybe two hundred, 250 bucks.

Fisher: But you know, this would have been the kind of thing that under today's laws might have been presumed to have bought a president of the United States, if it had been done on that spur of the moment, as it was done in those days, without reporting or anything else.

Sharp: One of the biggest problems we've had in terms of understanding campaign financing, and just party financing, has been getting lists of people who actually contributed money, because the campaign declaration laws in California were very weak. You did not have to declare much of what you contributed for the primary or for the general election. And so any list of names that we can have for our files would be really appreciated.

Fisher: It's not something I can give you on the spur of the moment. I would just have to go back and go through the old file and see. I'd be glad for you to have it, if I've got it. But there was not a lot of big money raised in San Diego for statewide or national.

Well, I can give you the names of people that you'd always look to as local contributors, but we're not talking about the kinds of big money that you would always hear about being raised in Los Angeles and San Francisco and New York and Washington, D.C., you know. When they really raised big money, they went someplace else. They didn't come down here.

Sharp: San Diego wasn't big time in terms of fund raising?

Fisher: It was not big time, although I had great fights with both Jack [President John F.] and Bobby [Robert F.] Kennedy about ignoring the fact that it wasn't big time in terms of what it did, but it could make a break in California. That's another story.

Splits Within the Party

Sharp: I see. One of the last general political questions I have is about party unification. It seemed like the Democratic party remained pretty united from 1958 to 1962. However, by the time of Pat Brown's re-election, the party seemed to be very split. Who were in the groups, and why did these splits occur?

Fisher: I suppose the first big split in the party may well have come in the summer of 1959 at the Democratic convention, where a lot of the northern California legislators and southern California liberals made common cause to try and keep the California Democratic Council

Fisher: from endorsing the water program. A lot of that ameliorated after that. It was the first internal fight on major policy that occurred which left an aftermath. It was a long time in simmering down, if ever it did.

The biggest split thereafter came because of Jesse [M.] Unruh's feeling of his much greater abilities than those of Pat [Governor Edmund G., Sr.] Brown, and his--what at least appeared to me--fairly consistent attempts to downgrade Brown as governor of the state in the years succeeding '62. This eventuated in Unruh's eventually telling Pat [Brown] that he [Brown] was an old man and it was time for him to step aside, let the new generation take over.

So the first real split, which ameliorated a good deal, was an ideological one, and that dealt with the 160-acre limitation and the water program. The second biggest one, as far as I was concerned, was a real effort by Jesse Unruh and his legislative lieutenants to downgrade Brown and make him step aside.

Sharp: Who were some of the people who were on either side of the 160-acre limitation within the Democratic party?

Fisher: Oh, down in the Valley, Roy Greenaway, who I believe at that time was a vice-president of the CDC.

Sharp: He was against the 160-acre limitation?

Fisher: No, he was for it. It [the 1959 state Democratic convention] was a very funny convention, because a lot of these people were personally very fond of Pat [Brown], but it [the 160-acre limitation] was a kind of an issue that people who hadn't lived in California the previous twenty or thirty years would have a hard time understanding. This had become such a touchstone of liberalism, the 160-acre limitation. Here we had a water program that all of a sudden kind of took a different approach and, you know, it was an ad run. All of a sudden, here were all these people having a piece of the true cross in their hand, and all of a sudden, Christ isn't dead. [laughing] What's the true cross worth?

Sharp: Okay. Well, you'll have a chance to fill in some more of these names.

Fisher: Don Vial was another one. There is another one--I can see him now, with his close-cropped blond hair. You know, he looked like a prize fighter. I'll think of some of those names, but Don Vial, Roy Greenaway, and this one I'm trying to think of were the great

Fisher: leaders in the CDC trying to dump the program, but aided and abetted by George Miller and Jerry [Jerome] Waldie and Virgil O'Sullivan and other legislators from northern California.

That was a very fascinating convention. Maybe we'll have a chance to get back to it.

Sharp: Okay. Well, it sounds like it. This was the convention in '62?

Fisher: '59.

Sharp: I see.

VI LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES AS SENATOR, 1958-1962

The Caryl Chessman Case

Sharp: I have a series of legislative questions that deal with the period '58 to '62, and there are four or five subsections within this topic. The first question deals with your membership on the Senate Judiciary Committee. You were on this committee when the Caryl Chessman case came up in 1960. Governor Pat Brown had granted Chessman a stay of execution, and there was a great public uproar about this granting.

Fisher: Indeed there was.

Sharp: Pat Brown granted the stay simply because he was opposed to the death penalty. I wanted to know if the Judiciary Committee had any role in this case at all, either in making recommendations to the governor, or in making some sort of action that either helped or hindered Governor Brown's allowing Chessman to be executed.

Fisher: Do you want to turn it off for a minute, and I'll make a cup of coffee.

Sharp: Sure.

Fisher: I'll put it on. [tape off briefly while Judge Fisher prepares coffee]

That would have been in July of '59?

Sharp: '60.

Fisher: '60. We had just gone out of session. The interesting thing was the alertness of Alan Cranston, who was then the controller of the state. I got a call from him about six-thirty or seven o'clock one

Fisher: morning. I'd just come back from Sacramento, back to San Diego, and I got a personal call from him. He told me that Pat Brown had just stayed the execution for sixty days. He said, "You'll be getting calls from the press about what you think about it. I didn't want you to be surprised about it."

I always thought this was one of the more alert things I ever saw a politician who was not directly involved do--stepping in and helping somebody who had done something that was going to radically change the way that people looked at politics in the future.

It did have a change that, you know, went back beyond that. As you may recall, the governor [Pat Brown] then called the legislature back into session, a special session, for the purpose of considering whether or not we would either repeal or modify the capital punishment provisions of the law. The Criminal Justice Committee [Criminal Procedure?] on the assembly side had previously reported out similar bills on, if I recall correctly, more than one occasion.

The governor's first inclination was to do that again this time. I think I and probably George Miller, Jr. were the ones who prevailed on him not to try that tack. One of the perennial opponents of the capital punishment was Senator Fred Farr from Monterey County. We persuaded the governor not to go the route of getting it [a repeal bill] through an assembly and putting it over on our side. The place where the fight was really going to have to be made was in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which had been opposed to its [the death penalty's] repeal, though not overwhelmingly.

My judgment then was, and still is, that the Senate Judiciary Committee in those days of '59 to '63 or '64 was probably the best legislative committee that I ever appeared with or before, and I'm not talking just about California; I'm talking about nationally. They were all lawyers, and like I'm now demonstrating, many of them are overly verbose, but they were an exceptionally perceptive bunch of men, many of whom wound up in the appellate courts, or trial courts.

So the bill was eventually signed. We had to let Fred Farr do it because he'd done it so many times, though he was running for re-election. Everybody thought he ought to step aside and let somebody else handle the bill. The bill was signed by Fred Farr, George Miller, Jr., Steve [Stephen P.] Teale, Joe [Joseph A.] Rattigan, and myself. That makes five. There were six of us who signed the bill. Three of us were on the committee. There had to be one other. It seems to me there were three of us on the committee who signed it, and Fred Farr, who was an awfully good friend

Fisher: in the legislature, and still is, was a bad legislator to be out. Farr was never quite prepared for the exact motion, and he was slow-thinking. A great human being, but he'd just be out-slickered by almost anybody who put his mind to it. He was kind of relegated to preventing the bill.

It seems to me the hearings didn't come until about two weeks after we were in session. You can look that up. But we had many a strategy session, and we finally wound up with Fred Farr and my administrative assistant, Lloyd [R.] Winburn, and Pat Brown's executive clemency secretary, Cecil Poole. I think that's what Poole was called in those days. Really his [Brown's] legal secretary, but also the designation of clemency secretary. Cecil was a prosecutor; he'd been a deputy to Pat Brown over in the district attorney's office. Poole was in favor of the death penalty, but he was a great lawyer.

Really, when it got down to the mechanics of getting the people out here from all over the country that testified on that bill, scheduling the hearings, who was going to cover what subject, what order we were going to take it in, and what emphasis we were going to put on the bill, really it was Pat Brown's office and mine that put the thing together while Fred Farr went out and went dining with Phyllis Kirk and Kingsley and, you know, the man from Minnesota, head of corrections back there. We had a lot of people who came out, and they were first-rate people. Fred Farr had spent his time with them, but the actual getting together of statistical information, documenting it, and putting the files together and everything was done by Lloyd Winburn in my office and by Cecil Poole in Pat's office.

Came the hearing, there were only three of us on that committee, which, as I recall, was a fifteen-man committee, who were in favor of it going in.

Sharp: This was going for re-enaction of the death penalty?

Fisher: No, for repeal.

Fisher: And that, as I recall, was about a twelve- or fifteen-hour hearing, which was all televised more around the world than it was locally. I forget what station did it; the educational television station in Sacramento, or it may have been KQED or a combination of the two. They televised the whole thing, and it was a fascinating hearing and was one of the few hearings in the legislative process that changed votes. My recollection is the final vote, as the bill was amended, was eight to seven to keep it to committee. So we changed at least two votes I know of, and maybe three.

Fisher: I wound up having to do most of the questioning during the entire session, because Fred Farr was introducing and putting on the witnesses. Joe Rattigan and I were cross-examining. Joe Rattigan was not; maybe because of his deafness he was reticent. Don't let me give you the impression he [Rattigan] wasn't really tough on the issue, but he did not question extensively on that. I would hazard to guess that during that entire session, maybe a third or a half of all the questions asked were asked by me.

The interesting thing about the case was that Pat [Brown], you know, was not--not just plain morally opposed to capital punishment, as I am. He just had a feeling it didn't work the way it was done. There was no certitude about it. He was a quick believer, which any proper person is, that the closer you couple the punishment with the crime, the more apt it is to have any deterrent effect.

Pat was not convinced of its deterrent effect, but he didn't feel absolute about the wrongness of capital punishment. He felt absolute about the wrongness of the way it was administered in California, and was likely ever to be administered, for that matter. He certainly had all the legitimate questions any good humanitarian has to answer, but I never felt that when it came right down to it, if he could have it any way he wanted it, he might not equivocate the last point, and not because he was unwilling to make up his mind. I think it's probably that he was older than I.

I felt absolute in those days, and I'm not sure, after having sat on the bench for a long time, that I'd feel as absolute as I'd ever been. You know, even I, having gone through hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of cases sitting inside that court, have to recognize that as much as I believe in redemption, not in a religious sense, but in the opportunity and possibility of redemption, as a practical matter, there are some [people] who are totally beyond redemption. I think these are the kinds of things that kept Pat Brown from ever being just a driving force. It was not a religious concept with him. Now, it was with his son [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.], and it was his son who persuaded him [Pat Brown] into it.

Reconstructing the story afterwards, I knew there had been a death watch. The Chessman case was a famous one for a variety of reasons, including the fact that no death was involved in the case. Secondly, Chessman had spent so many years on death row. It was clear that the man we killed was different from the man who committed the crime. Everything the police said about him was true. So in that case you were dealing with pure, unadulterated

- Fisher: retribution, period. We weren't dealing with a person that was incapable of reform. These are the kinds of subtleties in the Chessman case. No matter where you stood on the question of capital punishment, it must have really bothered any thoughtful person, whatever you thought of Chessman.
- Sharp: Do you mean that the death penalty wasn't the right punishment for Chessman, any way you looked at it?
- Fisher: Yes. Oh, yes. Lawyers have an old saying that bad cases make bad law, you know. You try and do something for somebody who really doesn't fit--the square peg for the round hole we've got. We've got all the round holes. So all of a sudden we make a square hole where 999 cases out of a hundred, all we need is a round hole. And all of a sudden you've got a square hole and nothing but round pegs. And so it was a very distressing thing to go through. There were some, like my replacement in the senate, who went down and joyously talked about going down and having Boston pie, you know.
- Sharp: Why, then, was Chessman eventually executed?
- Fisher: Well, Pat Brown never went any further than just giving us a few days--the six-day stay to permit the legislature, if it would, to change the law. The legislature didn't, so he [Brown] did what he said he thought he had to do: let the law be enforced.

I started the talk about the death watch. My recollection of it is that Pat's wife was out of town, and Jerry [Brown] was up visiting at the Mansion. This was while he [Jerry] was a seminarian. Jack Burby and Hale Champion and maybe one other person had been kind of doing the death watch. They held Pat's hand, went to dinner over at the Mansion, one thing and another, and sat around till they felt out of the woods, because they knew all of them were concerned about it. With his feelings about it [the death penalty], Pat [Brown] obviously had been in distress for some time as this decision approached.

That reminds me--let's get back to this death decision in general. It was about ten or ten-thirty [p.m.] when they finally decided that it was beyond recall now and went home. Jerry's the one that finally convinced him [Pat Brown] that he ought to do what he did. He [Jerry Brown] was the only one left. He sat there and talked to Pat until, as I recall, it was maybe ten or fifteen minutes before midnight, and he [Pat Brown] finally called up Dick [Richard A.] McGee, who was then director of Correctional Services, or the warden--I forget which. Dick McGee would know whom he [Pat Brown] called up. He called up at the last minute and stayed the matter. He [Pat Brown] called the special session. It was seven o'clock the next morning, and I got a call from Alan Cranston saying, "Be careful. They're calling." [laughter]

Sharp: Well, thank you for going through that story with us. We don't often get to talk to somebody who was in that position. Being on the Senate Judiciary Committee, then, you were in a tough deliberative situation.

Fisher: Well, we didn't retire it, you know, like an act of court; we didn't retire. We listened to the testimony, each of us thought to call the role, and that was it. The chairman [Regan] was in favor of the death penalty; he's on the court of appeals, third district, now. Eddie [Edwin J.] Regan. Joe Rattigan is on the fourth appellate district. Stan [Stanley] Arnold, who was at the superior court in Lassen County, since retired. My recollection is that Carl Christianson, who had been a superior court judge, went back to the superior court later, then has since died. And I, of all people, went onto the bench in later years.

I don't recollect any time when there was a clemency hearing that Pat Brown did not himself conduct. Now, I know his predecessor did not, and I don't think his successor did, and I'm not sure even that [Governor] Earl Warren did, though I suspect he [Warren] probably did. But Pat Brown always had prepared a loose-leaf folder which was not only a digest of, but had the original documents [of the case] in back of it, so that everything could be known, from the probation reports, the police reports--everything forward. All the reports from the psychiatrist, the reports from the Department of Corrections--all these things that were required to be done in any capital case--a précis of the legal problems involved. He always personally held the clemency hearing on the death penalty. He never avoided it, though there was agony to him in each and every instance. I think he was the only modern governor that's ever done that.

There were a number of people who went to the gas chamber after Chessman, at least one from San Diego that I know about. This fellow actually demanded that the [clemency] hearing not be held. It was a particularly gruesome murder, though if you'd look at it now with our present knowledge, you'd realize the guy was psychotic. I can remember he appointed a friend of his who had not tried the case, but had appointed by the supreme court to represent this fellow in the automatic appeal under the constitution of the supreme court.

It was Robert Bartell, who's now, last I heard, a superior court judge in Alameda County. Appointed him [Bartell] to represent this fellow Carpentier. He was the next man executed after Chessman. Carpentier had been convicted in San Diego twice. The supreme court reversed it because the judge had withheld some of the material from the jury. Terrible case. Came back, and retried, and again

Fisher: convicted. Carpentier was sent to the gas chamber. This fellow, a sailor, insisted that he be sent to the gas chamber, wanted to die. I remember Bob [Bartell] telling me that Pat [Brown] insisted that he [Bartell] come up to the hearing, insisted that he present the factors favorable to Carpentier.

I'm glad that you had raised this question because, as you know, I'm pretty fond of Pat. This is a better insight on the man's real feeling about his responsibilities than you could find almost in anything. This real basic feeling of the chips are down, he had to do it.

Sharp: Yes. With all the things he had to do as governor, it would have been very easy for him to avoid--

Fisher: It's been easy for most of them [other governors].

Sharp: Yes.

Fisher: You can always be someplace else.

Sharp: Yes.

Fisher: I've heard stories about other governors who, when the time came, had gotten themselves on a boat out at sea with no radio contact so they couldn't be gotten in touch with.

Sharp: That really is a good insight into Governor Pat Brown. I don't think any of us had had any knowledge about that before, so that's really helpful.

Fisher: Make a note to yourself when I'm going to say something about the appointment of judges. I sat in his [Pat Brown's] office when a lot of them were appointed, and what he had to say about them. That's someplace else.

Reapportionment

Sharp: Well, the next set of questions deals with the politics of Proposition 15 in 1960. This proposition was the plan of Frank Bonelli, chairman of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Apparently, the plan would have meant fairly equal north-south division of political representation along the line north of the Tehachapis and would have given Los Angeles seven senators instead

Sharp: of one. We understand that you had a role at the Democratic state convention in pushing against Proposition 13. Tell us a little bit about your role at this convention against the proposition.

Fisher: We ought to start by first pointing out that what was being talked about in those days was quite different from what we were talking about after the Carr case, and so forth, in which the supreme court dealt with one man, one vote.

We were then [in 1960] talking about shifting political influence from certain areas to certain areas, within a context of the situation, which was not one man, one vote. Now, there's no question but what some people were talking about one man, one vote. I hadn't thought about it in all these good many years. [Proposition 13] really tended to shift the thing so that when the chips were down, Los Angeles would have a dominating voice. I represented all of San Diego County--and a lot of people don't realize how big it is; it's the same size as the state of Connecticut.

Sharp: That is big. I didn't realize it was that big.

Fisher: I think we're 4,400 square miles; they're 4,410, or something like that. But the square mileage is almost identical, and San Diego was then the second largest county in population. It [San Diego] slightly exceeded Alameda County at the time, and substantially exceeded Orange County.

I had found that it was entirely possible, because of the incessant demands of Los Angeles, that every problem in the state be looked at and solved in a manner satisfactory to Los Angeles. The Bay Area is the bigger metropolitan area, but in terms of counties and senatorial districts San Diego is the biggest.

It was easier for me to get problems solved in San Diego, through the filter dealing with our problems and those of northern California, than it would be to deal with Los Angeles. What went through Los Angeles never filtered out in terms of solutions for other people's problems. It was so ingrown. The whole legislative process that had developed in California, while not in any sense ideal--we were taking a good working system and going to skew it in a fashion [in] which Los Angeles would have its way and never would listen to anybody else. Regarding the north-south fight on the California Water Plan, Los Angeles had the one thing it wanted to do. If Los Angeles had had its way, what it would have done is taken a certain portion of water of the state and just assigned it to southern California, really to Los Angeles. Los Angeles, through the Metropolitan Water District, dominated the south. So it would just have let them have it, and the rest of the state would have nothing to say about it.

- Fisher: I had proposed to the governor [Pat Brown] and he eventually adopted my plan instead of Dick [Richard] Richards's approach to the water plan, which was to finance everybody's problem and keep building until the state ran out of water. If we had followed L.A.'s approach, the problem would have been exacerbated instead of ameliorated. I saw the legislature as a system in which a real problem could really be solved. As long as it was working, I didn't like the idea of tampering with it, and particularly I didn't like the idea of tampering with it in a way which would have an effect to decrease the influence of the second largest constituency of the state [San Diego County], vis-à-vis Los Angeles. So I campaigned against Proposition 15.
- Sharp: So when you're talking about reapportionment, and then when you're talking about water, in both instances you're discussing the power of Los Angeles to get what it wanted, essentially, from the state government?
- Fisher: Not from the state government, from the state as a whole, you know. Here they were talking without regard to long-established water rights or long-established procedures of the development of water. The suggestion to amend the state constitution to all of a sudden make the water that historically belonged to somebody else in a reasonably well understood priority--you know, the man on the stream first and so on down the line--would have disrupted that and merely said that of everybody's water on this stream map, a certain percentage of it belongs to us in southern California. But when they said "belonging to southern California," they're really talking about the Metropolitan Water District. When they're talking about the Metropolitan Water District, they're talking about Los Angeles County. So this would have stretched California on the Procrustean bed of L.A. County's knee.

I thought that inappropriate. I think that the legislature was reasonably well able to address the major needs of the state and resolve them without all of a sudden by constitutional fiat taking away the water rights from around the state and letting Los Angeles deal with them, in a proprietary sense. This is the genesis of my thinking about the state legislature.

Unquestionably involved in my thinking was the fact that the legislature, particularly the senate in those days, had some people I considered giants, and some very liberal people, you know. I remember in the thirties and the early forties, you used to talk about the reactionary state senate that was run by all the cow-county senators.

Fisher: Well, when I was in the legislature, you had some of the most liberal people in the state coming from places like that [cow counties], who were, on the broad social issues, sometimes more adaptable to the twentieth-century solutions than people in some narrow constituency in some neighborhood down in Los Angeles. They were a lot less likely to be just bought and paid for by a single pressure group. By bought and paid for, I'm not talking about money; I'm just talking about the pressures on every legislator. You get one pressure group that's overwhelming, that deals with your own constituency, and you're dead if you don't listen to that.

Sharp: Was there one obvious position of San Diego County in the reapportionment fight, say from 1960 on, that you knew about? Was San Diego County trying to get more representation?

Fisher: No. I had a surprisingly good rapport, for a liberal Democrat, with the business community and with the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. I don't recall what the votes were, but I'm sure that with southern California, San Diego voted more against Proposition 15 than any other place south of the Tehachapis anyway, and maybe a lot more so than in any place north of the Tehachapis.

So it was in the political realities of San Diego's problem of dealing with the colossus to the north [Los Angeles] that I had found ways to make common cause with legislators from the northern part of the state. My feeling about the legislature was that if you really had a serious problem, if you put it on the basis that: "I've got a particular problem at home that needs to be solved," the legislature was willing to deal with it--even though the problem was particular to San Diego. I never found a time when they wouldn't.

We had a liberal state senate that in many respects was in a more solid sense liberal than was the assembly, which was still blowing back and forth. They were a lot more liberal people in the assembly, but when it came down to solid accomplishment, I thought that the senate was rather spectacular. You had some of the best legislators in the country sitting in the senate, many of whom eventually disappeared from the legislative scene because there was no place for them. Los Angeles had never elected any substitutes for them.

Role on Water Resources Committee

Sharp: We'll talk more about reapportionment later in the period, as it comes up. I'd like to move now to talking about your senatorial duties as a member of the Water Resources Committee. What was the origin of the California Water Plan?

Fisher: Well, it depends on what you're talking about as the water plan. If you're talking about the system that we built beginning with the authorizations in the late fifties and the money raised in the two bond issues since then as the water plan--or are you talking about the planning for water and the fact that there had been developed a great push by both southern California and the Central Valley interests for further development of water other than by the federal government? I remember talking about, going clear back to the days of Ed Haight, when they really understood the water problem and they had the old Mormon and padre sense that the development of the source of water is the development of civilization.

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Sharp: Tell us about the California Water Plan that the money was raised for in Proposition 1 in 1960.

Fisher: Well, the general planning, of course, was done before Pat Brown got into office. The bureaucracy of the old state engineer's office, which then became the Department of Water Resources, had put together a good water-planning agency, in terms of long-term planning for a society. It was certainly better than any state government's ever done before or since, and very likely as good as any national government had done. They built this bureaucracy anticipating building this big north-south thing, which was talked about all through the fifties, but in fact, the legislature was unable ever to resolve it. But they'd hold their hearings. I can remember back in the mid-fifties, they were holding their committee of the whole hearings in the state assembly before I got to the legislature. The assembly was unable to resolve the real political conflict of the political control of water, and how everybody was to be served, without denying water to the people in the areas of origin. Everybody was holding hearings, and had the committee of the State Chamber of Commerce, and, you know, the Federal River Project Association. Everybody was trying to develop the constitutional amendments and this and that and another thing.

But while this was all going on, the state Department of Water Resources under Harvey Banks, and I forget his predecessor's name, did do the essential long-range planning. This department made the

Fisher: projections about where our agricultural base was; where it was going; general soils; requirements throughout the state; where our population projections were going; what the industrial and municipal needs were going to be as opposed to the agricultural needs; where these were going to go; how fast they were going to change; what kinds of major things would influence these growths; and where the water was. It was the first real great inventory of a state's total water resources, alternatives for development, and so forth. All of this wound up in the famous document called the "Bulletin Three." But this was a matter of a lot of work that had been going on for a number of years, and the legislature was always good in financing the ongoing planning work, without ever being able to resolve the political problem at all. What do you do about it? So in that sense, you can't say that the [Pat] Brown administration produced the California Water Plan, because in fact this had been going on for a number of administrations, where the bureaucracy had continued to do the spade work in the planning. While it was not in every sense complete, it nonetheless was so well done that it was difficult to argue about the thing as a whole as to its feasibility, though you could talk about whether or not there was going to be a fault under a given dam in a given place. The legislature could argue endlessly about those sorts of things. It gave the [Pat] Brown administration coming in the opportunity to say: Look, this material is all available; either the final or the preliminary graphs of this great study have been done, and nobody is building it. We keep talking about it. We authorized the relocations of highways to put a dam in it; we don't authorize a dam, you know. We authorized putting a bridge halfway across the Feather River Canyon, but we don't give enough money to build it from one side of the canyon clear to the other side.

So it was in that political context that Pat Brown's administration came in and said: We're going to start building.

In fact, in the sense, a relocation of lands, easements, and the rights of way--some of that work had been done. But nobody was going to ever build a dam or build a delivery system until the political battle had been joined and some resolution made there.

It was in the first weeks or several months of the [Pat] Brown administration where this battle went on, essentially within the Democratic party, because Democrats were surprisingly overwhelmingly in control for budgetary purposes, or bonding purposes, although it was nip and tuck whether we could get any constitutional amendment passed. It was that issue upon which there was a major difference of opinion between Los Angeles and me.

Fisher: I was the only new senator from a major metropolitan area in the south to be elected in '58. Stan [Stanford C.] Shaw from San Bernardino was elected, but he was not in vigorous health. Before the end of his term, he couldn't be found anymore and never ran again. My predecessor [on the Water Resources Committee] had been vice-chairman of the Southern California Water Caucus. The legislators from southern California had been meeting for some period of years, formulating the way they were going to chastise the north. Los Angeles had--I forget--twenty-two or twenty-three or twenty-seven votes in the assembly. They said: If you don't do what we want to do on water, you don't get anything out of the assembly.

It was that sort of approach that Los Angeles was pushing for. It seems to me that the chairman of that was John A. Murdy, who was senator from Orange County, and the vice-chairman was a very respected legislator from out around Claremont. His name was Ernest Geddes. Surprisingly, unusual as that name is, there were two unrelated assemblymen named Geddes in the legislature.

Sharp: I thought there was another Geddes.

Fisher: Sam [Samuel R. Geddes] from Yountville. They held a series of caucuses, and they were going to come to a position. I had finally persuaded the water leaders of San Diego, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, and the city and the county, that it was a one-way road to oblivion to try and lock the legislature into letting Los Angeles blackmail the north to get a constitutional amendment, because it took twenty-seven votes to get the constitutional amendment, and there was no way to get it in the senate. So there was no way to get that. And there was no way to get any water program if we kept letting Los Angeles pretend that they're the state.

I had persuaded Pat [Brown] to reappoint William Jennings, who had been a deathbed appointment of Goodie Knight, to the State Water Commission. He [Jennings] was general counsel of the San Diego County Water Authority. At that point in time, the San Diego County Water Authority was the biggest user of the Colorado River water. The whole system was built, and we were the ones using it. L.A. was paying for it as standby. When I say L.A., I'm talking about those different agencies, including the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which had the biggest entitlement and the lowest usage. So in southern California the only major metropolitan area that was desperate for water was San Diego, because we were raising our water usage.

I don't recall now what the figures were. It seems to me we were using in San Diego County maybe somewhere between 100,000 and 125,000 or 150,000 acre-feet of water a year. In fact, before the end, it was over 200,000 acre-feet of water a year in San Diego

Fisher: County. The safe yield of all of the local water was about 25,000 acre-feet. So we were producing anywhere from one fifth to one tenth of the water we were actually using. The figures were worse than that. It seems to me that we were entitled to about 110,000 acre-feet of water, and we were using a great deal more than that.

The figures are long gone now, but San Diego was really in desperate circumstances. It was not in terms of being cut off from water next year, but if there was not a water program for the state water, and the rest of the agencies in southern California began to use their entitlement down to the Colorado River water, and Arizona began to use what the U.S. Supreme Court said they were entitled to but California wasn't then recognizing, San Diego was tail-end Charlie.* It was an absolute--as I saw it--in terms of the long-range planning, considering the length of time that it would take to build anything, get it authorized and built. If we didn't do something in 1958 or 1959 or '60, come 1980, we were going to be a desert.

And so it was in that context that I finally persuaded the water leaders of San Diego County to let me, a freshman senator, have a free reign to try and get us a water program without a constitutional amendment. I said, "There's no way we can get that. Now, let me do the best I can."

We finally held a big hearing. I forget whether it was one or two days, or evenings. We held a secret meeting to which all legislators from southern California came, and Joe [Joseph] Shell was a big leader on the other side. The topic was: how do you expect us to pay for everything and we don't get an absolute right. Well, I finally convinced the Southern California [Water] Caucus not to take a position, not to endorse anything, but just stand off. It was through the few people like John [A.] Murdy, [Jr.] and [Ernest?] Geddes and Jesse [M.] Unruh--I persuaded Bill [William A.] Munnell, who's now majority leader in the assembly; and Tom Reese, who is now just retiring from the Congress--they were leaders over on the other side--to give me time to work something out. I said, "We won't ever go for a constitutional amendment; we'll go for a water program."

Then I had to deal with Dick [Richard] Richards, who was insisting on a constitutional amendment. There was a big internal battle in the governor's office mainly between Dick Richards and

*See Arizona versus California, 373 US 546 (1963).

- Fisher: me. I think Rob Rudy* may have been the one that may have tipped the thing in my favor. He was a deputy director of the Department of Water Resources, and also special water counsel to Pat Brown. He eventually left and we organized the Westlands Irrigation District.
- Sharp: Was your negotiation of all of this as a member of the Senate Water Resources Committee, or just as somebody from San Diego County?
- Fisher: Well, I tried to use the legislative device too, but hell, I was trying to convince the water committee, the chairman of which was interestingly an ex-native San Diegan.
- Sharp: Was that James Cobey?
- Fisher: No, that was later. It was Howard Williams.
- Sharp: It's interesting the way you talk about your roles on the Senate Judiciary and Water Resources Committees. You talk about these roles in exactly the same context as you talk about your being head of the Resources Agency. You wanted to try to get people going, to get the deliberation to stop and the answers to begin.
- Fisher: It's all politics. It was like coming and watching people who are stalemated on several sides of a Chinese checkerboard. They look down and say, "What if I move this marble this way; what would happen?"
- See if you can get some movement; see if you can get somebody to look at it differently and get them enough off center that somebody else then shifts his position. That's the art of politics, I think--having some real desire to get from here to there, you know. So much of--maybe it's age again--so much of politics now just seems to be doing something so you get a headline today. I always thought politics was--you know, seeing if you had an objective to get, and trying to figure out where everybody stood, and figuring some way you can get the movements towards that objective.
- Sharp: When you talk about water, you're obviously talking about people's lives and their livelihood and their future, and so you are in a sense talking about the public interest. And yet, where was the public interest in all of this?

*The editor could not verify this name.

Fisher: The public's interests? [laughing]

Sharp: Redefined?

Fisher: The public's interests. I get sick and tired of everybody saying, "It is in the public interest to do this." In every piece of legislation, every administrative change in government, every decision that a judge makes on any matter of consequence, you are changing the law. You may be changing it merely by enforcing what hasn't been enforced in the past. But whenever you do that, some people will conceive themselves to have been benefited by it, and others will find that their sphere of influence, their sphere of action, has been restricted in some respect.

I can't think of any public decision where you can say, "People only benefit by this." Both things occur, and what you try and do, it seems to me, is find where you get the most benefit with the least adverse effect. But you get both in every essence. I don't know of any administrative, judicial, or legislative decision that does not have at least those elements in it.

So when you talk about the public interest, I think the long-range public interest as a whole was benefited by a water program, which is not to say that a lot of people's opportunities to deal with their livelihoods or their communities weren't changed in some respect. It may have been changed by--by bringing water in, you know. A little community where local control really meant almost a town meeting sort of thing all of a sudden has a big industry located in its middle; the industry dominates the community. You've got a lot of jobs. What's the public's interest? A purer form of town hall democracy that's gone by the board?

So I would be pleased to have you think that what I did was just in the public interest, but I wasn't so sure then, and I'm not so sure now. It was, insofar as I could perceive it, more in the public interest than against the public interest.

Sharp: There's a question of pork barreling, and each legislator saying, "Well, my constituency needs this," or "my constituency needs something else."

You begin to think, is it really the constituency whom he's concerned about, or is it himself and his own power? With something like the water plan, where it's a plan to be enacted, there is a lot of arguing back and forth about what the plan is to consist of.

Fisher: Sure. I've known some good politicians and some bad ones; I've known some black moral scoundrels. I've known some who are, I consider, almost saintlike. I never knew the legislator or the executive politician or the judge who didn't enjoy the use of power. Some don't admit it to themselves. I always enjoyed it. I liked to be able to say, "Look what I made happen." I enjoyed it. You know, it's one of the things about Pat Brown. He had his joie de vivre of that very thing--"Look what I made happen!"

That's one of the things that made him a great politician. That's one of the things that made him a lovable one, because he enjoyed it, and he made no bones about it; he enjoyed the exercise of power. He didn't enjoy the responsibilities of it sometimes, but he carried them out, as I explained on the death penalty thing. He knew if you had to clean out the outhouse as well as use it.

Sharp: Okay. Well, I just wanted to bring that out, because the history books will show that the California Water Plan developed and that certain people were responsible for its development. The inside struggle to get it to be what it is today has to be laid out very clearly, and it has to be seen that it was a very flexible process.

Fisher: It was very flexible and, you know, it was like so many things you see in the legislature. As a judge, I've had, you know, sometimes on not very important parts of the law, some young attorney get up and say, "You know, there's an obscure part of the law. Let me tell you about this; you probably haven't run across this." They will lecture me on it and tell me what those legislators intended to do. It turns out it's a bill I either authored or co-authored, and I can tell a good deal about it, but I can't tell him for sure what the legislature intended to do except pass the bill, because the motivation of legislators is different, you know. I'm then looking at the desperate situation that I see San Diego in, in terms of its then current developed use, and can foresee that without something being done about it, twenty years from now we're going to have to curtail the use of the water we're already using.

Sharp: Okay.

Fisher: Now, that looks like looking out after my own constituents. You're on the other side of the line. You're talking about this young punk senator, hardly dry behind the ears, coming up there and talking about spending \$1.75 billion just so San Diego can be assured of its use of 100,000 acre-feet of water; it looks like pork barrel. So the label don't help much!

Sharp: Okay. [laughter] Well, that's fine. To have your position explained is very helpful.

Fisher: You're not through with water, are you?

Sharp: No.

Fisher: Okay. Let me pursue something while we get to the 1.75 million acre-feet.

I finally convinced Pat Brown not to go with the constitutional amendment, but to go with a bond issue. I said, "Let's make this big enough and substantial enough that we can include development clear up into the upper Feather River, you know, the dams clear in Lassen County. It should be enough money so that everybody's got an interest in it."

I said, "That doesn't mean that everybody's going to vote for it who's got an interest in it, because some people have got historic stands and they've got constituents that may not understand. The right thing to do is make this big enough and all inclusive enough that we develop enough water to take care of everybody's needs, including those who talk just about the recreational needs in the north, you know."

Someone said, "You know, you see the big river going down past you, and it all belongs to San Francisco; it doesn't belong to us. We can't take any water out of that river, because San Francisco owns it." I said, "Let's get away from that sort of thing. Let's talk about developing long-range needs of everybody. You get it [a water plan] big enough and all inclusive enough, and everybody's got their hands on the tar baby. Everybody."

The tar baby theory of politics. [laughter] You're not old enough to have read Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby.

Sharp: Oh, I've read it!

Fisher: Good for you! I've used that a number of times, and nobody knows what I'm talking about.

The legislature finally decided to do that. At my recollection, it was on a conference down in the governor's office. It was the governor [Pat Brown] and Ralph Brody and I, but I'm not entirely clear on that. Well, they wanted me to carry the bill. I said, "Well, you know, I'm a freshman legislator. I've done the ground-work on it. There are two things you've got to worry about. One is that you've got a lot of people around here who have been wrestling

Fisher: with this problem for years. They'll resent it if a freshman carries it. The second thing is, you need the biggest name with the most clout in the legislature to put it in his name, if he'll do it, and that's Hugh Burns." Well, Hugh Burns's big constituency included a man named O'Neil who had lots of land down in the west side of the valley.

Either one of the power houses, or the dam, or the lake as part of the San Luis Reservoir is named O'Neil. He's a big landowner, and a big Democrat, and he has been a big contributor to the northern Democrats in northern California, I guess, for a number of years.

At any event, I said, "The thing you ought to do is go to Hugh Burns. I'll do the work on it. I'll negotiate the thing through, but you get Hugh Burns and his name on it, and I'll put mine second."

And so they said, "Fine."

So I think it was Monday or Tuesday, they brought the bill up for me to introduce, and I remember I got Hughie's [Burns] name on it, and put my own and had several others on. All of a sudden I realized it was for \$500 million, and I went back down the stairs, and I said to Ralph [Brody], "Everything you've told me is going to take \$1.75 billion to do this."

Ralph said, "Well, we don't think they'll go for half a billion dollars."

I said, "Nobody's ever gone for half a billion dollars? Nobody's gone for \$1.75 billion? You had better learn you're going to lose now. You've lost half your argument."

So they redrafted it, brought it back up to me, and I circulated it, and got all the names--I think twenty-seven names on it. You'll find mine second, and Hugh Burns's first.

Sharp: Why did the legislature decide to go for a bond issue instead of a sales tax way of paying for it?

Fisher: Of course, sales tax wouldn't have raised the money necessary to do it. Right off the bat, you know. You had at the very least sold revenue bonds backed by sales tax. But there was no way in the world to raise that kind of money by a sales tax, in those days.

Turmoil Over Various California Water Project Issues:
Legislative and Lobby Sentiment

Sharp: I understand Paul Taylor said that the idea for the California Water Project originated with some big landowners in the Central Valley who really wanted more water but wanted to get it at others' expense.* They attempted to sell the project as industrial and urban water, and I wondered what you thought about that theory.

Fisher: Well, he was an economist who, you know, was sort of the godfather of Don Vial--[bangs the table] Oh, what was his name! The little blond fellow. You must have run across--it's a Slavic name. Don Vial, and the CDC, and the old-time liberals, you know, who were incensed, for instance, when they--

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Fisher: --built the Pine Flats Dam in the later thirties, or early forties, which was built without any power production in it.

It was the very antithesis of the old Bureau of Reclamation thing on which most of us Democrats in California [were raised]. You know, it was one of the cornerstones of our California beliefs, the breaking up of the big corporate farms and that sort of thing. Paul Taylor was kind of a godfather to a whole generation of liberal Democrats to whom this was a real touchstone of liberalism.

Not to say that I'm not in favor of the 160-acre limitation; I was, and am. But the realities were that you couldn't deny the people in places like San Diego that, in order to fight that historical fight. All they could do was try and adjust it so they would pay more of their actual share of water. The practical matter is--arguing with Paul Taylor all over again--that that's precisely what the society did with the 160-acre limitation. The general taxpayer picked up the subsidy so that the industrial and municipal users, through other tax devices, paid for essentially free water.

The Imperial Irrigation District is a good example of it, on which they're still having the 160-acre fight. Their [the district's] charged cost of water is now 25¢ or 50¢ an acre-foot of water. Somebody else paid for the dam and everything else,

*See Paul Taylor's oral history interview, California Social Scientist, 1975, Vol. III, pp. 348-350.

Fisher: including the rate payers in Los Angeles for the Department of Water and Power, for all of the power. They were, essentially, the only users, until the Second World War, of the power out of Boulder Dam.

Sharp: So you wouldn't completely discount Paul Taylor's understanding of the origins of the California Water Plan?

Fisher: Oh, no.

You know, the landowners on the west side of the [San Joaquin] Valley undoubtedly, if they could have got water from the Bureau of Reclamation without the 160-acre [limitation], would have preferred it from them [the bureau] because it was a lot cheaper than buying it from the state. But if they had to pay what was supposed to have been worked out, you'd have to be a lot better economist than anybody I personally know, to know for sure whether they were paying their fair share or not. At least the people on the west side of the [San Joaquin] Valley who first bought water, guaranteed that it was supposed to be their pro rata share of the cost of getting it that far, then until such time as the south needed it, paid something less for the coverage. As I recall, that was the way it was eventually worked out.

Sharp: I see.

How were the Republican members of the state senate convinced of the need for the California Water Plan? I mean, was it seen as a bipartisan issue, or did acceptance depend on where you came from?

Fisher: It depended a lot on where you came from.

John Murdy, who's one of the most decent guys I ever met--awfully, awfully conservative--was a fair-sized landowner in Orange County. [He had] a couple of hundred acres, I guess. California Chilies, one of the big chili growers in California. I think he was looking at his district--the growing of the district. He didn't look at it as a partisan issue.

I know J. Howard Williams [of Tulare County] had nothing to gain from it, one way or the other; probably the most conservative man in the senate. Nonetheless [he] wrestled for a good number of years with the state's water program.

There are people in the legislative process--or were when I was there--who worked with the problem that needed to be solved. It might not pass any real direct bearing on their own district; there were just important things to be done. Howard Williams was one such.

Fisher: You had others, like Paul Byrne, who was from Chico, who was looking for the fact that this would be a great boon--the building and everything--in his own county, his own district. The same is true of old Ed [C.] Johnson from Marysville.

And there's old Nate [Nathan] Coombs whose grandfather put in the first vineyard in San Diego County, decided there was no place to go and went up right after Calaveras and put in a vineyard up in Napa--he wound up in the middle of the city in Napa. He understood the importance of water and, I think, eventually voted for it.

There were people like Joe [Joseph] Rattigan whose constituents came down and did everything but threaten to shoot him if he voted for it. Nonetheless, in the final analysis [he] voted for it because he thought it was best for the state.

Sharp: I think you're showing us just how complicated the passage of the California Water Plan really was.

Fisher: Any important thing is that complicated, really.

Sharp: You can talk about it on a lot of different levels, and yet the politics that are involved in the passage of such a plan are very individual.

Fisher: Very infinite.

Sharp: Yes, they really are.

Who were Bill [William R.] Gianelli and Francis Lindsay?

Fisher: Bill [William R.] Gianelli, when I got there, was a deputy director water resources engineer.* He later went out into the consulting business and represented a number of water agencies. He had his offices in Sacramento and was brought back by [Governor Ronald] Reagan. He happened to be a Democrat--fairly--but I don't think that he was very strong in his politics. [He] happened to come back and Reagan appointed him the director of the Department of Water Resources.

*The California Blue Book lists Mr. Gianelli as chief, Water Rights Section of the Department of Water Resources, in 1958.

Fisher: Bill was a pretty good friend of mine over all those years, but I always felt [he] was fairly narrow in his political approach to water. He was always looking at it in terms of constituencies--districts he represented, and so forth.

Sharp: We have both men down as writing much of Proposition 1; that was the bond issue for the California Water Project. Is that what you understand their role was?

Fisher: Francis Lindsay? No. Talking about the assemblyman?

Sharp: I believe so.

Fisher: No, didn't have anything to do with that. I'm sure Bill Gianelli had something to do with it since he was fairly high in the department, I think.

There were a lot that had a lot to do with it. Ralph Brody certainly a great deal. The actual physical drafting, I'm sure, was done in the main by the legal department of the Department of Water Resources. The person who would give you a lot of insight on that, I suspect, would be Pat Towner.

Sharp: Towner?

Fisher: Porter A. Towner--Pat Towner. I think he's still chief attorney for the Department of Water Resources.

I mentioned that I helped organize bringing down Ralph Brody and Pat Towner and B. Abbott Goldberg and Bill Gianelli and, I think, Jim Duty (who was up out of Los Angeles)--people on the engineering end and the deputy director's level in the Department [of Water Resources], and also the top legal talent of the department. There were twenty or thirty sessions dealing in water all over Fresno, to get in there and debate.

Ballas, George Ballas, was the guy I was trying to think of.

Sharp: Do you know anything about senate feeling, in early 1958, and Democrats' feeling that the legislature, or at least the senate, would hold up water legislation until Pat [Edmund G., Sr.] Brown was governor--attempting to use his election as leverage?

Fisher: No, I never heard it asserted. I don't believe the thing had jelled. Pat Brown didn't have the new faces with new ideas coming in, or people who were not really totally committed to some way of doing it; or people who didn't have the energy to conceive of a

Fisher: new way to do it, like my old friend Hugh Burns, who said, "I'll be in favor of anything that gets the water program." But he wasn't putting it together, and he didn't have anybody working for him, putting it together.

One of the things that's hard to recognize twenty years later is that legislators in those days didn't have big staffs. The legislative process has been entirely changed--[in the] view of some of us old gaffers, in many respects destroyed. You don't have the legislator himself doing his work and doing his thinking about the politics. He's out making speeches, and he's got a staff working out the politics of the thing with other staff members.

So it's hard to think, now, of the fact that in those days, the legislators, in the main, were doing their own work. There were only three senators in the entire senate that had a year-round staff. Four--the senators from Los Angeles, San Diego, Alameda, and San Francisco--were authorized to have one administrative assistant and one secretary year-round, permanent.

Sharp: Because it was thought they had so much work to do?

Fisher: Yes. No other legislator, because he was a legislator, did have that.

Now, some who had committees, some big committees, had permanent staffs, but no legislator but those four, in the entire legislature, had personal staffs.

Sharp: So from '58 to '60 and getting the water plan on its way and putting the bond issue through, you're talking about the need for the impetus of a new administration and new Democrats, essentially, in powerful places.

Fisher: The resistance to southern California came mainly from the senate, of course. You had little change in the senate over the years. Nineteen fifty-eight was the biggest turnover in the memory of man in the senate. It doesn't seem much in this day and age, but it was ten new senators. There were at least two of us who were written off as never going to show up.

Well, this was such a change that the guy from San Diego had a chance to talk to the guy in Santa Rosa and work on a new basis. The old senator, [F. Presley] Abshire, you just--no, no, no, no, you'll never get anyplace. As long as Abshire was there, there was nobody to talk to. He'd already said his piece, and he'd said it ten years before.

Fisher: Same is true of old Louis Sutton up in the Valley, who eventually voted for us because he was such a hard 160-acre limitation man; he was an old Granger. He eventually fought against it, but he was somebody new to talk to and you had new ideas. The fact that Pat Brown was there, no question about it, particularly in the assembly, made a great deal of difference. And, with two or three votes in the senate, it made a difference.

That last--I forget how long it was, a day and a half--we debated the matter; the senate was technically under lock and key. I'll tell you, you could hear the mountains being ground into boulders, the boulders being ground into rocks, the rocks into gravel, and the gravel into sand. [laughter] It was a time for a new legislator who had been there only five months. It was a time when you could almost hear the nerves breaking, twanging.

Sharp: Well, you're talking about nothing less than the future of California when you're talking about the development of a water plan, and who's going to pay for it.

Fisher: Yes.

Sharp: Did you, then, campaign for the passage of Proposition 1 in San Diego County?

Fisher: Oh, yes.

Sharp: How do you campaign for something like that? Simply by sending letters to civic--

Fisher: We'd got a big committee headed by some of the big names in San Diego--I was part of the steering committee--letters, billboards, everything.

Sharp: Why did George Miller, Jr. oppose the CWP, the California Water Plan? Because he was from northern California?

Fisher: Well, that's a simple answer to it, but it's a very unsophisticated answer.

George Miller, I guess I said once before, is probably one of the more complex men I've met in politics. George Miller told me a lot of reasons why it [the CWP] wouldn't work and it shouldn't work. In fact, I'm not sure he ever told me the real reason he was against it; and, in politics, he was long-term the closest friend I had from 1952 until the day he died. I still can't be sure what the practical reason [was].

Fisher: That he was from northern California, that his political power base was based on his leadership in northern California, undoubtedly had some effect upon it. The fact that the Shasta Dam, when built, was intended to regularize rivers so that a lot more water than the Central Valley Project was then taking out could be taken out of the Delta--this was important.

The result was that from the late thirties, early forties, until the Feather River Project to Oroville went in, there was a surplus water created in the Delta. That made it possible for the building of an enormous industrial complex just above Carquinez Straits, in Contra Costa County, where water was essentially free. Somebody else had paid for it. [laughter] The farmers had paid for that, you see, in part, and the rest of us had paid for it, nationwide.

Until a project that was big enough for the state to put together--that the Bureau of Reclamation could ride on the back of, or we on the back of them, for that first 110 miles below the Delta--so that they could then begin to use more of the water they had created by Shasta Dam, those industries would still suck the water out of the Delta for free.

Sharp: One of the other questions, and you've just raised it in talking about these industries, is the power of various industries like, say, PG&E, behind or in the development of the California Water Plan.

Is there anything you can say about that level of politics in the development of the California Water Plan? Which industries did you know were always in favor of the California Water Plan, and why might they have been?

Fisher: You might as well shut it off a minute. [tape off briefly]

PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric], of course, had always been strongly opposed to the development of publicly owned power and, I guess, was and is, in terms of area, the biggest private utility in the country. And PG&E had always been kind of the bogeyman for the Democratic liberal, particularly in the north.

There was many a man that got elected to the legislature, and later the Congress, and spent a lifetime campaigning against PG&E and all the iniquities of their nineteenth-century attitude towards government power. When you even talked about the building of a publicly owned dam, they often moved in and attempted, by one device or another, to get control of the public agency that owned the dam. If you'll make a question mark, I'll get back to that in the '59 [legislative] session.

Fisher: The overwhelming election of Pat Brown, with his insistence on raising taxes to pay for what we were doing: to build a big, integrated school system in the state (higher education and all that); to build the water program; to enact fair employment practices legislation, which was a very radical thing twenty years ago, really brought most reasonably sophisticated large industries to a realization that major changes were going to be made and that they [these industries] should try and have a hand in those changes and get the most benefit out of them that they could.

Even PG&E, I think, must have recognized that, in a sense, California government was going to be revolutionized by Pat Brown; that this was a state that was no longer going to be controlled by a few industries; that the legislature was no longer going to be a little debating society of little importance to the average lives of citizens; that all of a sudden you had a new thrust where the mechanics of government were going to be updated and rationalized; that the funding of state government was going to be updated; that the interest of the average citizen, which had always been either on the most local problem, or its congressman in Washington--all of a sudden comes a realization with the election of the Pat Brown legislature, that the state government was something of critical importance in people's lives.

So my impression in looking over those early legislative days-- I didn't deal very often, directly, with any lobbyist or representatives of PG&E, though I did, intensely, later, particularly when I was secretary at Resources, or administrator of the Resources Agency.

Excuse me; all through this, since now they are always called "secretary," I'm just going to use "secretary."

Sharp: Fine.

Fisher: Later, I had lots of dealings with lobbyists, but in those early days they were a grey eminence off in the background. They didn't think I was important to deal with, in the beginning, so they weren't really talking to me anyway. I was a member of the [Water Resources] Committee, and they would show due deference to a senator because he was a senator, but in terms of coming in and trying to get important things done their way in a particular piece of legislation, I was just not in a position they'd pay much attention to.

Fisher: My impression is that they had really generally resisted the development of the state water project, in the mid-fifties; if nothing else, just by dragging their feet and not being for it. I think, by the time I came to the legislature with the election of '58, they had come to the conclusion that if it wasn't going to be done now, it was going to be done in any event. So their thrust in their dealing with the legislature and their dealing with the executive branch went off in the much more sophisticated areas of dealing with the buying and the use of power in the [California Water] Project, which in itself is an enormously complex issue which [I] dealt with for a number of years.

I don't want to say that I really understand it all, even now, but I could see their shift. Now, part of that shift may have been engendered by the fact that they all of a sudden realized that a major part of their service area was going to be involved in major development and that this not only presented them with a threat, but also presented them with opportunities that they could take advantage of.

But their control of individual districts was something that disturbed me then and still does. As a matter of fact, I think that the courts have since dealt with it in some respects.

I can remember the next to the last day before the end of the period during which we could introduce new legislation. Somebody, and I think it was Bill Gianelli--

Sharp: This is in '60?

Fisher: No, this is '59.

It was either he or Pat Towner who was telling me about the problems they had in trying to develop a scheme of things for the development of power for the pumping needs of the state water project, which is a power-deficient system--it produces an enormous amount of power, but it produces, if I remember correctly, maybe only two-thirds of the power that it demands.

They found that the PG&E was working in and around their areas of interest, in particular the Oroville-Wyandotte Irrigation District. They had entered into a contract with the district in which they would underwrite the repayment of the district's bonds, in return for which they bought all of the power from the publicly owned system. The system was tied in--now it would be by computers--to the PG&E system of demand, so that to only a very small extent was the irrigation district in control as to when the water was released, and when it wasn't. It was keyed to the demands of

Fisher: PG&E and not to the demands of the farmer, but the farmer was getting extra water, and he was getting it cheaply, because PG&E was guaranteeing the repayment of the bonds to build a dam and a power system which was controlled by PG&E.

So the last day they introduced a bill; I introduced a bill-- I forget the number of it now. It sticks in my mind, 1218 or 1216, something like that. It was a very simple bill that said that the private utility would pay taxes on the publicly owned facilities to the extent that it was operated for their benefit. That caused a little hullabaloo.

Sharp: I can imagine!

Fisher: [It] didn't pass; didn't get on a committee.

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Fisher: So it didn't have much of a chance.

In any event, it was a bill I didn't work on or anything else. If I were to do it with my knowledge now, I'd have slipped it in and we would have had a lot of fun with it.

But their difference in their looking at water development was that it opposed the state water plan and, in fact, I think, in general indicated they were in favor of it. But when it came to a specific publicly owned water development system, they were going to have to pay taxes to the extent that they were using it for their benefit and not for the public's benefit. They were very alert to see that and dumped that bill in very quick order.

Sharp: You'll have more chance to talk about industry and water, and other sorts of industries and, say, oil when we get to the section on your position as secretary of the Resources Agency, later on, from '63 to '65. But I have a lot more questions on water, believe it or not!

California Water Resources and the Federal Government

Sharp: To move to talking about a federal role in development of the California Water Plan, I was wondering if you could say something about the role of Irving Sprague on behalf of the California Water Plan in Washington.

Fisher: Well, in 1959 and, I think, 1960 and maybe '61, Irv was administrative assistant to Congressman John McFall. He later went on to be hired by the congressional delegation to be kind of a staff man to the entire congressional delegation, Democrats and Republicans.

I wouldn't be too much privy to it, but I think it was in 1960 that Governor Brown [Edmund G., Sr.] and Hale Champion decided they needed somebody in Washington, other than just working through the congressmen. There were times when they were dealing with the administration, and dealing with the companies that had business back with the federal government, that affected California. They needed somebody who was answerable directly to the administration in California. It was then that they hired Tom Bendorf. He had been active in politics out here and, I think, at one time had been city manager of the little town of Guadalupe in Santa Barbara County. He was hired as assistant director of the Department of Finance. So he was our man in Havana.

Bendorf had some difficulties. There were some people that he could, and some that he couldn't get along with. I got along with him great. I was back there as a state senator, fairly often, to deal with San Diego's problems, and always got along great with him.

He then left the job and Irv Sprague was brought over into that position. But I don't think Irv came into that position until after I was the secretary of Resources [Agency].

Sharp: Oh. We thought it was earlier.

Fisher: Tom Bendorf was there for a year or so. Well, Tom Bendorf was there in 1961, anyway, because I remember having dinner with Libby Smith, now Gatov, who was Treasurer of the United States. That would have been at least '61, and maybe early '62, before Tom left.

Then Irv Sprague came in. He was in awfully good shape with the staff, and the Public Works Committee and so forth in Congress. And now talk about real pork barrel! [laughter]

Fisher: We had such a good working relationship, he and I. I'm a great admirer of his. So many things the federal government did dealt with the resource base [in California].

I remember that on at least one occasion--I think, two years running--I would give him our viewpoints on different pieces of legislation. It didn't make any difference whether it was a fish hatchery bill, or what. These were the kinds of things that went under the rivers and harbors bill. Often they were things that involved coordination with the Department of Commerce, if that's where the economic development agency at the federal level was--their funding, and local funding.

So towards the end of every mark up of the rivers and harbors bill, I'd get a call from Irv Sprague. We'd go down all the list and we said, "This is going to be in; that's going to be out." This was stuff that the whole state government was zeroing in on.

Then there would be a pause, and he would say, "Now, the chairman says...[pause] amongst these projects"--he'd name maybe ten or fifteen--"there's another X millions of dollars for California. What do you want?" And I'd name them, and the next morning the bill would come out, and there they would be. [laughter]

Sharp: That's pretty amazing!

Fisher: Now, that's true pork barrel. I didn't pork barrel for San Diego in the sense that I would have if I had been a local legislator, but it was my home district, and so they often got a little something that they might not have gotten if the secretary had been from--Eureka.

Sharp: What was the federal role in the California Water Plan? Do you know?

Fisher: Oh, sure. As I've told you earlier, they [the federal government] had this enormous amount of surplus water. The total federal area had not been, as yet, served and, in fact, they were still building on the Central Valley Project. But the cheap way for them to build the kinds of works that were necessary to get the water from sea level back up to the southern end of the Valley, or even partially up the Valley, made it economically infeasible to do it. You know, their own area wouldn't have carried if they hadn't been able to share the costs of these enormous works such as the Delta pumping plant, and the San Luis Dam, and the joint construction down to the 110-mile limit, or whatever it is. They are joint facilities.

Fisher: So it was economically advantageous to both the federal and state government to build that jointly. The federal government, of course, in fact, did the building of the canal and the San Luis Reservoir.

Sharp: Pat Brown, apparently, went to Washington to see federal officials in May 1958, before he was elected governor, on a shopping trip to attempt to get the federal government to buy part, or all, of the California Water Plan. Do you know anything about that area of discussion about the water plan?

Fisher: Well, I did at one time, but I'm hazy on it now. And, of course, I was not privy to any of that at that time.

You see, he [Brown] was then attorney general and, as attorney general, had been involved in a lot of litigation in water rights in the Central Valley. There had been more than one attempt to sell the whole project and to get an entire state water program built by the Bureau of Reclamation, back in the thirties. I think he was just picking up where somebody else had left off.

A Note on the California Water Project Bond Issue,
Proposition I, 1960

Sharp: We have some information about a discovery that you made on the bond issue, "that a two-thirds vote on it, on the ballot, was not necessary even though it was really a bond issue, which requires two-thirds vote, if the referendum was made a statute instead of a bond act. So it was passed out of the legislature in a form that would require only a simple majority for passage on the ballot."

Can you explain the--

Fisher: The mechanics of it?

Sharp: Secret?

Fisher: Well, no secret. I was just looking for a way to get something passed with twenty-one votes; just as simple as that. I told the lawyers to go to work on it and they had come up with a statute that authorizes a sale of the bond. And so it wound up as a statute; a referendum statute is what it amounted to.

Sharp: Essentially a law being passed by the people, really.

Fisher: Yes, sure, which requires just a simple majority, which was my whole point right in the very beginning. It was one of the early things I told them, "We can't get two-thirds votes in the legislature," which is what the constitutional amendment required. So that was the point.

I don't recall who did the research on that. I will be frank to say I wish I had, but I hadn't. I just knew that it could be done that way, and I had either asked Pat Towner or Ralph Brody, or maybe asked even the legislative counsel to do that for me--to help me with the device by which we could put this on the ballot as a statutory referendum.

The California Democratic Council and the Water Project

Sharp: What was the relationship between the CDC [California Democratic Council] and the passage of the California Water Plan? Did the CDC, as a whole, say it really ought to be passed, or did it do that kind of political endorsing?

Fisher: [laughter] Well, I don't think they went beyond that convention that I mentioned, in Fresno. But that was the first political convention I had been to where they did these things by what was the sense of the meeting. You know, I came out of that session, and that experience, having a great respect for Roberts's Rules of Order. At least everybody knows what the rules are; you know when they're violated; you know what to do about it.

As I told you, between Ralph Brody and I, we brought down a whole bunch of water experts: some out of the legislature; some out of Department of Water Resources and in the governor's office. It was my office that really programmed us in to all these meetings, and it was people like George Ballas and Don Vial we were following around.

It seems to me that that was their [the CDC's] first issues conference--the big issues conference. I helped work on the issues conference with the people up in the [Democratic] State Central Committee office. The people up there and the CDC were very close; they didn't make any big distinction between the two offices, really. Set up the regional conferences, and eventually the big one up in Fresno. It seems to me that Nancy Swattish, who lives up in the Bay Area over in Marin County, was really in charge of putting together the issues conferences for that year, including on the water program.

Fisher: We held an issues conference down here and it was an easy subject. We got up there and put together the list of questions we were going to be faced with and everything, and scheduled them out to these meetings that were [to be held] all over town. It seems to me they had something like seventy or seventy-five different--I may be way overstating, but it seems to me it was an enormous number of sessions on the four or five big issues. Water got about two-thirds of all the public attending it.

From each of these sessions came some "sense of the meeting" notes from whoever their [representative] was in that particular meeting--and that depended a bit on the chairman, a lot [on] finegling the seat. You got the right chairman and that sort of thing, which you couldn't always do, of course.

Then it would up with about half a dozen of us sitting in a hotel room in the Hotel Californian. It seems to me there was Nancy Swattish; there was Nancy Sloss; and Bill Grader, who many years later became my deputy, who has been famous, subsequently, in the Bay Area in the Mendelson affair; and his [Grader's] wife, Jerry; and Martin Huff, who is the executive officer of the Franchise Tax Board. I haven't thought about this meeting for a long time. We took this great pile of papers [gestures to indicate size of pile of papers on California Water Plan sentiment] to try and make some sense out of it. We finally decided, "We'll write our own report." And did. Bill Grader, at that time, was the administrative field assistant to a congressman who was killed in an airplane crash--Don Clausen's predecessor. The name escapes me at the moment.

He was to bring the paper before the meeting. I remember a great big thrash on that. Things began to fall apart because the northerners had most of the legislators who came for that issue, and on it, and they were cutting them to ribbons. I remember the congressman told me to go and give him a hand. I forget what we did.

In any event, the position paper that was adopted by the CDC was written in that fashion. It was a half a dozen of us who sat down in a hotel room when we couldn't make any sense out of all the stuff that would come in. I'm not sure it was the sense of the meeting at all. We wrote the sense of the meeting, which was, essentially, approving the water program. I'm sure we wrote some caveats in it, but I don't remember the details of it. But it was a great lesson to me that all this participatory democracy can be just a very destructive sort of a thing. Good guys can destroy it as well as bad guys.

Sharp: I have one other question about funding for the California Water Plan. As of 1960, the large fund called the Investment Fund, which previously housed tidelands oil revenues which came into the state coffers, became what was called the State Water Fund. This was, obviously, an increasing fund because the tidelands oil revenues were increasing. But it wasn't enough to pay for a California water plan?

Fisher: Oh, no. I suppose in all the history it might be, sure, but you need money now to pay for concrete and the whole bit. You can take any tax and say, you know, if you have it on the books long enough--"Will it do the trick?" And the answer is "yes"--except that fifty years will have passed and you won't have made the grade! That's, really, the problem with all the rest of these things. You need an enormous infusion of cash, now. Who's going to put up the money for--?

The Oroville Dam itself was the biggest time that was left on contract to the Oro Constructors, which is a consortium. It seems to me that that was the largest single civil contract ever let under bid by any government in the world.

You just don't go out and collect that all overnight from a sales tax or from oil royalties.

Sharp: I see. [pause; commotion in the room]

Opinion on the 160-Acre Limitation

Sharp: The next questions are about the acreage limitation. I don't know if you had a chance to read this article about the U.S. Supreme Court's upholding of the 160-acre water limit for California, which, I believe, was the Ivanhoe Water District vs. All Persons.^{*} The U.S. Supreme Court decision came in '58 and there was quite an uproar in California, I guess, afterwards because it was against, probably, much of the prevalent feeling. The U.S. Supreme Court said, "Yes, the 160-acre limit does apply to this water." The majority of the feeling in California was that, no, it should not, and the federal government, in the person of the U.S. Supreme Court, should not be saying what we're going to do with our water.

^{*}This article appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, 24 June 1958.

Sharp: Mine. [laughter]

Fisher: Oh, okay. I think it's an oversimplification. It was recognized as a large problem; that's why built into the bill was the Westside Wasteway system. That was one of the reasons why later I promoted a bill by Carley Porter which provided for \$2 million or \$3 million or \$3.5 million for a study of the waste disposal of the Bay Area because the Golden Gate discharges, maybe, 60 percent of the land area of the state, from the northern California border clear down to the Tehachapis, with the exception of the Coastal Range and the Salinas River system--the Pajaro. Except for a few little things like that it seems too that it was either 40 or 60 percent of the land area of the state drains out through San Francisco Bay.

So the problem [of waste water] was not ignored. In fact, one of the things written in was to attempt to take care of that but, of course, then you run into the resistance of the people in the Bay Area. Here you get into one of the great problems in waste discharge generally when you started with the old Dickey Act, which had been intended merely to resist the old, hydraulic mining days, and the dredges back in the Sacramento Valley. The way of assigning priorities almost gave the first polluter a prescriptive right to pollute as long as he didn't pollute below a certain level. We already knew that there were certain levels at which the waters of the state had to be maintained. The State Water Pollution Control Board had been very slow at arriving at what these levels ought to be, but there was no question what the law required: that these levels be set and that any water system you dealt with had to recognize this as the point beyond which you don't go.

During my years as secretary of Resources, I tried to promote the idea that you pollute as little as you can reasonably limit yourself to. [I thought] that everybody ought to be required, within reason, to do the best to limit pollution that technology knows how to do because eventually you get to that point anyway.

But it was already recognized that the waters of the state had their substantial burden of the discharge of waters. The shifting of where these waters were going to discharge was not the big point. The big point was how much you were going to add to the waters. It really doesn't make any difference whether it comes down the Sacramento River or gets taken out of the Sacramento and put in up above, on the San Joaquin, and then comes down a wasteway on the west side. Eventually it will have to [go out] the Golden Gate. The question is, how much do you load it with what it would not otherwise have had? Agriculture is one of the big polluters, of course.

Fisher: So there was a full recognition that these problems had to be dealt with. We're still wrestling with devices to do it, but it was out of this kind of consideration that we inaugurated, in '65, I believe, the initial study for the big time study which has disappeared now. What still needs to be done is to rationalize the entire discharge of the waste waters of three-fifths of the state out through the Golden Gate. We still haven't done it.

Sharp: So the main thrust of water concern in the early period, say from '59 through '61, was to get the water plan enacted with as few burdens on it as possible?

Fisher: Well, no, it's not fair to say with as few burdens as possible. The problem of water pollution control was a very substantial concern in the very beginning. The matter had to be dealt with; state law required it, and federal law required it. Common sense required it. All the devices by which it could be done were not then known. In fact, they're still wrestling over one of the early proposals, the peripheral canal, a good example of a device that initially was proposed by the Department of Fish and Game.

Here's a good example of where one doesn't perceive not only what the total public interest is, but you can't even perceive your own interest. One of the big promoters of the peripheral canal today is Metropolitan Water District [MWD]. They fought it like crazy back in the sixties because they were going to have to pay for it, in part. It was the Department of Fish and Game proposed it. They [Fish and Game] proposed it because that would do two things. It would permit the freshening of the water in the Delta on a continuous basis, out of turnouts from the peripheral canal, down channels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. But it would also regularize the delivery across the Delta, and would avoid the kinds of structures that the [Department of] Fish and Game has always had to deal with, particularly for the fish--salmon in particular because the Sacramento-San Joaquin area had been the great, outside of the Columbia River, the big producer of salmon on the west coast.

These were well-understood problems and nobody ever quarreled that this was going to have to be part of the dealing with the California Water Plan. The devices of how effectively to deal with it have not all been agreed upon, even as of today. If in the mid-sixties the Metropolitan Water District had said, "We want the peripheral canal," we would have had it.

Sharp: I see. Okay, I understand.

Fisher: Well, I told you Don Vial was violently in favor of the acreage limitation and opposed the state water program because of the lack of an acreage limitation. He was then the research director for the state fed. He came down [to Fresno] and was often the opponent in the series of meetings at that convention I told you about. I forget who the nice, nice older gentleman, not very political in nature--who was the president of the state Grange--he came down and talked to, yes, that convention.

The state Grange was without any real power because they're fairly insignificant most places in the state, except up on the west side of the Sacramento Valley where they're reasonably strong. But they were strongly opposed to it.

Labor was, philosophically, strongly opposed to it but because of their close ties to the Democratic party and to Pat Brown. They never effectively went out and campaigned against it, and I'd be hard put to say what position they took publicly in the campaign for the bond issue. I'm sure in San Diego labor didn't come out against it because San Diego was just overwhelmingly for the bond issue, and labor was overwhelmingly for it down here. This was the one issue on which in San Diego there was no divided opinion, a hard thing to find in this community then, or now.

Sharp: Why did Pat Brown oppose an acreage limitation? For ideological reasons, or practical?

Fisher: I think they were mainly practical reasons. For the state of California the bureaucratic underpinnings to try and devise and enforce 160-acre limitations were conceived of as being pretty overwhelming--other than the device of charging extra for water beyond an additional penalty which, I think, may still be built into the water repayment programs. Whether the problems would have been or not, I don't know, but it just looked like you'd sink out of sight.

The federal government had been unable to enforce the thing that had come in the middle of the Depression and had been pretty well accepted by everybody, and in fifty years it had been unable to enforce it really effectively anyplace in the state. For the state to get bogged down in that same sort of an enterprise just seemed like jumping into a briar patch we would never get out of.

Sharp: With AB 1326 in 1961, the assembly planned to put a 160-acre limitation into the state water plan, and Paul Taylor testified before the assembly water committee to request passage of that act. But AB 1326 died in the committee. Was there anything like this attempted in the senate, or in the Senate Water Resources Committee?

Fisher: There must have been; I just don't recall.

Sharp: There were people within the senate who felt strongly enough, then, who would have attempted it?

Fisher: Oh, Virgil O'Sullivan was one; he was on the senate water committee. And, really, George Miller, [Jr.] felt reasonably strongly about it. Here's where I get into the problems of psychoanalyzing my old friend George. Whether he was for it because he was an old, New Deal Democrat, or whether he was for it because it was a way that he thought to dump the program at that stage of the game, I just don't know.

One of the things you might look at--there was a series of, as I recall, three bills that he introduced and that were, I think, defeated in the senate water committee. They were brought up on the floor of the senate by some device or another, by a minority report or something. George brought up what he called the Delta Protection Act, and when what eventually was named the Burns-Porter Act came on the floor, those were the first amendments voted down. They were voted down at about five or five-thirty the evening of the first day of debate on the water program. I led the fight on the floor, against them.

If you will take a look at those, or have somebody take a look at it, one of those may have included an acreage limitation; I'm not sure. But I'm sure there was an acreage limitation brought up; I just don't remember the details twenty years later. It was not one of the things that threatened to dump the program over in the senate. There were people who felt strongly about it in the senate, but they were not a sufficient number with sufficient influence that it ever became a serious issue whether it would get out of the senate with or without that. And it was a view of mine and a lot of others that to graft that into the bond issue program would have defeated it in the legislature and, no doubt, statewide.

Some Results of the California Water Project

Sharp: With the California Water Plan of 1960 there would be very little, if any, water from rivers discharging into the ocean anymore. Instead, water conduits would be used to create water supply lines down to southern California which, obviously, would create a problem for the discharging of waste water. We wondered how much attention this problem received.

Fisher: [laughter] It received quite a bit of attention. Whose statement is it?

Fisher: They [MWD] fought it, and now they're trying to get it. And now we can't get the money, and now you've got the environmentalists who don't want anything, so they'll wind up with the place more polluted than it would otherwise be if we had the peripheral canal. The players have changed, and the rich have become poor, and it's not table stakes. They can still reach in their pockets, you see.

Sharp: That's all the questions that I have on water. Let's stop at this point.

Transcribers: Alison Nichols, Nicole Bouché
Final Typist: Marilyn White

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Frank Lanterman in Assembly seat row 1,
before Speaker's podium, ca. 1976

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Governmental History Documentation Project

Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

Frank D. Lanterman

CRUSADES OF A REPUBLICAN LEGISLATIVE LEADER, 1951-1978:
WATER, MENTAL HEALTH, EDUCATION, WAYS AND MEANS

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris
in 1977, 1978

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

For nearly twenty-nine years (1951-1978) Frank Lanterman vigorously represented La Cañada in the California assembly, outspoken and respected in championing the mentally ill, home rule, and fiscal responsibility. This brief interview for the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. oral history study of California government captures the essence of these attitudes and concerns, although the printed word cannot do justice to the rolling baritone which he modulates as carefully as the great Wurlitzer organs he has played since his college days at the University of Southern California.

Lanterman is the kind of citizen-legislator who has roots in the area he represents and has grown up with its concerns. His grandfather established La Cañada on part of a Mexican land grant in 1876 and he himself recalls the clear, dry air and the days when "We used to go up the valley just to look out to San Pedro and see the Catalina steamer coming around the breakwater thirty miles away."

In addition to working with family business interests, he spent twelve years as a member of the Los Angeles County Republican Central Committee, fighting "for equal representation and a free two-party system."

Water has always been in short supply in the hills around Los Angeles and Lanterman first went to the legislature to seek amendment of the Metropolitan Water District Act to enable his unincorporated area to have access to Metropolitan Water District water without being annexed into a municipality. He stayed to protest Governor Pat Brown's cost estimates for construction of the California Water Plan and to challenge Bay Area objections to the Peripheral Canal plan to speed northern waters to the thirsty south, an issue still unresolved in 1979.

Lanterman was also a vigorous spokesman for education and mental health, issues, like water, that seem never to be fully resolved due to technical innovations, fiscal implications, and shifting public attitudes. Although a bachelor, he speaks feelingly of the problems of the retarded and their families. He mentions briefly the landmark program he authored for regional centers for lifetime care of the developmentally disabled, about which interviews are planned with other key persons in the future.

His influence was probably greatest as a member and vice-chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, from which vantage point he comments sharply on the University of California budget and campus unrest in the 1960s. Like other senior legislators, his narrative ranges beyond the 1953-1966 time span of the present project, giving lively glimpses of his views on the Ronald Reagan and Edmund G. Brown, Jr. administrations.

Three interviews were recorded, between May 1977 and April 1978, in Mr. Lanterman's assembly office, the walls of which were covered with plaques and scrolls of appreciation from various mental health, child development, and other citizen organizations. His aide, Tom Rose, sat in on the interviews, nodding agreement and occasionally putting in a word of his own. The trips to Sacramento provided an opportunity to observe Lanterman in committee, making an effort to listen patiently while freshmen legislators belabored minor points, and on the floor of the assembly, where one person after another went forward to confer with him in seat #1, directly below the speaker's platform.

During this period, Mr. Lanterman was most helpful as an adviser to the overall project, including coauthoring legislation to continue its work. Shortly after his retirement, the Huntington Hartford Library expressed interest in conducting further interviews with him, to go into greater detail on issues he dealt with on the Ways and Means Committee.

Tapes of the interviews were transcribed and rough-edited by the Regional Oral History Office. Mechanical problems with tape #2 required that pages 22-27 of the text be reconstructed by the interviewer from notes taken at the time of the interview. Mr. Lanterman reviewed the transcript, with a request that he check the pages of Interview #2 with special care. He made only a few minor revisions and thanked the office for its attention to detail. The accompanying photograph and article on Mr. Lanterman's retirement were provided by his longtime secretary Helen Myers.

Gabrielle Morris
Interviewer-Editor

12 December 1979
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY



FRANK D. LANTERMAN, Forty-eighth District. Republican. Born in Los Angeles, California, November 4, 1901. Attended grammar and high schools of Los Angeles and Glendale; and the University of Southern California College of Music. Unmarried. Land Developer. Has resided at 4420 Encinas Drive, La Canada since 1914. Member, Kiwanis; Pi Kappa Lambda; La Canada Chamber of Commerce; Red Cross; La Canada Community Chest and Welfare Council; La Canada Church of the Lighted Window—Congregational. Life member, Musician's Local 47. Elected member, Republican Central Committee of Los Angeles County, 1938 to 1950. Elected to Assembly, 1950; re-elected, 1952, 1954. Chairman, Assembly Standing and Interim Committees on Social Welfare, 1953-1954. Member, Standing and Interim Committees on Ways and Means; Finance and Insurance; and Municipal and County Government, 1953-1954.



FRANK D. LANTERMAN
FORTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT



I WATER USE AND FUNDING

[Interview 1: May 2, 1977] ##

Debates of the 1950s

Morris: One of the issues that we came up with in our research was the California Water Plan. That seems to be one of the major issues of the Knight and Brown administrations.

Lanterman: Yes. One of the things that impressed me more than anything about that water plan was the--[discussion about seating]— I started to say, I served on the Water Committee all during the conception of and development of water plan legislation. The issue was just as severely partisan and parochial as it is now being developed. As I pass by the fields being inundated for rice flooding, I think of the question of whether or not you should wash your hands more than twice a day or other idiotic pieces of now pro judgements of that kind, simply because at the time that we started I remember I said on the floor (I voted against the plan)--

Morris: Did you? And you're from the southern part of the state.

Lanterman: I voted against the water plan because the governor was not truthful with the people of the state of California. This will not cost the people of the state of California, quote, "un sou plus, in taxes."

Morris: I had forgotten that.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 62.

Lanterman: Oh, I remember it like it burned into my brain like a branding iron. Because we had had a meeting, a conference meeting of the two water committees (senate and assembly) in Room 4202 with all of the principals involved there to give us a run-down of what we should do. Here we are, where do we go, and how do we do it? And the question was, we agreed that--They said that one billion seven hundred and fifty million was the absolute maximum possible to achieve in a bond issue that the people would buy. We knew very clearly that it would be much closer to two and a half billion than the one seven hundred and fifty. We knew that. It was all laid out for us. And with contingencies--

I had to virtually have a continual barrage of requirements and criticisms as to the inflation factor that was not being built into the estimate. And I said, "Any estimate that you have on inflation is so low that your figures are faulty and not truthful." And I said, "Until you have changed those, and until you assume normal understanding of what inflation will do with delay if you don't have enough money to finish the project in your bond issue, then I don't think I can vote for your bond issue." I said so on the floor.

However, I said, "I think that what you had better remember is that there are those of us from the south who know more about water than you do up here, we have had to live with hard water, we have had to recycle, store and save and scrimp for water. It was in my first and second year that I carried [legislation for] water injection systems to keep underground basin aquifers from being inundated with salt water because they were over-pumped, and the gradient of the lower elevation because of overdraft was sucking in water from the sea." And I said, "We had to get metropolitan Colorado water put into jets and jet it underground to create hydraulic dams to keep that salt water intrusion out."

The area which I come from, in La Cañada--I'm president of the Valley Water Company, a mutual company there, that the family founded, that was subject to a ten-year suit by the City of Pasadena for underground basin control. I knew better than anyone else what a community suffers from absolute curtailment of water by legal means--it was the first adjudicated underground basin in the state of California. It was a landmark decision. We have lived under water master control of the underground basins ever since that time. And that had occurred between 1940 and 1950.

Morris: That soon you knew there were going to be problems?

Lanterman: Oh, yes. Another thing that most people up here don't understand, or hardly understand, is that the Los Angeles County flood control had created spreading grounds on all of their water courses to recapture water downstream that was released from check dams or flood control dams. Instead of the general assumption that we had built concrete channels all the way to the ocean to dispose of our storm water, we were doing everything we knew how upstream from the dams to get spreading basins, to get the water into the underground basin by percolation.

Morris: To get it back into the land.

Lanterman: Yes, you bet. So, we have lived with this conservation, and even recycling down at the Whittier Narrows recycling division facility. We have recycled water and then spread the recycled water, sewage water recycled, into underground spreading reabsorption. We have been through all this. I didn't take very kindly to hear this superior California--superior, self-satisfied, "we know all there is to know about water."

Morris: It's a touchy--

Lanterman: It's a very touchy situation. And when I fly up on the plane and look out at thousands of acres flooded for rice culture, which is a subsidized program by Congress, and then have a young man in the restroom refuse to flush the urinal because this is conservation, I said, "You dimwitted idiot, it's all going down the river anyway, so what the hell. It's all going into the Delta area. It may be diluted a little bit, but you're not giving tertiary treatment to the sewage from this community, you know, from Sacramento."

So, that is just one of the early observations of a man who came up here to get water for his community to allow them to have the right under the Metropolitan Water District Act to have access to membership, without being annexed to the adjoining cities. That was the issue of the independence of the unincorporated territories. If we can do it ourselves, and pay for it ourselves, we are not interested in your assumptions that you can use water as a political weapon to force us to annex.

Metropolitan Water District Act of 1951

Lanterman: I came up here in 1951 for that one reason. It was to get the Municipal Water District Act amended so that this territory could have access by forming a municipal water district without having the old requirement that a municipal water district should contain a city. I said, "This is absolutely idiotic for the simple reason that a municipal water district provides all of the functions of a municipality for the purposes of the use and distribution and acquisition of water." Limited to that one thing.

And I said, "I think that if it's understood how deeply concerned we are with water, I want everybody to be absolutely honest in connection with this project. And to me the device, and the less than full disclosure assumption that you can build it [the California Water Plan] for a billion seven and a half." I said, "You know you can't build it. Tell them you can't build it. Tell them the truth. The people are entitled to be told the truth by their representatives in government."

I think that was the case with many of our problems in Washington. Even when Ike, on the best of advice, lied like a Turk on the first overflight of our U-2, and we got caught with our pants down, so to speak, diplomatically, and were exposed--that is an alliteration that has no particular significance, except that we were exposed. Now, for me, this was one of the basic issues in California. That southern California had done more in the field of water conservation than they ever dreamed up north. The only water conservation you ever had up north, if I may say so and I'm doing it, is federal construction, the Department of Interior.

Now, this all came up under the Warren administration, and I got him to sign the Municipal Water District Act of 1951, which Orange County had to have because they had to have an Orange County water district. They had to have something big enough to function, and much of the county did not have a city in at that time.

Morris: This was in order for Orange County to develop?

Lanterman: To have access to metropolitan water. We had to borrow, beg and steal to get in, because they had closed the doors on us for political purposes.

Morris: Who else were the legislators from that part of the state?

Lanterman: Two of the best known names, and the highest qualified, were Carley Porter whose name was on the act, the Burns-Porter Act, and Harold Levering from Santa Monica, both of whom are now deceased. We served together on the water committees, and were in constant communication. They were very highly qualified men. I remember one thing that interested me very much, was Mr. Levering when he said at one of their hearings--somebody was putting on quite a show of so-called testimony, and he said, "Mr. Chairman, I would like to qualify this witness." By the time he had qualified the witness, he was almost a mountebank, almost a faker, almost unqualified. Now, sometimes it pays to do just this, and I've been doing this ever since. Mr. Levering was a highly, keenly aware--a highly qualified and keenly aware man. He was a businessman, and sharp and incisive, and a superior legislator.

Carley Porter, my dear old friend, and now long gone, he and I virtually put together the Water Quality Control Act, which became a national landmark bill. All that you hear about water control at the federal level was based upon the essence and the fundamental provisions of that act.

Morris: You mentioned that it was the Burns-Porter Act. Would that be Hugh Burns?

Lanterman: Yes. The senator's name by protocol comes first. The brains were in Mr. Porter, however.

Morris: Would Mr. Burns be a good person to talk to about both water and--?

Peripheral Canal

Lanterman: Yes, yes he would. One of the finest brains in the field of water is no longer with us, and that was George Miller from Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County has put up one of the biggest battles of assumed infallibility in the field of access to the water system of the Delta. There are men down there with the Contra Costa water agency and others that have made a continued living for the last quarter of a century out of that issue. Yes, it's a business.

Morris: You feel that it's a profession?

Lanterman: Yes, yes, yes. Let me digress to the point that we had a hearing about six months ago at the Metropolitan Water District, a hearing put on by the Water Resources Agency to illustrate their proposals for alternatives to the Peripheral Canal, because that is the key that turns everybody on in the Bay Area. Actually, you must understand that the Peripheral Canal is the only solution to controlled flow through the Delta of all of the water from all of the watersheds feeding into the delta. It is the only metering device we have, even as a concept, as a potential, it is the only way we can keep millions of acre feet flowing uncontrolled at periods not needed or necessary for salt intrusion control due to the tidal subsidences, and the tidal flows--incoming and ebb tides.

Now, at the Peripheral Canal [hearing], we were getting an exposition of what alternatives there were. Each alternative is an expediency to avoid the full construction, simply by dint of political pressure from the Delta area, the surrounding Delta area. It is a cause celebre, it is a holy of holies, it is beyond doubt, even common sense will not prevail to discuss the Peripheral Canal. They start screaming immediately, and dancing up and down, and doing an Indian war dance, simply because they say this is an unheard-of intrusion into our rightful access to all the water.

Now, let me ask you in speaking of water, and I'm giving you an exposition from the south that has a perspective of twenty-seven years. Shasta, Oroville, and Folsom were the only reasons why we had any water at all during this drought [of 1977], because we had storage. Water conservation is storage, with capital letters, emblazoned in gold, written in letter of gold: storage. You do not have a reserve unless you have storage. And the question then was, with less than half capacity in those storage reservoirs, what are we facing, of course, at this time? And I looked out on the fields and saw all these thousands of acres of subsidized rice being flooded, and they're telling us don't ask for a drink of water unless it's necessary. That is hoop-la.

Morris: You come back to the subsidies. Was Congress and the federal government--?

Lanterman: Yes. Your representatives have just succeeded in reinstating a cent and a half, as I recall it, on the rice subsidy that had been cut by the peanut vendor, our present president.

Rose: Per pound?

Lanterman: No, no. Well, whatever the measure is, I don't know. One and a half cents is the subsidy they--It was eight something, and the president had cut it down to six and a half.

Economic and Environmental Concerns

Lanterman: Now, water then is the gold of California since Sutter. Water is the wealth of the Central Valley.

Morris: Because of its relation to agriculture?

Lanterman: Of course. And so, when we have well-meaning, self-centered, selfish, environmentally inclined people who would rather ride down white water on a raft than they would store the water for storage reserve, I get almost incoherent with anger. And what was done by the designation of the Eel, and the Mad and the Van Dusen, as wild rivers by Senator Behr? This couldn't have happened to a more fiendish guy.

Morris: Than Senator Behr?

Lanterman: Absolutely. They didn't have enough water to have a shower with over there [in Marin County, Senator Behr's home] until we piped in some surplus water--there was no surplus but we denied water to southern Californians and said, "You go out." We did this voluntarily. "You pump everything you can get out of the Colorado," which costs us through the nose because of the lift required for the Colorado. That water is seven hundred parts plus per million solids, salts, and minerals. What I'm saying is, we are doing it the hard way, and the boys up here flood the fields for subsidized rice.

Now look, there is a difference, any balance of values isn't there in priorities. And I just say, "Go to hell with your rice because that's part of the agricultural income, but it's a subsidy income, and it's being sent to where? Korea."

Morris: The rice is for export?

Lanterman: Yes, you bet. We don't use enough rice to excuse having a couple of garden patches of rice. But nevertheless, my interest then through all of this period has been to see that we had some balanced judgement in the treatment of our water. We can no longer afford to allow those wild rivers of the northern slopes to tear all of the soil away from their banks, and deposit it

- Lanterman: out into deltas of mud and silt at the mouths of the rivers. We can't afford this. This is horrible. And what we said was, we must establish these rivers as the supply in case of shortage. Now, that was the Water Plan, and when they put the plug in it, and said, "No construction of flood control or dam support for the next twelve years," wasn't it ironic that we ran into this cycle which could have been projected if they'd had an ounce of brains?
- Rose: The drought could have been projected?
- Lanterman: Yes, we could have projected the cycles of drought. We know what they were. They've gone right through here just like this, just like landmarks.
- Morris: Would this be people in the Resources Department that--?
- Lanterman: No, they bought it. This was a legislative, shall we call it, operation. But nevertheless, I opposed it mightily. I went down there and pounded on Governor Reagan's desk. I said, "I don't think you people have enough brains to come in out of the rain if you're going to do a thing like this. We know what the cycles are going to be, and you cannot allow this [wild river legislation] to go through because of some environmentalists who are trying to give you some flapdoodle that this is what we need."
- Now, recreation is just grand, but if you can't take a bath, it gets a little flaky, doesn't it? [laughs]
- Morris: There seem to be differences of opinion on recreation, because wasn't recreation one of the--
- Lanterman: Who gives a damn about recreation if we are water short?
- Rose: You're really choosing among kinds of recreation. You're choosing further wild river canoes against the other kinds of recreation that take place on the reservoir.
- Lanterman: It's not a canoe, it's rubber rafts. And that was the big fight down there at the Mokelumne. And all of this ecological ecstasy by the environmentalists is carrying the basic concept of conservation of our natural resources to the extreme, where you cause hardship as the result of lack of storage. Now, we can get more storage up in here--just a minute, Tom--we can get more storage up in here off of the rivers, but you just picture the Sacramento River and the American River, and the Consummes, and the other rivers down there flowing through into

Lanterman: the Delta in an unrestricted flow to the sea. Now, that's like leaving the spiggot wide open to get a pailful of water. We just can't have that. That is why the Peripheral Canal, which has come through this thing like a thread all the way through has to be considered as a metering device bypass to control the flow in relation to the need so that water will be conserved by that device.

They said, "All you want to do is divert it to southern California." And I said, "Let's not call it the water plan, let's just call it the 'Italian Slough', that's the bay, (the forebay of the San Luis is the Italian Slough) just call it the Italian Slough Sewage Diversion Project.' That's just about what it amounts to." This then, is one of my concerns and has been all through this period. From Warren right straight through.

I just feel that the environmentalists got carried away with their enthusiasms and their chance to wave a banner in the breeze, and say, "Hey, what a big boy am I. Look what we have done." And I think the time will come when they'll want to back away from it.

Morris: Is it a part of the consumer movement in general?

Lanterman: The only ones who can call it a consumer movement as far as I'm concerned about the storage of water versus recreation, are the recreation consumers. And I'm not interested in their bouncing down a river.

Morris: How about Randolph Collier and Pauline Davis? They were from pretty far up north.

Lanterman: They can give you more of the northern California background on this. I supported Randolph Collier's bill, which was a moderate bill, and a reasonable bill, on the wild river deal, and I said, "He is the senator who represents this district, and I see no reason for this Johnny-jump-up to come up from Marin County [Senator Peter Behr] and say, 'We will do these things,'" because he had the support of the Sierra Club, and a few other well meaning, but over-anxious groups of people.

I've told him to go to hell in seven languages, many times, simply because they are extremists to the detriment of the well-being of the people of California in this issue. I think I know more about it than they do. I don't give a hoot what they think. But, the fact is, I came up here to preserve water, and before I

Lanterman: leave I will do my best to see that we get some kind of consideration in this regard. I can't make a false statement on the thing, or a blatant statement, because I am seventy-five years old last November. I have this session and the next, and that's it. I will not go on beyond that. It isn't possible, it isn't expected.

II COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Modesto State Hospital Problem with Tranquilizers

Lanterman: I really came back for these two reasons. One was to bring some sense into this [water] storage concept, and the other was to see that this governor, the present governor [Edmund G. Brown, Jr.], realized his responsibilities as it related to the mental hospitals, and the handicapped children. And that he refused to do as long as he had a convention to go scalawagging back to, and having extra-territorial political ambitions that were premature, and a false junket.

Morris: You put that very colorfully.

Lanterman: Well, it's meant with the most sincere accuracy I know how to convey. Because he's now parading all over the place, having pictures taken, and PR photos taken of the young people who are volunteering to help. What we needed in the hospitals--

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This was a cause I attached myself to way back in the period of Goodwin Knight when, for some unknown reason (I knew the reason but I'm not going to get too bitter about it) they attacked the competency of the staff in brutality and forceful feeding and regurgitating death down at Modesto [State Hospital]. A group of us, bipartisan, three and three, went down there and put out that fire and told them to get the hell out of there, and to leave that hospital alone.

Morris: Who started the fire?

Lanterman: The senate. And the attorney general's office, under Pat Brown (when he was attorney-general) sent down an investigator to uncover the terrible dilemmas--nothing new about all of this stuff.

Morris: It crops up in legislation over the years.

Lanterman: When you leave things alone, and you divert adequate staffing, and you try and keep patients in a hospital too long, you create what is known for state employees as a false lead, or whatever you want to say.

We had to put out that fire down there simply because it was a political thing. Not enough tranquilizers were being ordered by the then-director of the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Morris: Was this while Frank Tallman was director?

Lanterman: No, no. Dr. Rapaport.* Dr. Rapaport was the superintendent's superintendent. Tallman was an academician.

Morris: That's an interesting distinction.

Lanterman: Dr. Rapaport was a highly qualified and recognized expert in the field of forensic psychiatry. And he's a good personal friend. And I went down to put out that fire as a tribute to a man whom I thought was highly qualified to be the director of the Department of Mental Hygiene, and who had the interests of his patients at heart. The reason he refused to take a big order from one of the big pharmaceutical firms that was trying to peddle it, was because he said, "I will not order all those psychotropic drugs, that volume, until we have tried it in controlled cases to see what the side effects are on the various qualities of patients." This is a medical problem.

Short-Doyle Community Mental Health Services Act, 1957

Morris: Was that issue at Modesto what eventually lead to the Short-Doyle Act?

Lanterman: No, that was another kettle of fish. That was Madame Portia Bell Hume from Berkeley who was the director of social services for the Department of Mental Hygiene. The

*Dr. Walter Rapaport was appointed director of the Department of Mental Hygiene in September, 1957.

Lanterman: reason for that is very simple. Down in Los Angeles we had three outpatient clinics, run and operated by the Department of Mental Hygiene. And they had been there for ten years. They were the ports of call for Norwalk, Patton, and for Metropolitan [state hospitals].

Now, those hospitals were located like the three points of a triangle. They were far remote from the center, and because there were so many patients put into hospitals and kept for such lengths of time, and that was the thing I meant to say and make clear to you, the ever normal granary of warm bodies requires so many employees on a tenured employment. That has been generally the case, where they have kept patients in the big hospitals too long. I'm not talking about the incurables, or the ones who have gone completely beyond recovery, but when you have institutionalized people for a length of time, they can not return to reality--there is no return. It's a point of no return.

These outpatient clinics in Los Angeles became an issue with Alan Post. He said, "Los Angeles County is getting a benefit that no other county is getting, and therefore they should pay fifty percent of the cost." That was your fifty percent concept of Short-Doyle. You understand, purely economic. It was a necessary adjunct to the hospitals because they were so far away you had to have an outpatient clinic for patients who needed to come and get reoriented temporarily, even for day care, where they could be taken care of.

Morris: It was intended as an outgrowth of the hospital--

Lanterman: They were service stations.

Morris: --rather than to keep people in the community so that they didn't have to go to the hospital?

Lanterman: It was patients who had been released from the hospitals, who had to have these service stations. So there was nothing new then about Madame Portia Bell. She just said, "Well, I think then in view of the cost figure it should be seventy-five, twenty-five, and we'll have to have set up outpatient clinics through the county, by the advice of the county government, and we will contract for this purpose to set up outpatient clinics."*

* In 1963, the Short-Doyle Act was amended to raise state reimbursement to seventy-five percent for services started by cities and counties prior to October, 1965.

Lanterman: It was perfectly obvious to me at the end of ten years that what they needed more than anything was inpatient clinics at the local level, so that they did not have to go to the state hospitals to be rescued, to be sent back to outpatient clinics. Now, anybody who knew anything at all about the European system, those that don't have big mental hospitals, they have small community facilities, you cannot return people to reality unless they're at home. They need a home base to have reference to. And so, with the experience we had in Los Angeles County with the psychiatric wards at the hospital (they were way ahead of all the rest of the counties since, due to their size, they could afford it--)

[telephone interruption]

Lanterman: I just said, with our experience in Los Angeles we found that they needed more screening when they came than afterwards. What you need is diagnostic evaluation of a patient and his needs to begin with. Isn't that what every doctor does? Isn't that what everyone should do where there's a health problem involved? What is the nature and the extent of the disability?

That was Los Angeles County's experience, that screening made it unnecessary to send a lot of them to state hospitals. Los Angeles County also said, "We will not send seniles by commitment to a state hospital, to the back wards of a state hospital. We think that the rest of the counties are ripping off this cost by making the state pay for what is often an inappropriate and illegal commitment. Because they were not with psychosis, it was simply a deterioration of age. Senility is a borderline thing, and they can become obstreperous, and all that, but they're not serious. They're just meant to be taken care of locally in Los Angeles. Los Angeles County had done so with sanitarium care.

Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, 1967, and Amendments

Lanterman: So, I got involved with this thing, and I said, "This has got to stop." And so, out of it came a report from Los Angeles in 1966 that was the product of eight months of seminars, of psychologists, psychiatrists, medical staff, nursing staff, and technical advisers and social workers in the field of the care that they had experienced in Los Angeles County's psychiatric ward. And out of it came this proposal [AB 1220] which was basically the assumption of the rudiments of

Lanterman: inpatient care at the local level that became LPS, or the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act.* Only we couldn't get the counties to adopt it because they had had a bad experience with Short-Doyle at fifty percent and seventy-five percent.

We were in the process of raising that to ninety percent when I had to hijack Short's bill [SB 677]. With his consent, we got Senator Short to allow us to reimpose our bill which had been defeated in the Senate Government Efficiency [Committee], simply because George Miller's personal physician didn't want any part of it.

Now, that's what I've had to fight, and actually we then went through a series of improvements in the act, et cetera, and never getting funding, never getting adequate funding--

Morris: In the budget?

Lanterman: Yes. In the contract with the counties the 90-10 [reimbursement formula] was never really, truly implemented. The state hospitals ripped off the cream for so-called maintenance, and the local care got the leavings. If there's been any criticism of the standard of local care, it was because it was not fully implemented. I just got through talking with Roy Bell this morning, and he said, "I think I have conveyed unmistakably to the Department of Health and those involved, that the dollar must follow the patient. If he leaves the hospital, the dollars of that hospital care must follow into the community to maintain a standard of care equal to if not superior to the hospital."

* The 1966 report by the Assembly Subcommittee on Mental Health Services was critical of then-existing judicial procedures for commitment to state hospital of persons alleged to be mentally ill and recommended as a substitute for hospitalization, a community-based system of emergency service units. As passed, on the last day of the 1967 legislative session, the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act made major changes in commitment procedures. Most of the provisions concerning the proposed new community-based mental health services had been deleted, although many were adopted in subsequent sessions. See Eugene Bardach, The Skill Factor in Politics, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972.

Morris: Roy Bell is somebody else--

Lanterman: Director of Finance.

Morris: --on our list of potential interviewees.

Lanterman: He knows everything there is to know, dear.

Morris: Good. Could he explain it--

Lanterman: He could explain perhaps financially to you, but I'm just saying the skulduggery of my having to deal with a determined California State Employees' Association that did not want the hospitals reduced in patient load--and understand we closed Modesto and De Witt [hospitals] on the advice and guidance and insistence of Alan Post.

This was not Governor Reagan, this was the legislature through Alan Post, and he proved to us conclusively that these hospitals were a mishmash of various kinds of treatment and just a repository for local use. And we said then, "Well, we'd better return to a local program and adequately fund it."

But we've never been able to get the fact through to anybody that non-hospital board and care in the community costs, instead of one-third the cost of hospital care in the community, nearly the full amount minus a small amount for overhead of the hospital. That should have all followed the patient into adequate community care program and cure. And that has not been developed. I have had to fight like a banshee to try and do it, and this is my last year and a half to try and bring it to a head.

Now, the department has come up with a proposal that we have satellite hospitals. Anything to get state employees back to work. And I said, "Look, you can't run your other hospitals, not worth a dime. They're underfunded, understaffed, and you have acquiesced to it. In fact, insisted upon it. And that is around your neck, not the legislature's." And so, from water to mental health.

Programs for Developmentally Disabled and Budget Problems

- Morris: That is quite an interesting combination. And then there is Ways and Means.
- Lanterman: Ways and Means I have used--I have been on the Ways and Means Committee for handling these cases, and handling these people-oriented problems of service, corrections and welfare, and mental health, and the developmentally disabled. And I had to fight like a demon to get the thirty-eight hundred series [sections of the Welfare and Institutions Code] through, which spelled out in full, completely, the developmentally disabled program that we should be having in this state. And I am now getting them to agree to rates that are adequate to care for these children in community facilities. They made me take this out of the bills in order to get the bills passed.
- Morris: Who made you take it out?
- Lanterman: The governor's office, the department. The governor's office was up here on the day before closing, and said, "Frank, these things will have to come out that have any reference to standards of staffing in hospitals."
- Morris: Is this the same kind of pressure--?
- Lanterman: This is the dollar following the patient. And economics are such that they inherited a surplus that would choke a horse. And they are not really telling you the entire truth of that surplus. It's much bigger than they say. And so, all I can say to you is, it has been accumulated by devious devices. Marching orders for political consumption, the great economist, which was simply wrecking that which we had by underfunding. Which is really sad.

When they forced Dr. Rapaport out of office, because it was politically too hot to handle, we got a kook from back East to come out here. [Daniel] Blain, he wasn't worth the powder to blow him up, and it wasn't until we got Dr. Lowry that we reorganized our departments, and we have had a pretty good operation of the hospitals up through the period--through to the close of Pat [Brown].

But Pat would not financially be responsible, for his third term effort, adequately to fund our state exchequer. As a

Lanterman: result of his defeat, the state faced absolute insolvency. This is no exaggeration. I went all through it and I know. I tried to get him to adopt a cigarette tax that would have paid enough to make our cash liquidity for the accrual accounting valid. And he wouldn't do it: Don't put in a tax, you can't have a tax, you can't have a tax.

Actually, when Reagan came in, he said, "It isn't as bad as I thought it was, it's worse. We are absolutely insolvent. We must meet these obligations." And they temporized through until we raised eight hundred and twenty million dollars in a new tax bill. And it's the growth factor of those taxes of the '67 tax bill that have made it possible to accumulate the present surplus.

Morris: You're saying then that the legislature doesn't have that much control over the budget that the governor proposes.

Lanterman: No. He has the last word. The fact is, in 1970 I gave the governor, Governor Reagan--I was the chairman of the conference committee--we sent down to him (either '69 or '70, I'm just a little doubtful about that) the first budget in which the governor did not blue pencil one item. He said, "Frank, this is historic. How did you do it?" I said, "We did it because we worked at it and we had to."

So, it can be done, but we had no alternative. Now, we're facing the Serrano-Priest decision over schools, and one school bill wants to put a lot of money in the hands of the local boards for bargaining table/teachers relationships, and the other wants to pay off the state's obligation of school support. That's the difference between the two bills.

The bill that I'm supporting, Mr. Greene's bill--it's the governor's program--has special ed. laid out to be made general in five years time.

Morris: Wasn't Jerome Waldie also interested in special ed. when he was in the legislature?

Lanterman: Sure, yes. Jerome Waldie was the real stemwinder, along with myself and Petris. The three of us, the three musketeers, out of the Ways and Means Committee, to start the first regional center concept for San Francisco and Los Angeles, to provide an alternative to hospital commitment for life. And I developed it through then finally into the thirty-eight hundred series.

Lanterman: Hopefully they will not decimate it. But, they're doing their darndest with this hospital, satellite hospital concept which has not even been approved in principle, or by theory, or given a legislative hearing at this late date. And I just said, "I will not support it."

III LEGISLATIVE LEADERS OF OTHER YEARS AND DEMOCRATIC MAJORITIES

- Morris: There is another name that goes back a long way. When you mentioned Alan Post I thought of it. Ben Hulse.
- Lanterman: No, no, he passed away some years ago, dear.
- Morris: That's too bad.
- Lanterman: Yes. And so did Hatfield, all of those. Mr. Collier can talk to you about those people. He knew them much more than I did. Not Randolph but John, John Collier. Because he's been here longer than I have. He was a close personal friend and confidante of those. I used to sit at the round table at the old Sacramento Hotel, where Hatfield and Hulse and all of the old bulls of the senate sat, and they wouldn't allow anybody to approach that table for breakfast that had anything to do with the lobbying thing at all, you just keep away. This was the round table of the leadership, and it was a very important piece of business. There was an awful lot of difficult adjustments made at that table in the morning. And I was privileged to sit at that table.
- Morris: That must have been quite an honor.
- Lanterman: It was for a freshman. They just said, "Frank, you are our people, so let's go."
- Morris: Does John Collier live in Sacramento by any chance?
- Lanterman: He lives right over here at the Francisco Apartments. He has a home down in his district, but he stays up here almost entirely.
- Morris: Do you think he would be interested in talking with us?

- Lanterman: Oh, I think he would love to talk to you. And Vince Thomas from San Pedro has been here longer than any of us. He's been here for over thirty years. Thirty-three or -four years.
- Morris: And his special area of interest?
- Lanterman: Fighting the city of Los Angeles for annexing San Pedro. That was the first shoestring strip annexation. The old city attorney worked out this thing where it didn't say you couldn't, so he went right down the road, right-of-way, and annexed the shoestring strip down to the harbor. Took over Wilmington and San Pedro.
- Morris: Oh, good heavens.
- Lanterman: So as to have a harbor for Los Angeles.
- Morris: And I have Luther Lincoln.
- Lanterman: Luther Lincoln is still alive and functioning. I can't tell you where he's located right now.
- Morris: He didn't go back to Alameda County?
- Lanterman: I don't think so. Donald Doyle of the Short-Doyle Act is a very prominent and successful insurance man in the Bay Area.
- Morris: Did he stay in touch with the legislature when he--?
- Lanterman: Yes, he comes back and forth on occasion.
- Morris: And keeps a hand in on the mental health legislation?
- Lanterman: Yes. No, no, he just sort of left it up to me. Actually, the mental health thing locally became so under-financed, Mr. Petris said he wished he had never voted for it, but that's because Alameda County has such a problem--and the fact that we couldn't get the funding, he got the idea that the act was faulty. The act was not faulty. The act was essentially a sound concept. You return your patient to his home environment as quickly as possible, and you keep an investigation for all those in the hospital, and give them a yearly review so that nobody can just stay there and stay there as they used to in the old days.
- Morris: We also have a mention that John McCarthy was the Republican leader in the senate. Now do you recall--

- Lanterman: Jack. Yes, he's still down there, I think. I don't know whether he's still alive or not. Bob, his brother, was the one I think who died.
- Morris: One was from San Francisco, and the other one was from--
- Lanterman: Well, they were all from Marin County, dear.
- Morris: I see. Was he important in some of these legislative developments?
- Lanterman: Yes, he was. He was quite a leader. Both the boys.
- Morris: And then we have Robert Monagan.
- Lanterman: Bob Monagan is a fine source because he was Speaker of the House when I was chairman of the Ways and Means.
- Morris: So the two of you would have worked pretty closely then.
- Lanterman: Oh yes, very close.
- Morris: And it helps if you're both in the same party?
- Lanterman: Well, that was the basic reason I was chairman because we were in the same party. During the Reagan administration, he had a majority of one in each house once. All the rest of the time it was a Democrat majority.
- Morris: Would that be kind of a trend during your years in the Assembly?
- Lanterman: Well, it was a trend in the manner in which they were financed and promoted, let me tell you that. You have to understand that the last two years, the California Teachers' Association, California's employees' association, and the AF of L, virtually have dictated the membership here, by their financial support. All you have to do is get a copy of the top nine contributors of funds for the campaign. That would be very interesting.
- Morris: When did that kind of a pattern begin to be evident would you say?
- Lanterman: It fell apart when Reagan vetoed the assembly reapportionment bill, and that opened the door for the courts then to make the reapportionment, and they just turned it over to a bunch of Democrat lawclerks and that's what we got. The Republicans were reduced from thirty-seven down to twenty-five, and we're

Lanterman: now down to twenty-three. And it is not productive of good legislation to have a lop-sided membership in the house. Conflict, argument, debate, and compromise are the anvils of good legislation.

Morris: I must say I like the way you phrase things. We've just come to the end of the tape, and you've got more immediate things to do.

IV PERSONAL BACKGROUND, VIEWS ON EDUCATION

[Interview 2: February 14, 1978]##

University of California Entry Standards

Morris: You were talking about the current questions about University of California entry standards in relation to your own experience. Can we get that on tape?

Lanterman: I believe that the University of California admission standards should be of the highest quality. The recent decision of the regents to raise entry standards is as it should be and I admire Superintendent Riles for supporting it.

For Jerry Brown to challenge it is a political decision. There is a piece on his reaction to it in the Sacramento Union that is filled with buzzwords that to me smack of cynical opportunism. If the students applying are poorly prepared, that's another question. That should be dealt with in other ways. But to lower standards of the University is using entry standards to do the work of affirmative action.

Half of the kids today can't write and yet there are complaints about having to take bonehead English classes. When I was at USC, I took bonehead English, even though I'd been well-prepared and I found there were still things I could learn in it. We don't expect enough from the students. And as for reading--do you know that silent films taught many people to read? Following those subtitles was speed reading for fun for those kids. They learned fast--they had to, to understand what they were watching--by matching the action to the words. The advent of sound films was one good reason for all the fuss about Why Johnny Can't Read.

Silent Films and Music Studies

Morris: You used to play the piano for silent movies, didn't you?

Lanterman: All the way through college. I worked up my own programs for every show, matched what I played to what the movie was about. And part of every show was a community sing, with the words to the songs on the screen. That gave them more practice in reading that people weren't even aware they were getting.

Morris: I remember the little bouncing ball over the words.

Lanterman: Those days were a very productive era in American life. When we started to make distinctions and put students into special categories, we began to cause problems. Passing sentence on them by labelling them can be deadly. At the same time, they're handicapped by not having proper preparation and without understanding of what it is they need.

They have to be articulate for today's world. And they write like they were nine-year-olds--their script. For the most part it's so juvenile that it looks like a nine-year-old --great big fat letters and not always--isn't that true?

Morris: I have seen that.

Lanterman: It looks almost immature for a grown youngster, say eighteen or nineteen, and some older. I can point to some people immediately; they don't write legibly. It looks strained.

Morris: Did you study education? Did you plan to be a teacher at one time?

Lanterman: No, Just an old codger with ideas.

Actually, I served on the joint committee that created the first review of California education, in 1958.

Morris: Was that the one that created the master plan?

Lanterman: Yes.

Morris: Let me back up a minute. How did you get to be the organist in the--?

Lanterman: Music was my major. And the organ inspired me to do other than to play Bach. I used to go to the home of one of the recognized choirmasters and organists of the old school in Los Angeles.

Lanterman: I'd go there and practice on the little organ in the home. This one was a small organ in her residence. When I'd come, she'd come down and open the doors to the living room and say, "Mr. Lanterman, I just love to have you come and play. I get so damn sick and tired of Batches Fewjes."

Because I used to improvise a lot. In fact, I'd just spend too much time doing creative things with my fingers and that followed through to the point where I was more theatrical than artistic.

Morris: You didn't like Batches Fewjes?

Lanterman: Well, I considered that for the birds. Great music, wonderfully contrived, musical architecture with carved stone traceries that you don't do now. And who ever listens to it now? Unless it is played dramatically, there's just a series of architectural notes, following one another. They don't follow the structure at all. They just listen for anything they recognize as the outline of a melody.

Bach had some great melodies. In the G Minor--[declaims a few notes]. Almost like a jig. But it's big and it's melodic. And the big D Minor, which everybody says, "Uuuu," and they groan--great piece of dramatic writing. When you stop to consider the period in which he wrote, this was dramatic writing. This was theatrical music in an ecclesiastical era. And the organs didn't lend themselves to that too well. They were pretty ponderous because they didn't have enough wind power to have anything but low pressure pipes speaking.

Because of the low wind pressure, you couldn't write music for the pipes with harmonics. So they had to supply those automatically and mechanically by having mixtures, the harmonics speaking on each note--a combination harmonics. That's called a mixture. For the most part it was pretty much of a mixture, I can assure you. It would get pretty dissonant and they'd play chords on it and all you'd get is a whole series of unrelated harmonics that at least gave some color to a very drab performance. The organ itself was just short of sour. It was on tune, but it sounded dull. It didn't have any pizzazz to it. It didn't have any harmonic structure that inspired you to listen for the coloration.

And so, on occasion he'd let fly and say, "I can't stand this any longer." and write something very melodic and very dramatic. I mean the structure harmonically in polyphonic writing, it was magnificent. Nobody has ever

Lanterman: achieved anything like it, with the facility that he had. But it's a good deal like Brahms, Mahler, Beethoven, the great German period of romantic, dramatic music that had so much protein in it, of musical substance, and the orchestration of it was so beautiful that if you can't enjoy that, you can't enjoy anything.

The other night I listened to some Stravinsky and it was an accomplishment in dissonance that may have had a justification from the standpoint of theory. But I'd rather listen to Bach than listen to him, because Bach made some sense and all he's making is a concordance of dissonance.

Morris: Did you come from a musical family?

Lanterman: My dad loved music. My mother couldn't carry a tune if it had a handle, neither could my brother. But music to me--I just loved the organ, so I became seduced. The Wurlitzer to me was far more colorful than all the concert organs you could build and put more pipes in. You could get thunderous and pontifical. I notice that all the organs they're putting in the University now are the classic baroque design for polyphonic playing, just as though there was no other organ available. And it annoys the hell out of me.

Growing up in La Cañada

Morris: Did you grow up in La Canada. La Cañada?

Lanterman: Thank you. With the tilde over the n. La Cañada is for the birds and for Iowans and Okies. That Spanish heritage is illustrious. La Cañada, of course, is an interpretation that I feel is more poetic than for real. In some Spanish dictionaries they call it a gully.

But the utilization of the Spanish heritage, Mexican, Indian, army of occupation to sustain and protect the missions --that's our heritage in California. It is a tradition of color, the same as New York and Pennsylvania; the Dutch; they are very proud of the pronunciation of their historic names. Particularly, what was it--Nieuw Amsterdam. So we all have color, but Californians' major heritage is Spanish-American. I'm very proud of it and I hate to see it unappreciated.

Morris: Were there Mexicans in your community?

Lanterman: Oh yes, yes. We raised several wetback children that our laundress brought up because they had no means of getting an education. She would smuggle 'em in and they would be put through our grammar school without benefit of bilingual programs. And because they have to learn, they did. I remember one such family. The mother was determined to raise them well; the father made very little farming.

Morris: Oh my.

Lanterman: It started even then. She had a lovely family and her husband adored her and they wanted their children to get an education. Their teachers expected them to learn and they did learn.

I get so sick and tired of some of these present demands and the way they're made. When I was making appointments to the joint committee to review education, those were the kind of people I named. And then, after they had given their time and thought to the committee, there were a lot of changes in the final report, a lot of changes that they didn't like.

One of them was my former high school coach who later was principal of the high school, another was a man in building and loan, Glendale Savings. And he was very disappointed in the final report. You would think that their opinions would stand for something, my conservative appointments of the old school, bread and butter citizens, but no, not them.

[short section of tape untranscribable]

Lanterman: . . . I don't agree with a lot of this modern dewy-eyed theoretical stuff, like Helen Heffernan coming before the committee and saying, "I plead with you--" for some kind of experimental preschool program. In any event, she got what she wanted. So, that was my original interest in education.

Later, when I was a member of the Revenue and Taxation Committee under Tom McBride, he's now a justice of the appellate court--very solid, intelligent person. At that time we were having hearings in San Francisco. I'd listened long enough and I said, "Look, the state colleges are fighting among themselves for money and for expansions. And the University is fighting them, for dollars and for prestige. I'm sick and tired of this eternal bickering and this fight for the almighty dollar. What they need is a referee, and it should be the legislature.

Morris: Before we get past it, where did you go to school, high school?

Lanterman: North Normal.

Morris: Do you happen to know why teacher training institutions used to be called normal schools?

Lanterman: I don't know the origin. All I know is that it was a teacher training institution that started UCLA. Part of it was the old Edison Building at Sixth and Grand Avenue in Los Angeles. It was an old red brick fortress, very foreboding looking type of building, drab architecture. So I go back too far.

It was the high school and normal school. Then the normal school went out to Vermont and Melrose as a state college. . . . But it was a member of the legislature who was later a member of the board of supervisors who passed the bill creating it, which later became the University of California at Los Angeles. The University wouldn't allow it and when it later became the University of California at Los Angeles, it was a branch. And the old copycats up at Berkeley were so impressed by their infallibility of judgement that they thought of it as a poor relation. Like a community college, junior college.

We had a junior high school then; I liked junior high school and the little Hooper Grammar School I went to. The intermediate school had been started by John Francis, superintendent of schools in Los Angeles at that time.

Morris: When you were growing up, was La Cañada part of Los Angeles city administration?

Lanterman: No way. I fought for twenty-six years up here to prevent the city from moving in and taking it over. I said, "Go to hell." They created an issue over water, water bonds.

Pioneer Grandparents and Parents

Lanterman: My grandfather established the community in 1876 when he and his partners bought five thousand and some acres of a Mexican grant. That land grant had originally been given to Don Jose Verdugo in reward for his services. He was one of the defenders of the San Gabriel Mission, St. Gabriel. And that grant stretched all along the area that looked down over the valley and he named our area La Cañada, with a hard d. They said th.

Morris: That pronunciation is Castilian.

Lanterman: That's Castilian. Sure.

Morris: Did you grow up speaking Spanish?

Lanterman: No. Took two years of it. That was enough, to have a smattering.

Morris: Had your grandfather--?

Lanterman: Grandfather was a retired dentist from East Lansing [Michigan]. He lived at the foot of Capitol Avenue in East Lansing and it was right down beside the river and he had bronchitis. They told him he'd die within a year, so they came to California lock, stock, and barrel. Pioneers, came out on the prairie. And then they tried every place to find a dry climate and they couldn't, so they came to La Cañada which had a little outpost sanitarium there, Dunk's Sanitarium high up in the valley. . .

It was land that was railroad land, where every other acre belonged to the railroad, you know. Section land. They came up there and took a look at it and the air was so clear and so dry because the land was washed by the breezes, so it was cool during the day. It came up through the pass and so it was just a constant flow from the bay. In those days, you could see, on a clear day, Catalina. We used to go up the valley on Sundays just to look out to San Pedro, and you could see the Catalina steamer coming around the breakwater, the plume of the smoke from the steamer. You could see the water sparkle and that was thirty miles away.

Morris: So you knew your grandfather?

Lanterman: Oh, sure. He died in 1908. That was when I was seven years old.

Morris: He would have come to California relatively young?

Lanterman: You would imagine so. He came out in '76.

Morris: So he bought the land.

Lanterman: He and his partners bought the land. They were going to raise cattle. They didn't know anything about all this and they had a freeze and a drought and a few other things. The retired army colonel who bought it with Grandfather, who was a retired dentist, wanted Grandfather to do all the work. Grandfather said, "I'm too old for this kind of thing." So they dissolved the partnership and they whacked up the land into two-hundred-acre lots and ran a street through the middle of it, called it Michigan Avenue, and that name survived until just a few years ago.

Lanterman: Many of the titles of land still refer to subdivisions of Rancho La Cañada, resellers and resellers and resellers. Two hundred acres was the basic plot size. We built [our family home] in 1912, '13, and '14; it took two years to build. It's concrete. Dad and Mother laid the thing out with strings on the ground. They'd decide this room wasn't big enough, so they'd stretch it out. It's got about eight thousand square feet in it now.

Morris: Sounds like a ranch house.

Lanterman: Well, it was one of the first big reinforced concrete homes in Southern California. We have a ballroom in it, goes across the top of the house, for which the house was not engineered and the walls began to spread and we had to put tie irons across the top, keep the walls apart. So it was just an afterthought. Everything else was downstairs. A typical patio design, with the bedrooms on one side and the living room, billiard room, dining room, breakfast room, and kitchen--all in white tile six feet up, looks like an operating room--on the other.

Morris: And a big patio in the middle?

Lanterman: Yes.

Morris: Did you and your brother help build the house?

Lanterman: We were kids. It was 1913, I was twelve; well, one year younger than the date. My brother's five years older. I was just about to go to high school.

We went to Borendo Intermediate. I told you we had intermediate schools in Los Angeles and that was created by John Francis. The grammar school, K through eight, had to give; they had to do something. So they created out of the old Borendo Elementary School an intermediate. They built an auditorium, and they heated the place by pot-bellied stoves with coal alongside of it. It was a fine old school. Rose Hardenburg was the principal and she was a very lovely, generous woman, grandmotherly type gal, who had a hard nose for business and discipline. She ran a fine institution and that was grades seven, eight, and nine. They did a lot of things there.

Morris: Was the elementary school still in the same building?

Lanterman: No, they moved all of that out and created an intermediate. That's where I got my start in Spanish and geometry and chemistry. We had all of those things. It was a very good experience.

Lanterman: The other experimental school was Santuces. As you go by on the freeway, Harbor Freeway, heading south, before you cross Pico, there's a little building sitting down there, looks very strange, that's old Santuces Intermediate School. Now that was one of the first experiments.

Mother was in those days corresponding secretary of the PTA. She was one of the first to go down to the old Castilar Street School at the corner of Castilar Street and College, across from the French Hospital. It's all been torn down now, it was one of the old sections.

We had a lot of Russian immigrant children and they were poverty-stricken. Mother and her group went down and served the first hot lunch to these children, because they had no food. It was one of the first hot lunch programs in any school. . . [short section untranscribable] So that's the early history of my knowledge and background on these educational things.

Morris: For the record, could you tell us your mother's and father's names? Was your mother raised in La Cañada too?

Lanterman: My mother's maiden name was Emily Folsom. She grew up in Santa Monica, though she was born in Washington, D.C. Her uncle, Commodore Webb, was commandant of the naval yard at Portsmouth, Virginia. Her father, Edward Channing Folsom, was a doctor who graduated from Harvard.

My father's name was Roy Stanley Lanterman.

Morris: Did your father being a physician have anything to do with your own interest as a legislator in services for the mentally ill and the mentally retarded?

Lanterman: No, not his being a physician per se so much as his compassionate nature and his humanitarian principles of service to people.

Morris: Had your father gone to any of the same schools you did?

Lanterman: My father, as a very young man, a very small boy--nine years old --used to ride his pinto pony for seven or eight miles along the edge of Verdugo Canyon to the confluence with another canyon debris wash at Chevy Chase in what is now Glendale, to a little one-room adobe school. The road would wash out in the rains, but the school was on high ground. It was part of the old Sepulveda grammar school district. A few years later my grandfather organized the La Cañada grammar school district and that became the only grammar school other than Sepulveda serving the Glendale area, which was then just rolling open country.

Lanterman: When I first came up here, one day a little, white-haired, quite aged and infirm gentleman stopped at my desk and introduced himself: "My name is Levering." He had something to do with printing for the state. And he said, "Are you any relation to Roy Lanterman?" And I said, "Are you any relation to my father's old teacher, Sally Levering?" You never saw anything like this old gentleman--tears and emotion: "How did you know that?" He was so touched.

I said, "Sally was a household word in our home, and on regular occasions my father used to tell us about the time she gave them an assignment to stand up in class and read aloud, and she gave my father Whittier's "Snow Bound" to read. He came to the line, "It snows, cried the Belle." And he pronounced the last "e" and the class shrieked with laughter and my father was so chagrined, he gritted his teeth and thought, "I'll read everything if it kills me." [laughter]

I know my father, in telling me these things, also told me he went to McFarran's Academy in Los Angeles in lieu of a high school. It was a private school. Then he took his pre-medic at USC when it was in just one building, Whitney Hall, which has now been taken over by the alumni association. It's just a typical wooden, clapboard-overlapping house, almost looks colonial. They've maintained it beautifully and it's now all pristine enamel and trim. It's a lovely little jewel of a building. That sat out in a meadow, a barnyard and meadow, a field. Just beyond was the county fairground, which is now the Coliseum and Exposition Park.

But they had the race track with the grandstand and the fairground and the horse barns and the school was beyond that. The only way you got out there from downtown Los Angeles, mud and board sidewalks, early, early, early on was on a mule car that went out on little tracks with this little junky car with a mule pulling it. Now this goes back a long way.

Valley Water Company

Lanterman: I am of the soil and I came up here to get water for our community because the City of Pasadena sued us for underground water rights that they had pre-empted as a city, that actually belonged to the rancho as a riparian right, to the rancho's entitlement. My grandfather had never considered it that important to fight for because they were farmers (they had a lot

Lanterman: of citrus in those days) and they had enough water from the gravity flow of Pickens Canyon that my grandmother had insisted my father buy the rights to from the old settler, Colonel Pickens, who settled up there on this section land.

He bought the rights to Pickens Canyon and the gravity flow and the tunnels up there for mountain water and they created the first water system for the community of redwood flumes and concrete piers. Then they had a series of reservoirs across the top of the community that people had entitlement to as long as water was available. . .

Morris: Would that have been the Valley Water Company, of which you have been a director?

Lanterman: That was the Valley Water Company. We had been providing good service to our customers for a number of years and then Pasadena developed to the point where they were looking around for additional water supplies and they looked to our area and decided to try to tap our aquifer, which is the underground catchment area that covers a large area there.

And so, to put a stop to that, I went to the legislature and got the Metropolitan Water District Act passed. I can remember a delegation of us going to see the governor about it. We were there in Warren's office and what he wanted to know was, "Is this a good bill?" When I assured him that it was, he had no problem about supporting it and signing it.

Of course, since then there have been others who wanted access to our water. They have tried the annexation route, which we have voted down locally. When that doesn't work, they try annexation by taxation for services provided by special districts. So we finally became an incorporated area to protect ourselves. It wasn't their attitude we objected to so much as their attitude.

Morris: [laughter] The tape is just about ended. Let me turn it over.

Lanterman: Yes. You say that what I'm saying is oral history. Is this all right?

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V COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND THE
LEGISLATURE

Coordinating Council on Higher Education

Lanterman: There was another time when I had occasion to be very much involved with the university, when we had to reorganize the Coordinating Council on Higher Education. It had become a captive committee, dominated by Hitch [president of the University of California] and Dumke [chancellor of the state college system]. UC was trying to dump anything it saw as inimical to the university and saying that the legislature was not competent to tell the university what it should be.

Morris: You felt that the UC representatives had too much say on the Coordinating Council?

Lanterman: I felt that when you serve on a committee like that, you're paid to dominate it. I said they should both be off. Vasconcellos said I was being paranoid, but I insisted. I said it was time for a face to face meeting. We had a Chinese member then, what was his name, a local man. I said, "The university of the state colleges just can't say to the legislature that it has not got the authority--no tickee, no shirtee."

Well, he laughed; he thought it was very funny. I didn't think when I said it.

Morris: You seem to have a great respect for the university and at the same time, you take it to task very sternly.

Lanterman: Academically I do, to the extent that they don't get overburdened with publish or perish. I think that they are so overwhelmed with acquisition of research money that they're least receptive. The research becomes the only end.

Morris: Do the state colleges have a similar problem?

Lanterman: The state universities have a similar problem now in that they're trying to get the research money. That's what I told them. I said, "For God's sake, don't let them become another branch of the university." That's all they are now. They're bigger than the university by how many? Twice, three times.

Morris: That's a factor of the population in California, isn't it?

Lanterman: That's a factor of their expansion. Nineteen campuses, isn't it?

I went down to the university the first time a member of the legislature had been invited to the annual meeting of the faculty--what do they call it where all the academic senate meets? In any event, it was the first time a member of the legislature had been involved, come down. At that time I was vice-chairman of the Ways and Means [Committee].

I had been put in this spot as vice-chairman by Mr. Unruh, who was the Speaker at that time. He said that the governor has to have access to and a voice in the legislative process. So I was put on as vice-chairman, representing the minority. It was the first time that a specifically minority party office had been created, and it was created to meet the situation where both houses were controlled by the Democrats and the administration by the opposite party. Unruh was Speaker and the [Senate] Pro Tem was Hughie Burns. We had to have a new title.

So I was vice-chairman in '67 and then in 1969 I became chairman. By one vote.

1969 State Budget Pinch

Lanterman: When I saw all of this turmoil on the campus then--there was no communication--we held hearings. Mr. Stull, who was an assemblyman at that time, conducted these campus disturbance hearings into the cause of the lack of discipline and control by the administration of the university. I could see that the statements made by the representative of the faculty senate of the senate position were what he had been allowed to present.

Lanterman: In other words, he was just stating a policy position. It was clearly academic, a stilted statement. We weren't getting information. We cross-questioned, cross-questioned; we were not getting clear information.

I said, "Mr. Chairman. I sense that what we have been inflicted with today is academic presentation. We are not getting full information of what's going on." I said, "Something's got to be done."

After that meeting (I can't remember the name of the man who'd been making the presentation, a very nice moderate guy, who wanted to do--but had been restricted as to what he should say) we were sitting over in the bar. He was sitting at another table and I went down the line, in a stentorian voice you could hear all over, and I said, "I'm so damned sick and tired of stilted set pieces so that we don't learn the things we must know." I said, "We've got to do something about that." I started talking about the money control and the real financial pinch that we were going through at that time. Very severe. Keeping in mind that when Reagan came into office, it was very difficult for us to pay our bills.

We had even had a budget determined by counting the interest on state funds that would be coming in six months from that date but we didn't have the cash flow to pay for those bills due then. And that was called accrual accounting. Corporations always use it, but a corporation must have cash flow, cash liquidity to pay current bills or the corporation will have to declare bankruptcy. And that was the state's position at that time, simply because Pat Brown would not allow us to have a vote on a tax increase to provide these funds even to keep the state solvent. He was using a device that was a bookkeeping device, without the cash flow.

I remember I tried to persuade him to establish a uniform cigarette tax statewide, which had only been adopted by charter cities. They varied from city to city so that you had problems of tax differential as to the cost of that cigarette tax. And I said we must have this across the board for the counties as well as the unincorporated areas and general law cities.

Charter cities, according to constitutional contract, are exempt once they have put it in their charter, and the people in that community have voted for it, that charter city is above it, by this constitutional authority. That has been a real question all during the years as to that authority which is the highest, the state or the charter city? The concept goes back to the city-states of Florence, if you want to go back through history.

Lanterman: So I tried my best and we were in dire trouble in 1967. We had to raise \$860,000,000 in the first year [of Reagan's administration] to keep the state solvent. All we were told at the time was there were no reasonable substitutes other than a progressive cigarette tax that nobody would scream about, essentially, because there was a city tax and it was uniform. And Pat had walked away from my bill and pocket-vetoed it, that's how he did it. The governor no longer has that authority. If he doesn't sign a bill within a certain time, the legislature can declare it law without his signature.

Now that was why we had a huge difficulty and I said we must have better coordination [with the university] and I was laying down the law on the money and the tightness of money and what we had to do to get--our cash flow--and that the university had damn well better keep in mind that they couldn't just go on expanding into infinity under the present condition of funding. I was laying this down as a member of Ways and Means talking and this man (who'd been testifying) came over and he said, "I've been listening--I couldn't avoid hearing--."

I said, "I know I've been laying down the law and maybe I intended you to hear it. Maybe I did. Maybe this is what you might call getting out information that I knew you didn't have."

He said he'd never heard this. "We don't know anything about what you've been saying. We're entirely ignorant of what you're talking about. I think we ought to have better communication as well as you."

I said, "Now you know how to do that, if the university will go along. I think it would be a miracle."

He said, "Can you set us up a dinner?"

And I said, "Just invite the academic senate up and let's sit down with the two legislators who are involved in the plant and the educational system. We'll sit down and have a cat fight. I'll set it up. It will be nonpolitical; there will be no statements; there will be no political opportunity."

Well, it was the first time this had ever been done or proposed. And it was in Sacramento. They tore each other apart, with abandon. They shrieked at each other like mad and the legislators tore them to shreds. It was the first time the academic senate had ever been flayed.

Lanterman: I laid out the whole thing at the Senator Hotel. I said make it a men's dinner; just steak and potatoes and whatever. Let's have some liquid refreshment, with enough hors d'oeuvres to soak up the alky so they won't get out of hand.

So we had all that, but they were too annoyed--and then they got inspired. They said more than they intended to, I am sure, BUT as we went around the table in a roundtable discussion with interceding and intervening discussion, et cetera, and me presiding, we finally wound up the meeting without bloodshed and with a helluva lot better understanding of the legislature's problems and the university's and the lack of legislation possible without discipline on the campus by the administration of that campus.

That was the purpose of that meeting and it was an historic meeting. And I felt very pleased when the state colleges asked for the same thing; we did the same thing for them. I think there was a lot better understanding, at least on the part of the legislators themselves.

Student Discipline and Campus Expansion

Lanterman: It was shortly thereafter that I was asked to come down to the university. That was the first time that a member of the legislature had been asked to address this faculty group. So I did and it was about the time when they had the boys in green, the state national guard, posted and everything guarded because of the People's Park element. The merchants had said you've got to get this blankety-blank element from moving in from the Haight-Ashbury. They got into this old part there--a real hostile--physically, emotionally and disease-wise and dope-wise, it was just an impossible thing to be allowed to stay there by the university.

That was the People's Park--and they tore down the fences and they were all over the place.

Morris: There were some adults from the community with them, hoping to work with the university to decide how that land should be used.

Lanterman: They were debating the politics when I was down there. And at this meeting, I laid down the law. I said, "Look, I am Mr. Legislature. We have just been through this terrible experience here. The state of California is disgusted as a result of the

Lanterman: lack of what I would call judicious judgement as it relates to the business at hand. Now, we are responsible--we are the elected officials--to act to make these decisions. This is our responsibility.

"And I'm going to tell you, if you think that Santa Cruz, Irvine and San Diego are going to become replicas of Berkeley and UCLA--just forget it. I hope this message comes through. Don't get ambitious to think that we will substantially support them by taxes. You're not going to get that funding support. We do not have the funds to provide it." I said, "That proposed growth is out of sight. Maybe you will be able to effect it in other ways, but you're not going to take this university and extend its facilities that far and be funded by the state. I have news for you, you're not going to get it. So make up your minds and try, to the best of your ability, to really stay close, to limit your desires, to what we can afford."

Now that was a very important statement to make. In any event, I told them that the university could not expand that fast.

Morris: It was a matter of the available state money?

Lanterman: The fact was that we had to limit the university to within its capacity to be funded. I told them so. I said, "This is not retribution. This is not anything like that. The fact is we have just been through a very difficult period and this is all we can do."

We had a luncheon up here for these nine faculty representatives, from UCLA and all the campuses. It was a joint meeting of the two finance committees, Ways and Means and Senate Finance. And at that meeting they had this dear old prof from UCLA, the traditional Mr. Chips--the venerable--and he mumbled and bumbled about nothing in particular. Finally I said, "Can't you be a little more specific, please?" And I asked him a question. And he didn't know the answer for the man he'd come up to talk to.

Senator Grunsky, who was chairman of the finance committee on the senate side, who was a fine, qualified man of education, he said, "I can't hold it back any longer. I've got to say something."

And I said, "Senator, you've got the right to say anything you want to say."

Lanterman: He said, "Doctor, you've talked to fifteen minutes and you haven't said a God damn thing." Before he could go any further, the chairman of the academic senate who was presiding said let's stop before we go too far. So instead we went around the table and each of the members of the finance committees had their say, and there wasn't one who didn't support academic independence, but that discipline on the campus had stopped, like Cambodia did--classes stopped, no discussion groups, otherwise, et cetera, et cetera. And I said, "I don't think you people quite understand your contract. We can fire you for not meeting your classes. Your contracts have been abrogated. Do you understand what that means in relation to your tenure?"

"I don't give a damn what the kids said. You have to be there. I don't care what you say or what you did. You did wrong." And that's what the legislature said, all around the table. They said, "We will not tolerate this."

We had had dissident members on the campus of the faculty before who had hot things to say at faculty meetings, defied the more wise, or shall we say, experienced members. These firebrands were the ones who took over after they got things disrupted and they passed all kinds of resolutions that had no real merit, more from political activism than academic freedom. And the fact is that we could just not tolerate that. We had to make that decision.

That was an historic meeting also. Out of that meeting came new resolve from the head of the academic senate. He said, "Frank, we held an emergency meeting of the academic senate. And I said, "I'm hereby creating an executive committee that will review all these ideas of committees and other groups before they come to the faculty senate." Now that committee had a substantial quieting effect on the firebrands, to the point that, with legislation that we got, and the lack of trouble, we had a relaxation of tension, we had responsibility on the campus and the university was rescued from complete, what shall I say, internal dissolution. It was a very, very touchy and important thing to do, but it had to be done.

Concern for Teaching and Disadvantaged Students

Lanterman: I just give you that as a background to my interest and concern for the university, because the university is an institution that is highly regarded. But it's a two-way street. They have to be funded. And I raised the question, by resolution, and I

Lanterman: quoted the constitution that says that the legislature has prime responsibility for the education and the well-being of its citizens. And the university does not have that authority under the constitution. Let's read it!

So I put in this resolution calling for a complete review of this responsibility. And to request an audit from the University of California. Do you understand that we had never had an audit of the professional and student contact pattern. We had never had that and A. Alan Post had said we could never get this information. They'll give us some little books with some figures in it and say that this is confidential and not to be used in public.

So during this period of my chairmanship, I sent a letter, "Dear Dr. Hitch--" I prepared the letter on behalf of the subcommittee on education of the Ways and Means Committee, telling the university they were defying the legislature by being unresponsive and uncooperative. The legislature was so furious, they said we've got to do this.

Morris: Everyone was concerned?

Lanterman: This was bipartisan, nonpolitical, it was the institution of the legislature versus the institution of the university and who has the authority of this relationship. And so I prepared this letter and it was a dilly. I said: You will prepare for me an audit that I will share with the subcommittees of Ways and Means on the student contact hours on all of your campuses in all of your classes and you will do it within ten days.

Dear, they got it for me! And we had a meeting right in this room. It was either do or die. So I told them that a copy of the report should go to every campus. They said we can't do that. I told them, "You're damned right it can, and it will not be watered down and it will not be buried, it will be the original copy. And you will get that out to them or you don't get a budget."

In any event, House Speaker Monagan called me down and he said, "Hey, what's this I hear about your holding the budget of the university up for ransom?"

I said, "The only thing we can do is use the letter and I'll wait while you read it." He read the first page and he said, "Great! Have at it."

Lanterman: So out of the turmoil, we got the first real audit of the student contact hours and what it did, to me, was restore the emphasis on teaching. What the students were getting was teaching aides when what they needed was the best the university had to offer. They were coming up there, their first experience away from home, and the great university was not giving them what they came to the university for!

Morris: You feel that more senior faculty were needed in the classroom?

Lanterman: Yes. I mean giving them guidance and that way they would get their respect. I think that this unrest generally was the result of the students being given the back of the hand.

And so what we did was point out that when the faculty is given the authority to run things and also giving attention to the lower division people so they would have some guidance, then you wouldn't get the disturbances. I would say that the effect was very fortunate and beneficial in light of events.

Morris: Was the legislature concerned in general at the overall size of the university budget?

Lanterman: All of it together in a way. My response was: Gentlemen, I think the legislature has been more than generous with you. I would not recommend another dime and as far as policy determination, I think you have housecleaning to do. I think it needs, personally, someone with enough go to just dive in and say, "Look, now is the time to straighten this out."

So when you say I respect the university, I've always respected it. I love it. It is a distinguished institution, but you do not have the complete and total monopoly on wisdom, particularly regarding education for the disadvantaged. It should be focused in an entirely different direction. I regret that Mr. Vasconcellos wanted to change the competitive standards of the state scholarships to a student grant-in-aid program, specifically for the underprivileged.

I just said, "No. No, this is wrong." I fought it. But I didn't have the votes and the liberal attitude, the newer members, prevailed. You have to understand that Claremont, USC, Redlands, Occidental are doing a first class job of teaching, making room for the underprivileged and ethnic groups. They go to great pains to see that these students have the tutoring and counseling they need to hold their own with college work. Now I say that they [the legislature] ought to find a way

Lanterman: to get some support to the private agencies that are doing this and that the university should be able to do likewise in the interests of equity and balance.

It's good that I'm leaving, I've said these things enough.

Morris: The energy you've put into being involved in all these issues is incredible.

Lanterman: It's an incredible input of a lifetime of living and intense application of energy and mental industry.

VI POLITICAL PRINCIPLES AND ADVICE

Los Angeles County Central Committee, 1938-1950

- Morris: Your vita says that before you came to the Assembly you were also involved in the Los Angeles County Republican Central Committee.
- Lanterman: No, that was my political activity. I helped elect Congressmen and assemblymen. That was the citizen's role of participating and involving himself in elections.
- Morris: You're elected to the county central committee?
- Lanterman: Yes. You were. You are, as an individual and as a citizen. You run for office. You are elected. It doesn't always mean you know what you're doing.
- If you're participating and your name has become a recognized attribute of the party, then most likely you will be asked to run for the central committee.
- Morris: Why do people run for the central committee?
- Lanterman: Just to be involved. And have some input.
- Morris: And then the committee asked you to run for the assembly?
- Lanterman: Oh yes. From the days of Franklin Roosevelt.
- Morris: Were you pleased?
- Lanterman: Oh yes. Very much. I went into it at that time--the depths of the Depression--because of the fight for equal representation and a free two-party system. And I feel this way right now, that with the California Teachers Association, the CSEA, and

Lanterman: the AFL having bought this legislature four years ago for one purpose--public employees' collective bargaining--it's the end of two parties.

I know what I'd say to them. I'd say, "You can go straight to hell. You are not going to have one union in Sacramento run our legislature. I for one think you've got a lot to learn and I don't believe this is the way to do it. I will not vote for a loss of basic control to these upstarts."

I will not do that. So, I am an established figure and people ran against me for the exercise. I think they don't believe anything they say.

Morris: Your opponents just wanted the experience?

Lanterman: Yes. Conservative district. They didn't always agree with me, but they said he's reliable. And I was. I've stayed there these twenty-eight years. I could be re-elected again--no problem. But I can't afford to stay there, at these prices, at my age, which is seventy-six, going on seventy-seven. I can not stay there under this kind of tension, and nerve-strain, and frustration, of having only twenty-two votes to work with. You don't get good legislation if you have stacked committees across the board and stacked action on the floor. That's the balance that you have now in the assembly.

Morris: Do you feel there's a similar problem in the state senate?

Lanterman: You have a free and independent balance in the senate because of the number of conservative Democrats sitting there. I for one just say--well, I could go on another two years. There's always two more years, always another term. But I just feel that maybe my contribution's been made.

[Interview 3: April 3, 1978]##

Morris: Last time we were talking about when you served on the Los Angeles Republican Central Committee, from 1938 to 1950.

Langerman: Oh, yes. That just shows that you had been out in the hustings and that you have an interest as a citizen to make sure that the political system works, or you don't have representative government.

Lanterman: I had started precinct work right after the '32 election. The balance of power in California had become so reduced by the Depression and the stringencies of the economic situation that I felt that the election of a man like Roosevelt, whom I considered a New York politician with no particular justification for office--I knew nothing except his personal ambitions and the fact that he had suffered a tragic polio difficulty and disability. I've always known that anyone who has a handicap tries to compensate for his physical disability by extra mental effort, and sometimes it becomes almost an obsession with them to gain power intellectually where they are limited physically.

Morris: That's an interesting concept, yes.

Lanterman: They overcompensate and sometimes in order to attract attention they will be overt, which he was. Being the son of a physician, I was aware of these things and I just said, "Well, that driving obsession for power is to offset the physical limitations, "because he had been very active physically in the sailing sports and games and things, and the son of a well-meaning mother who spoiled him silly. I was aware of all that and I said, "My God, somebody better go out [laughter] and take a look and see if we have to sit here and take this."

California Republican Assembly and Congressional District Activities

Lanterman: So, that's why I got into the field of precinct work. It was about that time that the Republican Assembly was organized in the state for precinct work, to organize precinct work. The older Republican hierarchy of Republican clubs--that was the only way that they operated in those days, by the local Republican club. They raised funds and encouraged candidates and things, but the age bracket had begun to wither away the energy and vitality that newer blood might bring about.

So, I just said, "Well, I'll hop right in," and I became the president of the local Republican Assembly. I became the congressional district chairman of the Republican Assembly. At that time it meant that we included in our congressional district, because of the population requirements, nearly all of the San Fernando Valley, if you can imagine that size.

Morris: Incredible, yes.

Lanterman: Because it had very sparse population, and it was most difficult to have to drive distances as the congressional chairman.

I became later the member of the County Central Committee, then the State Central Committee. Being the congressional district chairman of the County Central Committee means that you had three assembly districts under your jurisdiction, and it meant quite a bit of input of time. Inasmuch as the Depression had made money a very scarce article, it seemed to me important that I make double efforts to try.

During my administration of the congressional district, I put down several uprisings where self-serving attorney members were trying to lead themselves into judicial appointments by contributing their precinct work, ostensibly from the position of the generous citizen who is giving of his time, but really they were feathering their nests potentially. That was their means of attracting attention to themselves.

I had to put these people down. I just said, as a citizen member who was trying to do a job for our congressmen and to get people in that more represented the district than the ones we'd had, it meant double effort, redoubled effort, and at the same time this may have some kind of an implication of what I was doing later when I came to the legislature.

I didn't come to the legislature for politics; I came for water, if you will remember my statement. I did not come here as a method of climbing the political ladder for further office. I came here at full maturity, at age fifty. I was not a young ambitious [man]; I was a mature middle-aged person and I came for the purpose of non-political reasons.

But my interest in preventing exploitation of political office by ambitious people goes right back to Roosevelt. He didn't need the money. He inherited a golden spoon. But I didn't like the motivation around it. It may seem an anachronism now to even comment on the great Roosevelt. I never looked upon him that way. I just felt that he was a political accident, by virtue of his injury (I mean his crippled difficulties), and by virtue of his being there at the time, and world conditions at the time, and his ability to articulate in a stentorian type of pontification that had more sound than substance, in my opinion.

Decision to Run for the Assembly, 1950

Lanterman: So, getting back to my original position of working in the field, I carried on with that when I came here. I carried on to the extent that--I started, as I told you before--we went down to the session to try to weed out some of the exploitation by professional people here who were exploiting their position for personal benefit. So, I have been consistent in my position.

When I started out in the field, I said that the representation here of those who are here to exploit politically by advantage of their seat was anathema to me. "It is a matter of principle and a matter of almost anxiety that we do not do what we're doing."

And so it took me--then I started in on the third house. When I started my conflict of interest efforts, I was beaten down regularly by the third house, and the cry of the citizen legislator was used to downplay what I was trying to accomplish. It took a great deal of energy and a great deal of perseverance and a great deal of personal character, continuity, to overcome the traditional exploitation of political advantage.

Morris: Going back to your own decision to run for office, you would have had already a great knowledge of organization and--

Lanterman: The mechanics and organization structure and so on.

Morris: Yes.

Lanterman: But I was a non-political candidate, because I was president of the Valley Water Company, a mutual company that my family had founded. I guess I was vice-president at that time. But we had been through a very difficult and costly water suit by the city of Pasadena on underground water, and I just felt that it was imperative that I come.

Morris: That you come to Sacramento.

Lanterman: And that I get the bill passed that would make it possible for the community which my grandfather had founded to have the right to water to survive, because politically we were being prohibited by the adjoining cities. And I said, "You cannot use water as a political weapon. You cannot use sewage disposal as a political weapon to coerce us into the corral of political control by the local entities, city hall." That I have fought the whole time I was here, exploitation of power by city management, and I still have.

Morris: Was there any opposition to your declaring your candidacy?

Lanterman: Oh, yes. Sure, sure. The Democratic candidate at the time was a lady who was studying for her degree at Cal State or UCLA. I'm not sure. Anyway, she was getting her degree in social work or something or other. And I found her to be very concerned with the is-s-sues [pronounces word in drawn out way], and I can remember her talking about the is-s-sues like she was talking about tis-s-sues. And I used to think, "My God! Doesn't she ever know anything about anything except is-s-sues?"

And the issue here was a very practical one of survival for the communities, and that was to provide water for domestic use; not irrigation water, but domestic. The growth of the community required this, and so it was non-political. In fact, I walked in because she did not make a very attractive picture. In her strident effort to achieve, she was not reaching the public who understood that I was going for another purpose, not political.

Observations on Knight and Warren

Morris: In that 1950 campaign, Goodwin Knight was running for lieutenant governor and Warren was running for his third term as governor. Did you work together with them at all, or have support from--?

Lanterman: Goodie Knight--I always referred to Goodwin as "Goodie"--was an old warhorse who had been a party stalwart for years, always making appearances. And I never could understand why he was always around trying to bolster candidates and so on until I found out that was his way of getting around and being seen.

Morris: He was already on the bench at that time.

Lanterman: Yes; he was on the bench.

Morris: It seems like it's rather unusual for somebody, once he's gotten a judicial appointment, to get off the bench.

Lanterman: No, he was politically ambitious. It was a very strenuous period of California politics at the time.

Morris: Yes.

Lanterman: Warren was a non-partisan Republican, and he understood that north of the Tehachepis you had to be a persona grata, someone who was approved by the conservative California Democrat, who was a Californian first and a conservative in his judgment of government, and who was not particularly interested in the political machine as such.

Of course, California was a Republican state, but Warren found that he had broader appeal if he divorced himself from the partisan structure. And he wouldn't even allow Frederick Houser, who was the lieutenant governor [1942-1946], to run with him. He just disassociated himself literally and had his own campaign headquarters and wouldn't allow anybody to be in or on the campaign train or even mention the name. And it became quite a cause celebre politically in the resentment of the partisans that the titular leader should disregard so flagrantly--

Morris: The party structure.

Lanterman: Any party structure, or his participation. He was a loner.

Morris: Yes. By 1950 he was beginning to have quite a lot of opposition in the Republican party, wasn't he?

Lanterman: Yes. I had to put out the fire in my own district. In Glendale they just wanted to almost lynch him they were so angry with him. Violent disregard. Violent opposition. And I had to try to placate and to contain some of that as a partisan. I said, "You can't do this."

Morris: Did you feel it was more important to have Warren running for governor on the Republican ticket??

Lanterman: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I mean, he was the "great white father" at that time. He had built himself, or had been built by Joe Knowland of the Oakland Tribune, as the crusading district attorney of Alameda County. That's how he attracted his attention. And he was flamboyant to the degree that his physical stature and appearance were on his side, the white mane and the tall imposing facade. He was articulate, but never inspired me with his utterances. It was purely self-serving, I felt, and he was adamant in many of his positions, which I didn't think was particularly appropriate.

Did I tell you about my first contact with him?

Morris: No.

Lanterman: This is interesting. As freshmen, we were to be received in the governor's office. The great man was going to receive us.

Morris: All the new freshmen?

Lanterman: The freshman legislators. So, we went in to attend a welcoming greeting by the governor. At that time the governor had the corner office in the old capitol building, right where the entry comes in from the west, it's to the right, and had a whole fleet of offices down the hall. It was later the Secretary of State's office. And that big room was quite imposing, it seemed to me, as I walked in and saw the big murals on the wall and the great seal and all that sort of thing. As I walked in, here was the governor standing beneath the flag, a beautiful picture; I mean, he was waiting for the photographer, I guess.

"Well, Assemblyman," [he said]--I was the first--"what brings you to Sacramento?" I said, "I guess the same thing that brought you, Governor." "Well, hello," he said. "That's great. This thing gets under your skin, you know. There's one thing you must remember up here, Assemblyman, that no matter how thin the batter, there's always two sides to the pancake."

And I said, "Governor, may I make the observation that if you're going to have that thin a batter, you'd better grease the skillet liberally." [laughter] And he roared! He just roared, because I outpunched him, you see.

Morris: [laughter] Oh, that's lovely.

Lanterman: [laughter] You've got to grease the griddle, that was it. Not the skillet. But you've got to grease the griddle liberally, or you won't have two sides to your pancake.

California Water Plan, State Finance Concerns in the 1970s

Morris: When you came up here in 1951, did you expect that you would be staying here for nearly thirty years?

Lanterman: Three or four terms at the most, at the outside, maybe two or three. I didn't know. I had no plans. I just wanted to get this bill through. But we got into the development of the proposed water plan and it was essential to me, as a person who was knowledgeable in water, and I carried a whole series of bills for the Metropolitan Water District, because they had an articulate spokesman.

Morris: The water district did?

Lanterman: Yes, in me. An aggressive member who was not interested as to the deleterious effect a bill that was controversial might have on your political career. It was a job to be done and it didn't make much difference whether people liked it or not until they knew what was in it, and you had to sell that package.

And one of the first things we were finding was the drastic overdraught of the underground basins in Los Angeles County.

Morris: Yes. We talked about that a little bit before and I wondered who were the other legislators that you worked with.

Lanterman: One of the prime ones that I worked with mostly was Harold Levering, of the Levering Oath, and he was a very wonderful person. He was very adamant in his ultra-conservatism. He was a businessman who hated to see labor exploit politics to the point where business and enterprise could not exist.

Morris: Did you feel that was an issue in the water legislation?

Lanterman: What?

Morris: An attempt by labor to exploit--

Lanterman: No, no, no. That was just his--he, as a businessman, a former businessman from the Midwest, came out to California to retire, manage his portfolio of investments. And he was a very competent well-organized individual, and very terse, and rather enigmatic, and completely unyielding in his principles, a very strong person. He and I got along just fine, except that when I had to sit next to him in a committee and he would have his chain cigarettes going, that nearly drove me up the wall.

Morris: [chuckle] You were an early advocate of limiting smoking in public places.

Lanterman: Well, there it was offensive and I knew that it was dangerous as a physical habit. I used to plead with him because I thought that he was harming himself, and that's the way it panned out, finally, after, when he decided--they wanted him to run for Congress.

When their Congressman Jackson said he was going to retire, they wanted Mr. Levering to run. He lived right adjacent in the Santa Monica area, or West Los Angeles area, on Moraga Drive, right near Sepulveda, near the San Diego Freeway and just above Wilshire, in a little canyon up in there, a very pretty place.

Lanterman: He found out that there was going to be political contention for the office and the Central Committee was hesitant about giving him, because of political interference, unanimous request to run. He said, "If you aren't going to give me unanimous request, take it and jump in the lake. I refuse to be a candidate." And they nearly died, but nevertheless that was the situation.

Morris: And he declined to run?

Lanterman: He declined to run. And then I think the year following that he just said, "Oh, what's the use? I've given all the time I can." And by that time the water project was passed and the people had passed [the bond issue]. We served on the water committee together. He and I were pretty rugged individualists. And sometimes the ones with less fortitude were all over the lot and we had to sit there and pound the desk.

Morris: What kind of leadership did Goodwin Knight give as governor to the development of water policy and legislation?

Lanterman: Well, I thought that he did the best he could under the circumstances and under the tremendous hiatus and conflict between the north and south. He did his best, but because he was from the south he didn't have the sympathy that he might have had.

He had the foresight to tell the legislature in 1955, "You had better get some revenue into the general fund, or we are going to be in dire straits due to the growth patterns and the enormous growth factors of the state, populationwise."

And the legislature said, "No. We'll use up every dime of surplus we have before we tax anybody for anything."

Morris: Is that left over from the Depression years?

Lanterman: I imagine. We had a reserve set aside after World War II of surplus due to sales tax that couldn't be spent due to priorities, and that was the Rainy Day Fund of \$75,000,000. Well, that was the forerunner of cookie-jar financing where they would stash things away.

We have just gone through, to show that there is no change, a vote on the Behr bill [S.B. 1, 1978]--I don't know whether I talked to you about that or not.

Morris: It was just coming up in debate.

Lanterman: Yes, on the Behr bill. Senator Behr, in his peroration on the bill before the Ways and Means Committee--we were going to be the ones to look at the money end of it. And it was a questionable bill when it came to us because it had a five percent transaction tax on the sale of homes, to finance the bill, ostensibly. And that meant essentially an estimated \$600,000,000 to \$700,000,000 rip-off on home transactions by owners of homes, if they had to sell their home, just to ostensibly pay the deficit that was being created in the general fund for property tax relief and renter relief.

In his opening peroration, he said, "And now, if any one of you of this committee feel so inclined that you feel that this bill can be financed out of surplus, I will drop the bill." Just like that.

And I said, "Senator, don't drop it too hard until I ask these questions. I want to ask a question of finance, Mr. Chairman."

He said, "Very well." And as a vice-chairman they humor me.

I said, "Of finance, I want them to answer me specifically how many years in the last ten have you underestimated the revenues to the general fund, and by how much, and by each year?"

There was considerable wagging of heads and [makes clucking disapproving noise] and consternation. And by the time we got to the bottom line, it was about \$400,000,000 had been underestimated deliberately by the Department of Finance to make sure that there would be funding for the governor to play with these programs, and the legislature was kept in the dark.

You see, the Department of Finance is the governor's financial creature and they do what he says. They do what the office of the gremlins down in the governor's palace guard says, and that's purely political.

So there's great resentment by the legislature to being hoodwinked deliberately for the purpose of: "You don't know how to handle this, and we'll handle it, but we'll tell you just about so much and no more."

So when that \$400,000,000 a year hit, and I said, "That will make, then, instead of about two and a half billion, maybe three and a half to four billion a range, of surplus

Lanterman: at the end of this current fiscal year." I said, "I consider that a reprehensible rip-off of the people of the state." And I said, "The whole issue is based on the fact that the growth factors that I helped Ronald Reagan build into the income tax graduated series and application of brackets--" because we had had none. We had had no growth factor. That's why we were in dire jeopardy when he came into office. We were a bankrupt and insolvent state.

So, we had to go whole hog, but double-digit inflation at the national and international level intervened to the point where income tax skyrocketed with the inflation factor, when it should have been indexed to keep it at a level. And I will always blame Reagan for not allowing an index to be attached to that factor.

Morris: The income tax.

Lanterman: Yes. And that's where I said, "We have inherited the wind, and that's what this three and a half billion surplus is. It has nothing whatever to do with the economic, or so-called prudent economic, procedures of this administration. They just inherited the wind." And I said, "There is absolutely no excuse whatever that this amount of money should be in surplus at the present time."

Well, the committee just collapsed. There wasn't going to be a bill unless there was going to be an adjustment. The Speaker had to move in and they had to temporize and they came up with a compromise. Even the compromise has not told us how much more we're going to have by May 15. We will know in the May revised figures what our income brackets will be. It might even be beyond that.

But [in] the bill, then, we struck the five percent. If anybody had told us we were going to strike the five percent, you'd have said we were all nuts here. But it was the circuit-breaker concept of giving the surplus to those who had not paid for it.

I said, "It's the same argument we had under an overcharge under Reagan for withholding, a miscalculation on withholding to the degree that it had to be returned." Said Reagan, "We have taken this by inadvertence and bad figuring and projections, \$80,000,000 surplus that should not have occurred." And he said, "That's taking it out of the pockets of the taxpayers by subterfuge and mismanagement, and I will not tolerate it." And he said, "That \$80,000,000 has to be returned to the people who paid it."

Lanterman: There was tremendous uproar on the floor. Bill Bagley was trying to carry the bill for the \$80,000,000 and the Democrats were doing their best to destroy it so that they could spend it the way they wanted to for their people, or for their special benefits, for their credit.

I went over to him and I said, "You're not going to sell it the way you're trying, kid." I said, "Just say, 'If this were an Internal Revenue Service overcharge, the money would by law have to revert to the people who paid it. It's just as simple as that. And that's all we are doing here, as a matter of financial integrity, of the responsibility of the state.'"

So the bill went sailing through. He was the most surprised man you ever saw. A simple explanation: You don't rip it off of people who paid it; you return it to the people who paid it if it's an overcharge. And that's what the Republicans had insisted upon instead of this so-called circuit-breaker thing of returning it to people who had not had anything to do with paying it, simply as a welfare redistribution of the wealth.

And I said, "That would provide the great unwashed [laughter] with the best election money could buy. What the hell."

Morris: Really. Yes.

Lanterman: You see? And so we had to stop that circuit-breaker and that's what held us up a year. The administration wanted it. They wanted it so bad they could taste it and they were doing their damndest to get it through. He [Governor Jerry Brown] moved heaven and earth to get that thing through.

And, so, when they blame the legislature as too little too late, why in the blazing hell don't they attach it to the guy who was responsible for it?

Knight and Knowland 1958 Campaigns

Morris: Going back to Goodwin Knight, would he have consulted with you and other Republican legislators in 1958, which is referred to in the textbooks as the "big switch," when he ran for the Senate and Mr. Knowland ran for governor?

Lanterman: He didn't consult with me, but I consulted with him. I went in to see him and I said, "Goodie, the L.A. Times makes or breaks politically. You understand that. So do I." But I said, "I think the people of this state will rise as one man if you have the courage to stand up and defy them [the Times] and say, 'I am the titular head of this party. I am the governor. I am seeking re-election and I demand to have that prerogative honored.'" And I said, "Goodie, don't buy this phony thing."

He went to Arizona and nearly collapsed because they had put the pressure on him: You either do, or we'll dump you.

Morris: The party structure?

Lanterman: No, no. The Times. He got the word. It was the Knowland influence. Old Joe still had a lot of oomph in those days and Bill Knowland was having domestic problems that required--his wife said, "I'm going to return to California and you're going to come with me, or else we're going to get divorced."

So, that is the story to the best of my knowledge. I don't say it's a fact, but that's the best of my knowledge. There was no other explanation of why he [Knowland] should turn and come back here with a campaign to be governor based upon the right to work. My God! It would bring out every Democrat labor vote from under every rock.

Morris: And make it a solid vote?

Lanterman: Oh, yes. Sure. And that's what happened. They defeated him and Pat Brown walked in, because of the split.

Morris: Yes. There has also been a report that it was a long-range plan on Bill Knowland's part, that what he really wanted to do was be governor so that he could then start a campaign to run for president.

Lanterman: It's possible, but it was premature at the time.

Morris: Because he'd been so close to Warren when Warren missed the nomination.

Lanterman: Well, he was appointed. He was an appointed Senator, just like Kuchel, later on.

So, politically speaking, it was prematurely handled with the wrong issue. I told Mr. Levering, who was [saying], "Oh, my. This is a crusade!" I said, "You're going to have a crusade of Democrat labor moving in and just dumping you right on your face if you do." And I was so right, dear. [laughter]

- Lanterman: It really hurt me to have him do it, but I told Goodie. I said, "Stand up and say your piece, Goodie." I said, "You've been a good governor. You have a good record. You are honest. And as far as I'm concerned you have the right to demand your opportunity to serve." And I said, "I don't care who's putting up what. And you may be cut off at the knees with money." But I said, "They won't buy your compromise."
- Morris: Were there other people urging the same kind of stand that you suggested?
- Lanterman: I don't know, dear. I don't know.
- Morris: No kind of caucus arrangement or--?
- Lanterman: Not to the best of my knowledge. We were submerged under the enormity of political pressures, I think, politically as a party. And if the money is not going to be available, and it has been sequestered into a package, you can't run a campaign.
- But I said, "I think you can." And I said, "I think small contributions and the people will rise as one man and say, 'Nobody in a political power play is going to destroy your right as a good governor to succeed yourself.'"
- Morris: That's what the Democrats had been doing, wasn't it, trying to build campaign budgets by small contributions?
- Lanterman: Well, they had no others.
- Morris: Right, but--
- Lanterman: Now, strangely enough, most of the fat cats are contributing in a larger measure to the Democrats.
- Morris: [chuckles] Is that the same fat cats that used to contribute to the Republicans?
- Lanterman: Dear, everybody making a contribution has always, even the third house--they've always buttered both sides of the bread. So, whichever side it falls on will pick up some political gravel.
- Morris: [laughter] Did you find that in financing your own campaign?
- Lanterman: Oh, yes. Oh, sure, sure, sure. And I would find out that they would contribute almost as much to my opponents as they did to me, just to make damn sure.

Morris: That you ran hard? [chuckles]

Lanterman: Yes. [chuckles] No, I just said that as far as I'm concerned, Goodie should have made this decision. [tape off briefly for telephone interruption]

So, I don't believe that I have the power of projection or of being an oracle, but I was there; this is my opinion; that's the way it was. And I think that it was an abortive effort.

Morris: Did it have repercussions within the Republican party?

Lanterman: Oh, yes. It wrecked the Republican party. Pat came in for eight years. And it took a Ronald Reagan, with a flair, because Pat had been such an almost political non sequitur.

Morris: How so?

Lanterman: He didn't have anything to sell.

Morris: I don't quite understand that.

Lanterman: To his own party he didn't have anything to sell. He was all over the lot, and he didn't use good judgment, and he was a liability, or else Ronald Reagan, as an ex-movie actor with a fast line and an articulate person, wouldn't have been able to step into the picture. He just barnstormed, and here is a leader. He had the projection that Warren had of the facade of appeal, whatever it is. He had a certain amount of intestinal fortitude politically in saying, "This is what I believe. I think this has happened."

And he came into office on a great economic crusade: economy in government, cut down the bureaucrat, cut out the fat, cut, trim, and squeeze. And it appealed, just like this [Proposition] 13 thing is an appeal, not based on fact but based on emotions.

I'm even, at the present time, crusading against 13 as a phony bologna piece of nonsense, and yet [Milton] Friedman is coming out and saying, "We have to have this to shake up the legislature." He doesn't know which end is up. I listened to Reagan last night quoting him, and he said, "Well, I have misgivings about its deficiencies, however--." And I don't think there's any "however," because I think the Behr bill is the only responsible means by which we can overcome the difficulties.

Lanterman: We are redistributing the surplus through this bill, and by the conditions that we put in it we are restricting the expenditures of state government and local government. We are doing a good job and we are providing for renter relief that 13 has nothing in. And 13 is a specific special benefit to the apartment house owners, because this man is the executive director of the apartment house owners, Mr. Jarvis. As I say, he's an old walrus, and an old faker, and a three-dollar bill. He's been trying to peddle this thing for years. And this year, with the effect of inflation on assessed values, he has hit a very sensitive spot.

It's hard to argue with people's [arguing]: "I'm going to lose my home!" [said in plaintive tone] Well, I've sat next to them and I know how emotional they are. I'm going broke paying taxes, personally. I can't stay here. And I've got to exploit and get rid of my property.

Ways and Means Committee

Morris: You've mentioned the third house several times and I wondered if--

Lanterman: The third house are the lobbyists, the legislative advocates. They ran the place with an iron hand all during the period when they had us frozen into a salary squeeze, no matter what we did for ten years.

I was the one who had a study made calling for the examination of the workload of the legislature, the increasing workload, and the justification for due compensation. And I had to fight this citizen legislator concept to the point where it was simply just a shibboleth of third house aphorisms and things.

Morris: Are there ever times when the members of the third house individually are helpful in delivering information?

Lanterman: Yes. I had several, and they said, "Frank, we wish to God we'd never listened to you." I said, "You had to. The time has come." And I said, "No longer were you going to be able to dictate policy by your theories of your expediencies."

- Lanterman: As an advisory capacity, they serve a very excellent purpose; as a political machine, they were very harmful when they tried to preclude an individual action.
- Morris: Are you more aware of the third house, serving on something like the Ways and Means Committee? Do they lobby the Ways and Means Committee more than other committees?
- Lanterman: Oh, no more so than they do in the policy committees. No more so.
- Morris: You were appointed to Ways and Means first quite early in your career, weren't you?
- Lanterman: Yes, yes. They didn't want to. "Oh, you don't want to serve on Ways and Means, Frank, do you? Do you? Do you?" And I've been on there, I guess, for about what? Twenty-two, -three, -four, years, or something. I've lost track. About twenty-four years, I guess.
- Morris: They said, "You don't want to serve on it?"
- Lanterman: They were trying to persuade me not to, dear.
- Morris: I see. And you already wanted to be on that committee?
- Lanterman: Yes. I wanted to say the salty things that have to be said.
- Morris: Was the Ways and Means Committee the beginning of your interest in mental health and retardation?
- Lanterman: Oh, no, no. That began way back in '53, when I was chairman of the Social Welfare Committee, acting chairman, and I knew what the impact was on the taxpayers of Los Angeles County. We were getting the raw end of the deal. A lot of little counties can gang up on a big giant like L.A., and by dispersing their votes to the point, or corraling their votes, they can really give them the business. And we had been getting the business for years.
- Morris: In terms of cost to the public--?
- Lanterman: Special privilege to others and not to L.A. in equity.

[Interview concludes abruptly because Mr. Lanterman was needed on the floor of the Assembly.]

Transcribers: Justan O'Donnell, Marilyn White
Final Typist: Marie Herold

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RICHARD RICHARDS

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Governmental History Documentation Project
Goodwin Knight/Edmund Brown, Sr., Era

Richard Richards

SOUTH OF THE TEHACHAPIS:
A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENATOR COMMENTS ON THE 1953-1966 ERA

An Interview Conducted by
James H. Rowland
in 1978, 1979

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Tuesday, November 29, 1988

Hugh M. Burns Dies — Ex-State Senate Leader

Chronicle Sacramento Bureau

Sacramento

Former state Senator Hugh M. Burns of Fresno, a father of the State Water Project and onetime leader of the Senate, died in his home on Saturday after a long illness. He was 86.

Burns was one of California's most influential politicians in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1957, he became the first Democrat to preside over the Senate since 1889. Despite a Republican majority, Burns used his skills as conciliator and compromiser to hold the leadership post.

His greatest legislative legacy is the Burns-Porter Act, which authorized the multibillion-dollar State Water Project with the massive Oroville Dam as its main source and the California Aqueduct as a pipeline to supply the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

Burns served in the Senate at a time when the Legislature was dominated by rural and Northern California interests. Los Angeles County for many years had only one member of the Senate.

After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1964 that such representation was unconstitutional, Burns said he disagreed with the decision that soon gave Los Angeles County 14 senators.

"The reapportionment," he said, "was not for the benefit of California and represented a new

theory that minorities are not entitled to a voice in government — that the majority is entitled to run roughshod over everyone, winner take all."

For many years, Burns was chairman of the controversial Senate Fact-Finding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities.

A native of Arizona, Burns moved with his family to Fresno in 1907 and was a 1921 graduate of Fresno High School. In 1929, he and partners established a funeral home.

Becoming active in Democratic politics, he was elected to the state Assembly in 1936 and seven years later to the Senate, where he served as president pro tem and Rules Committee chairman from 1957 to 1969.

Burns retired from the Senate in 1970 and for the next six years served on the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Appeals Board, to which he was appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan.

"He was a giant in the Senate as far as I'm concerned, one of the greatest guys I ever knew," former Senator Lawrence Walsh said of Burns. "He kept the respect of the whole state of California while he served."

Burns' wife, Wilma, said he died peacefully. "He just shut his eyes and went to sleep," she said.



HUGH M. BURNS IN 1967
An influential politician

"He was one of the most wonderful people in the world. He did more for people than anybody I ever knew."

Besides his wife, Burns is survived by a daughter, Coilene Draklich, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento. Burial will be at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Chronicle Wire Services contributed to this report

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Senator Richard Richards was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office for the Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. Brown, Sr. segment of its Governmental History Documentation Project. His eight years as state senator for Los Angeles County from 1954 to 1962, his long-standing liberal leadership within the Democratic party and the California Democratic Council, and his campaigns for the U.S. Senate in 1956 and 1962 made him a welcome participant in our documentation of state government.

As a native of southern California, Senator Richards began his political experience as a campaign worker for Congressman Jerry Voorhis while a high school student and champion debater at Alhambra High School. After earning a debate scholarship to the University of Southern California and completing his law degree at the same school, he again campaigned for Voorhis in his losing congressional race in 1946 against Richard Nixon. An ardent Democratic liberal, Senator Richards' broad involvement in the inner workings of the party and his role in setting up the California Democratic Council formed his base to defeat Mildred Younger in 1954 to become state senator from Los Angeles County. As state senator he was, among other things, the leading proponent of water rights for southern California during the legislative struggle over the California Water Plan in both the Knight and Brown administrations. In addition to his legislative achievements, his two races for the U.S. Senate have distinguished him as a consistent and active campaigner in both the state and national political arenas.

I first met Senator Richards in his spacious law offices in downtown Los Angeles on December, 1978. From the window of his office we were blessed with a rare wintry vista of the distant San Gabriel Mountains and the Los Angeles basin. After introductions and a slight delay in finding an electrical outlet for my recorder, Senator Richards launched into a candid narration of his personal history, his involvement in Democratic party politics in Los Angeles County, his role in the formation of the California Democratic Council, and his own and other state-wide Democratic races in 1954. Further interviews covered his two campaigns for the U.S. Senate, his remarks on the structure and changes in state senate operations, and his important role in the struggle for the California Water Plan. All the interviews were conducted in Senator Richards' law offices. In that ambience he was moved to challenge each question and counter with a reply that testified to his political acumen and debating skills.

After rough-editing, the lengthy interview transcript was forwarded to the senator for final review. He quickly reviewed the transcript and returned it to our office with few changes.

The following memoir of Senator Richards encompasses his broad political experiences in California politics. Scholars of the California Water Plan, the California Democratic Council, and the twists and turns of Democratic party politics in the Knight-Brown era will appreciate this forceful narrative of a veteran participant in California's political history.

James H. Rowland
Interviewer/Editor

27 November 1979
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

I RETRACING A PERSONAL HISTORY

[Interview I: December 5, 1978]##

Family Background

Rowland: You have an idea what our project's about?

Richards: From the correspondence I do. I received two letters, one of them in November, November the thirteenth, and another one from you on the twenty-seventh.

Rowland: As I might have told you, we're doing a study of the Goodwin Knight-Pat Brown years by interviewing legislators on legislation, issues, and events.

What I'm particularly interested in with you is--I see you as a very comprehensive person, covering a span of years and many issues, particularly the California Water Plan. Of course, being in the state senate--that's kind of my favorite body--[laughter] you knew Hugh Burns and how he operated.

Richards: Oh, yes.

Rowland: I'll be asking questions later on about how he and various other senators worked.

But we have a certain format which we try to follow; we're not too sticky about it. If you could give us a little bit on your family history, childhood and education--I think I outlined that for you.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 127.

Richards: Yes. Well, I don't know how much you want, but I can give it to you in a few sentences, general background. I guess you have the name; it's Richard Richards. I was born in 1916 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. My parents were--my father was of Germanic descent, and came down through a line of Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. My mother was raised in Ohio, with a family history that covers a rather broad span and not of particular interest here, I imagine, although it goes back a good deal further in American history than my father's side. My general ethnic background, as far as I know it, is Scotch, Irish, Welsh and German. I imagine the double name has some slight link to the Welsh background, because that's where I've run into other double names in the past.

I disliked the double name when I was a kid in school, because it was different. As I grew older, it didn't take long until I realized it was a distinct advantage, certainly in politics, because it was different and because it was easier to remember.

As far as education is concerned, I attended grammar school in Iowa. My family came to California prior to the great Depression, in '26. I continued grammar school out here. I went to the remainder of my schooling in California.

Rowland: Public school?

Beginnings of Political Involvement

Richards: Yes. Alhambra High, for example, of which I am very proud. It's a good high school, though it's no longer there. [laughs] They've moved it. But I feel that some of my earlier interests in politics, for example, developed while I was still in high school. In fact, I know it did. I became interested, when I was a kid in high school politics. The earliest contact of significance I remember was with Jerry Voorhis, who was a congressman at that time, or who was running for congress when I met him. He took time enough away from his usual activities and perhaps, in part, because he had a teaching background himself--he was willing to work with kids, like myself, who showed some interest. I continued that interest to the point where I was active in three congressional campaigns and managed one of them before I was twenty-one years old.

Richards: As a result, I had been pretty active in political activity of that type on the local level ever since I can practically remember. [laughs]

During the depression, my dad, who was an insurance man--he was connected as general manager, in fact west coast manager of a company which, along with many other insurance companies, went belly up in the great Depression. I had to go to work, therefore, rather young, while I was still in high school. I did go to work and helped support the family, because Dad didn't work after that.

Fortunately, because I was a debater at Alhambra High with a moderate amount of success, I got a full-time scholarship to USC [University of Southern California]; otherwise, I couldn't have gone to school. That put me through my A.B. degree, four years at USC on a full scholarship. Then I went to Harvard Law School for '39 and '40, and then was offered a job teaching at USC to finish law school, because again, the family needed a little bit of help, and I was spending money at Harvard whereas I could make it at USC. So I came back on a fellowship, and finished my law at USC.

The war came along, and I was able to pass the bar fortunately just before the war hit, and therefore that didn't interrupt (as it did for some others of my generation) the law training. After the war, I came back and started my own practice, and shortly thereafter I went again into political activity. I worked my way up in the [Los Angeles] county committee, and--we'd better break off there, because I don't know how you want to handle this, whether you want to go into county committee activity or what.

Rowland: Well, why don't you go right into this first xerox I sent you on--

Richards: How the CDC started?

Rowland: How the CDC started up, yes.

Richards: Let me bring my wife into the picture, because she was always very active politically at the local level. She is now deceased, unfortunately. She died in '74. But she and I were married in the latter part of the war years. She had been active, as I had, prior to that time on the local level. As a result, it was because of her activity with various local people who then were my friends and remained friends with both of us for a long time thereafter, that when I first ran for the assembly--

Richards: As a matter of fact, that's not quite correct. It goes back so darn far--these things run together like a montage. My first race for assembly started before I was twenty-one years old. Having been active in the Alhambra area--

Rowland: This was before the war?

Richards: Yes, when I was in USC. I took some time--well, I didn't take time off, really. I remained a student and got a bunch of other kids together and I became a candidate for assembly in the old 53rd assembly district, which is Alhambra, San Gabriel, South Pasadena and San Marino, at that time, a heavily Republican district. Not exactly a choice area for a Democrat, let alone an inexperienced one, to run, but I did. I got clobbered, of course, but I learned quite a bit from that first race. We did our own work. We put up our own signs. We made our own signs and so on.

It was quite interesting. My wife, to whom at that time I was not yet married, was active in the local area. Then we started to go together, and thereafter while I was in the service, she continued to develop a bit of an organization, and as a result, had sort of a ready-made campaign for me when I got back. I ran for assembly the second time also in the same tough district. In that instance--and I've forgotten the year--I was nominated by the Democratic party, but beat by Montivel Burke, who was the incumbent, in the finals. This was still when the Republicans were in heavy sway, and we had cross-filing. It was a difficult time for any Democrat.

Rowland: I have two questions. First of all, why did you get involved with the Democratic party when the Democratic party was in second place at that time? The second question is, what attracted you to politics?

Richards: Well, as I mentioned earlier, Jerry Voorhis' contact. Jerry was a liberal Democrat. My instincts--I was a debater at the time in high school, and I don't recall ever being at all intrigued in any other possibility, or any other party involvement other than the Democratic party. It never entered my head to.

Rowland: Were your parents Democrats?

Richards: No. My dad was a rather active Republican. My mother was a Democrat. But neither of them were active in the sense that I was. Neither one ever ran for office or worked in local politics. But Dad was fairly well-known as a Republican and was rather outspoken, quite articulate. As a result--although his name was Dean W. Richards, his nickname was Dick. So when I ran on the

Richards: Democratic ballot and they saw Dick Richards, I'm sure that nine out of ten people thought it was my dad and were astonished to see the Democratic registration. [laughter] As a matter of fact, I'm not sure that my dad voted for me. He indicated he wouldn't, although the impression that comment gives of the differences between us should not be carried out, because we were really rather close. We did not have differences, except on the political level.

Rowland: Was it your parents early involvement in politics that attracted you to politics?

Richards: No, I think not. I think it was my work in debate, my work in high school, my interest in public affairs that developed as an active debater. I had been west coast debate champion, California oratorical champion, president of the California Debate League, re-elected three times. That's why I got my scholarship to USC. So I was active in that point of view in public affairs.

Rowland: Focusing on an ideological framework, which from study shows to be quite liberal, was that a tendency in your family to be quite liberal on issues?

Richards: No, it was a tendency of my own, and the people with whom I associated. Again, I attribute it to high school association, and particularly to work with Jerry Voorhis, who was quite liberal, and who as you may remember--in fact, when Richard Nixon was first heard from, it was as a candidate against Jerry Voorhis. So my first involvement with Nixon goes way back to the first time Jerry was defeated.

When I managed one of Jerry Voorhis' campaigns, he was elected. The next time after that, I was a candidate myself and this was the year when Jerry was defeated. I was nominated, he was also nominated, and we were running together in the same district, so to speak, although there were three assembly districts in his congressional district. He was defeated that year by Nixon. So that goes way back.

Then I was active, of course, in the Helen Gahagan Douglas campaign against Nixon, so these involvements are rather consistent. I was always on the liberal Democratic side, straight on through my election into the legislature.

Rowland: Was this in conflict with your parents ideological base?

Richards: No, I don't think so. No. As I say, my parents were not truly active. It was almost like a joke when people found out that Dad was not the one who was running. But they were somewhat surprised

Richards: because, as I say, he was an outspoken Republican in his own beliefs. But he did not, in any time, attempt to limit me in my activity. My mother did not either. In fact, she was a Democrat and rather encouraged me. They were both rather well along by that time. They both passed away shortly after the war. I was born late in life, as an only child.

Rowland: Oh, you are an only child.

Richards. Yes.

Rowland: Like me. [laughs]

Richards: Well, there are a lot of us around. [laughter] My wife was also an only child.

No, it would not be correct to attribute my political interest or my activity to my parents. Neither would it be correct to attribute it as a counterbalance to them. No, that was not involved either way. I had nothing but encouragement from my folks in whatever I did. They spoiled me beautifully as I went forward--again, as an only child.

Rowland: What turning points in your childhood can you recall to attribute to--?

Richards: I think the turning point was being a self-acknowledged absolute failure, which I felt like when I first entered high school, not having done anything worthwhile in grammar school.

I came to two people--Lillian Zellhoefer and a Miss Walker, both of whom were in the area of oral expression and debate, both of whom were teachers at Alhambra High. Both of them I'm quite confident have now passed away. I know Lillian Zellhoefer has. I'm not sure of Miss Walker, but she was older than Zellhoefer, and I lost track of her. I think she probably is no longer with us. In any event, they both influenced me greatly as teachers. They gave me the opportunity to go forward in debating activity and public speaking, which I think contributed both to my political activity and later to my legal work.

Rowland: Were you involved in sports at all?

Richards: Not to any great degree, no. I was editor of the local high school paper and head of the debate club locally, and I was commissioner general, which is like president of the student body, at one point. A few things like that. But this is all high school activity. High school was a group of minor end-to-end successes from my point of view [laughter], having not accomplished anything that I thought amounted to anything up to that time.

Richards: High school was a period that I look back on as being very pleasant. I think it was during that time that my public drive developed. The contact with Jerry Voorhis would of course be the next one, in which he helped shape the practical political activity of the very early years.

Rowland: One last question relating to your family. Had your parents completed high school and college and wanted you to continue on?

Richards: My mother was a graduate of Cornell University. My dad had never gone to college. And I couldn't have gone to college had it not been for the scholarship I had at USC.

Rowland: That scholarship was for--

Richards: --all four years. I never paid a cent tuition in my life, which is fortunate, because if I'd had to, I couldn't have done it. [laughs] Which, incidentally, although it's not involved in this study, I am endeavoring now to set up some money for a comparable scholarship at USC, in which I will endow it.

Rowland: USC seems to be a breeding ground for a lot of politicians in the Los Angeles basin.

Richards: Well, could be, although it had a rather conservative reputation when I went there. The reason I went to USC was that they offered me that scholarship. It was not a matter of any political reason. As a matter of fact, as I got more active in politics, I felt that USC, to which I now feel--as I've already said--somewhat indebted because of this scholarship, because of enabling me therefore to get an education, and a debt which I intend to pay back, and I'm doing so now indirectly by setting up comparable scholarships.

The negative side of it is that as I became more active, including getting elected to public office, I felt that I was being considerably ignored by the USC hierarchy that tended to support the Republican side in those days rather consistently. I don't think that's true in recent years, but I think it was certainly true then.

In my campaign, Mildred Younger, for example--who I defeated for state senate--was also a USC grad, also a USC debater. In fact, she was debating at USC in the women's club at the same time that I was debating in the men's club. So we'd known each other from way back. She had all kinds of local publicity and what appeared to be support from the USC hierarchy at that time. And I did not.

Rowland: Even though she was a woman?

Richards: Well, yes. I think largely because of the fact that she was on the Republican side. She's a very competent gal, by the way. She's still around. So I don't mean to deprecate that. But I think that the difference in attention was part--I really accepted it, because there again, the background at USC in those days was quite conservative. UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] was considered the more liberal school on the way up. It probably still is, to some degree. But I think the differences politically are muted now by comparison.

II TURNS AND TWISTS OF PARTY POLITICS IN LOS ANGELES

Democratic County Infighting

Rowland: Turning to the subject we were just getting into, about the Democratic party, I'm referring to this xeroxed newsclipping on the Democratic leadership surrounding James Roosevelt's gubernatorial campaign. I don't know if you had a chance to look at that. [see Sacramento Bee, August 24, 1950]

Richards: I didn't pick you up on that. I'm sorry. I intended to, and then I digressed myself.

I was talking about my wife, and the reason I was is because she knew a number of people who, when Jimmy Roosevelt came to California, also knew Jimmy. It was through Niocy and these people--Niocy being my wife [Bernice]--that I met Jimmy. We not only became well acquainted, but Niocy worked for him as a volunteer I think through the entire time that Jimmy was active, and/or part of the time, she worked for him as a paid worker in Jimmy's office, when Niocy and I were in the tail end of this time when we were going together and in the earlier part of our married life. During that time, of course, I was a struggling young lawyer and just beginning to establish myself. Therefore, Niocy's working helped.

Anyway, we got well acquainted with Jimmy and all the people around Jimmy. The inference I gathered from your earlier comment was that you're not clear that we were on Jimmy's side. We were.

Rowland: Okay. We are clear that you were friends. The reason I brought this out is that this article describes a conservative revolt against yourself and Glenn Anderson over a Korean War resolution that you and Glenn did not want as a county committee resolution.

Richards: During the time there were all kinds of factions with the [Los Angeles] county committee. The county committee experience was one that extended over several years, as far as my political growth is concerned. Having run for the assembly so very early in life gave me a link to the grassroots base, such as it was, which includes the local organization of clubs which as yet did not call themselves CDC [California Democratic Council], and also to the county committee--the county committee is made up of representatives selected locally, seven to a district. One of the automatic involvements of the county committee is to be a candidate and a nominee of the party to any public office--in which case, you are then a member of the county committee.

I think, as I recall, my first membership in the county committee came by virtue of my having been a candidate for the assembly. In any event, I was a member of the county committee and then I remained active with the county committee and worked my way up in the county committee to vice-chairman.

We had a long, knock-down drag-out bitter fight with the then representative of the conservative faction, named [Rollin] McNitt. I remember that campaign very well. There was an awful lot of internal fighting and activity. The county committee in those days was a pretty active entity, politically. It was the nucleus of whatever political activity existed in southern California--very much unlike the present, where it's faded into an innocuous dissolution.

I've had some trouble finding out what they are doing. They're not doing a whole lot now, in the natural drift of political events, not because of any problem there, I don't think. It's just because politics are on a different level now, since TV and other factors have played their part.

The county committee was really the nucleus of local activity. It soon became the nucleus of whatever club activity existed. It certainly was the nucleus of the internal disputes within the Democratic party, including the liberal versus conservative differences: the McNitt-Richards fight again put me on the liberal side, McNitt on the conservative side. I beat him, and then became vice-chairman and then later became chairman of the county committee, following Glenn Anderson. He and I worked together over the years.

Glenn was in the assembly at the time. He was county chairman. Being an office-holder, he could not function as chairman, in a practical sense, on a meeting by meeting basis. Therefore, although I was vice-chairman, in those days I functioned as chairman for

Richards: about a year or two. When he was available, obviously he was chairman. But he was often not available because of his Sacramento duties. And then thereafter I succeeded him as chairman and stayed in for a couple of terms, I guess it was.

I in turn was succeeded by Don Rose, who's still a friend of mine. He's now down at Laguna being a retired postmaster of Laguna. He had moved from L.A. county in later years.

I suppose what you would want to do is to link county committee activity with the CDC growth, ultimately, because they were linked, if you want to get into that next. I'm doing all the talking here. You'd better interrupt me, [laughter] because you'll wind one of us up--away we go! [laughter]

Rowland: I just finished talking to Butch Powers, and--

Richards: How is Butch? I haven't seen him for quite awhile.

Rowland: Quite well, quite well.

Richards: Is he out on the ranch?

Rowland: Yes. It's quite big, it's huge. But he's thinking of selling it.

Richards: Really? Butch--I haven't seen him in years. But he was a rancher of some substance, as I recall.

Rowland: He has a lot of acres in Elk Grove. Maybe for reasons of health--

Richards: I assume that one of his problems was not and never would be money, and therefore I'm surprised to hear that he's selling the ranch. What's he going to do, retire from ranching?

Rowland: I'm not quite sure what he's going to do. It sounded like he was going to retire.

Richards: Well, of course he's getting a little long in the tooth like a lot of us.

Rowland: Yes, right. Anyway, getting back to this point here. We were talking about the split over the Korean War resolution. I was wondering if this had larger ramifications. I think you've mentioned about this ideological--

Richards: I think it would be difficult to break it down into issues, and of course some of the issues would be pertinent now and some of them would not. But the split was continuous in that--and this is what gave spice and ginger to the meeting. It was in the open.

Richards: Incidentally, we had large media coverage. Our county committee used to be covered by three newspapers: the [Los Angeles] Times, the [Los Angeles] Examiner, and the old [Los Angeles] Herald-Express. We used to be covered by LIFE magazine; not unusually, by two or three national publications, and often times had photographers there waiting for the action. [laughs] Because there was action. We had one man who dropped dead, while he was speaking to the county committee at the microphone, of a heart attack because of his feelings running so high, which I'm sure contributed to it.

We had one man who came charging down the aisles and clobbered another speaker with a crutch. [laughs] He was, incidentally, a man who retired to Palm Springs, who was a well-known writer at the time.

Rowland: The one on crutches?

Richards: The one who wielded the crutch, yes. When he came down--I was presiding at the time, and when I saw him coming down the aisle, I thought he was coming down merely to ask for the opportunity to speak. Instead of that, whack! [laughter] He takes his crutch and takes care of the guy who's been at the mike.

In a more serious vein, we had some very significant fights over issues. We took our votes very seriously in those days, not like kid stuff, and they both were duly recorded and duly reported. In those days, of course, the press was more conservative than it is now, and therefore I think, part, in fairness, of the reason for our getting so much coverage was if the Democrats could be seen fighting among themselves, the Republicans liked it very much. [phone rings, tape off briefly]

Influence of Jack Tenney and Sam Yorty

Rowland: What was the influence of Tenney and Sam Yorty on Democratic party policies in these early years before the CDC formation?

Richards: Well, the first influence, which was considerable, was Tenney's, because of the Tenney committee.* Tenney was the outstanding example of the roaring reactionary in our eyes, and stood for everything negative that we then young, Democratic liberals believed in. Jack Tenney had made the full circle from extreme left to moderate left to middle left to the right-wing of the Democratic party, and then out of the Democratic party into the Republican party, and then out of the Republican party finally into some outfit that was even to the right of that. As far as you could go.

The reason I take you through that circle, with which I'm sure you're familiar, is that Yorty made the same circle. Yorty is another one (though he's still around and Tenney is not). In my opinion, Yorty is at the moment an absolute idiot politically. He, for a long time, however, was a definite detrimental political influence on the party. There is one area in my political history that--I deem it to be a temporary lapse of political sanity. That's when I actually reached the point, at one of the Democratic conventions, of nominating Yorty for public office.

Rowland: In '54?

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: When he ran for the [U.S.] Senate?

Richards: Yes. I said that I was supporting the labor position at that time. Because I was then quite well known for my own liberal views. I think they felt that if I were to support Yorty this would bring some liberal votes and support for him, which he badly needed. I did not then recognize--

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Richards: --what I now feel, is an absolute absence of Yorty's belief in any political motivation which is meaningful, other than self-service. In other words, I never supported him since and I never would.

*The Tenney committee, founded in 1941, was the Joint Legislative Un-American Activities Committee. In 1947, it became the Senate Un-American Activities Committee. Jack B. Tenney was state senator from Los Angeles who authored legislation that created the committee in 1941. He was committee chairman from 1941 to 1949.

- Rowland: Now you mentioned the Tenney committee and the Tenney committee hearings. Did they affect the party? Did Tenney, for instance, try to build a file of liberal Democrats?
- Richards: Oh, I have no doubt that he did. I have no doubt that he did, and I imagine that most of our people who were active at the time would find themselves in the little red book, if they looked. No one, however, took things from our point of view seriously other than as a target for attack. We considered it to be a far out anti-Democratic group that was nothing but negative in its motivation and its effect. It should have been eliminated. I mean, no one took it seriously enough to say, "We or anyone we know will trim our sails because of that committee."
- Rowland: I've got to ask you one question. Do you know Richard E. Combs, or do you know of him?
- Richards: I don't think so.
- Rowland: Combs was the counsel and the investigator for the Tenney and the Burns committees.
- Richards: That's where I heard the name. That's why I had to ask you, because it rang a bell. But the answer is no, I do not, and did not, and never have known him.
- Rowland: You never met him when you were in the senate?
- Richards: I don't believe so. I don't believe so. But I do recognize the name, and that's why, merely because I've see it in print in that category.
- Rowland: [laughs] That's still the biggest mystery. I'm probably the expert on the Burns committee, and I still don't know anything about Richard E. Combs, other than what's been printed in Mary Ellen Leary's article.
- Richards: We haven't reached the Burns committee yet, though. We're still talking about Tenney.
- Rowland: I know. But I just had to bring that out. I'd be interested to hear anything than anyone knows about Richard E. Combs.
- Richards: Well, the link, if any, between the Tenney committee and the Burns committee is somewhat vague in my mind. You would be better informed in that, having studied it yourself, than am I. The reason it's vague is because by the time I got into public office

Richards: and was there in a position to have met, and of course known, Hugh Burns for example. Since I beat Tenney, and had to in order to get into office--Tenney was my first opponent when I was running for state senate, because we still had cross-filing. So I had to beat--

Rowland: Oh, that's right. Mildred Younger is the one who eventually beat him--

Richards: --on the Republican side, and I had to beat him on the Democratic side or he would have been the Democratic nominee. How Tenney was registered made no difference. So I had to beat Tenney on the Democratic side and Younger had to beat Tenney on the Republican side, and Younger and I met each other in the finals. [tape turned off and restarted] Yes, so Tenney was on both tickets at that time.

That, of course, is because we had not yet eliminated cross-filing.* My side was working to get rid of it over many years prior to that, and we finally got rid of it after I was elected. I don't mean to imply because I was elected, but all of us that were getting into office in those days--there was a beginning of the upsurge of the Democrats, two years after I was elected, because of getting rid of cross-filing. It amounted to a real upsurge of Democratic power in the legislature.

When I was first elected, we had finished a long period of Republican domination. The year I was first elected to the state senate, which was 1954, did not end Republican domination, but it was the beginning of the end of it. We were making our first inroads. It was the next election, two years thereafter, that showed a real Democratic forward surge. The elimination of cross-filing insured Democratic opportunities to equate the number of people elected and their strength with their registration at home for the first time, because registration under cross-filing was a meaningless operation.

*Cross filing was eliminated in 1959.

III FORMING THE CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL

Opposition from Incumbent Democrats

Rowland: I have in my notes here a little question that says, "How did the CDC come into existence?"

Richards: Well, I think that the CDC came into existence because a number of people needing an expression of political activity locally had formed themselves into clubs. The clubs had no nucleus of central activity other than--

Rowland: Volunteers?

Richards: Yes, they were volunteer organizations entirely, sure. Unpaid, of course, and just a little gathering of people at the local level in various communities who felt that they wanted to be more active politically. They found that the club method was a means of doing it. Glenn Anderson had helped to support this move. I had, both locally and in my work in the county committee, Glenn in his work in the county committee, so many others, whom we haven't named, all of whom--obviously there were many people who had helped foster this.

The county committee itself was the only nucleus that they had, in that there was a continual debate back and forth as to whether the county committee could charter clubs, whether clubs were not official if they were not chartered, et cetera, et cetera. And because various county committees varied considerably in their degree of activity and authority locally--for example, the county committee in Los Angeles County was extremely active over many years, whereas up north, the county committees weren't doing anything. Therefore the county committee, as such was not a satisfactory statewide nucleus for the club.

- Richards: Now come along people like Alan Cranston, [Glenn] Anderson and his associates, all or our people who wanted to foster the club activity, and the CDC gradually grew into a concept.
- Rowland: As we see out of our office, we seem to get the indication that it was primarily the Stevenson campaign which fostered the interest in volunteer politics.
- Richards: It was really before that that it was growing in California. The Stevenson campaign gave it life. Stevenson became, as you can see in the picture behind you [points to photograph on wall] an idol to many of us in that period. It is therefore, I think, correctly attributable to the Stevenson campaign that the club movement grew into a meaningful statewide entity. But it was already there. It was already in being. We had already had some of our statewide meetings. But I guess the best way to leave it is the way I just put it: Stevenson breathed additional life into the whole movement.
- Rowland: So volunteer organizing was something that was beginning even as far back as the Roosevelt campaign in '50?
- Richards: That's right. We had clubs being formed at that time. For example, when I first ran for the state senate, having been county chairman for a few years, I depended heavily upon club activity for my success on a county wide basis. Then when I ran for U.S. Senate two years thereafter, the club activity formed a large part of our political organization, such as it was.
- Rowland: It wasn't called the CDC at that time, the California Democratic Council?
- Richards: No, but that was in process of heavy formation at that time, without a title, because there had been meetings state-wide between the clubs in an effort to bring them all together.
- Rowland: I have mentioned in here, in the topic outline you might have noticed, I have mentioned conflicts with what I have called bipartisan Democrats: that is, those Democrats who came out of the New Deal who adopted more like a Republican party stance under cross-filing, such as Hugh Burns, for instance. These were mainly representatives from the Central Valley, I suppose.
- Richards: That's right. They were conservative Democrats, out of the Central Valley. Burns is a good example. This was a different branch, of course, of the party than my branch, so to speak. I certainly don't attribute it to the New Deal as such. Perhaps it is because

Richards: some of them came out of a pre-club organization period and incidentally, frowned upon the club, because they frowned upon local grassroots political activity.

There are those who, at that time, at least the way we envisioned them, were people who wanted to run the Democratic party from on top. They wanted the officeholders and incumbents to be the ones who ran the party, and the less local activity you had, the better, because they would not be challenged in their authority. Those of us who were at that time on the way up, the young liberals, were looking to a greater voice in the party, and were somewhat suspicious of the older officeholders. Particularly those who had survived under cross-filing, because the only way you can survive under cross-filing is to play down issues. The clubs were issue oriented. We were issue oriented.

Rowland: Would Jack Tenney fit into that category also?

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: Was he antagonistic to club formation?

Richards: Oh, sure. In fact, all of older Democrats, it seems to me, who were prominent during the period of cross-filing tended to feel that not only the clubs--which I don't think they understood, other than as a threat locally, were bad, but they thought that issue orientation was not the way to go.

The ones on the way up were heavily issue oriented, and of course this was contributed to by Stevenson. This was contributed to by the club. This was contributed to by the CDC. This was contributed to by our local fight within the county committee over the course of years--all those fights were centered on issues. That which caused more and more new people to become active in the party was because of their interest in issue orientation and a desire to do something about it. It was not unusual to clash on issues within the framework of our party. The Roosevelt group, for example, differed strongly with those who had been running the party prior to Jimmy's coming in. Jimmy had less than spectacular success in taking over the party, although he was national committeeman for a period of at least two years, and this formed a nucleus and a platform for him around which a number of our people circulated. But I think issue orientation has to be considered a central factor in the growth of the club movement and in the coming forward of a new breed at that time, just as we're seeing now another full circle and a new breed coming forth, different from certainly our group.

Rowland: Now turning to the '52 campaign, I have a note here that you and George Miller supported Estes Kefauver in the primary, the '52 primary.

Richards: Yes, but without any great enthusiasm. Kefauver didn't catch fire, with the exception of some very ardent Kefauver partisans, of which I did not happen to be one. My support of Kefauver should largely be attributed as I recall it, to a party loyalty, or a faction loyalty within the party, in that I was supporting any candidate who had a reasonable chance on the then-liberal side of the party, and Kefauver was considered that.

But he did not set the grassroots afire, except in various isolated incidences largely limited to northern California, incidentally. He didn't do like Stevenson did, in which you had the fight-and-die Stevensonian types, who went all out for Adlai, practical or not, because of a full feeling of enthusiasm for the things he stood for and his terrible leadership and his articulation of issues. It was quite important to us. Kefauver didn't get that deep into it.

Rowland: Did this go against the party leadership?

Richards: Sure, against the eastern leadership, for example. You remember the Stevenson--incidentally, in those days, during that whole period of political activity, from the time I was vice-chairman until I went through the matter of state representation--that is, being a state senator and running for U.S. Senate--I attended I think as a delegate virtually every Democratic convention for a period of I don't know how many conventions. I don't think I ever missed one until the last one, which I deliberately missed. In any event, that covered quite a span. You will remember, from those conventions, the same kind of fight on a different level, in which the establishment Democrats in Chicago, for example, wanted no part, even though Stevenson was an Illinois man.

Rowland: They wanted Kefauver?

Richards: No. I'm not trying to limit it to the Kefauver thing. I'm speaking of those who opposed the establishment in California, who were somewhat comparable to those who opposed the establishment nationwide. The establishment itself usually took the conservative position. Although we find, for example, Stevenson being the Democratic nominee, we find it being over the dead bodies of a good many very conservative Democrats nationwide and in California. That's as far as Stevenson is concerned.

Rowland: Who were those conservative Democrats that you would point out during this period, '52, '53?

Richards: Oh, boy. There you're getting back into--I would have to have you ask me.

Rowland: Hugh Burns?

Richards: Well, of course, he would be one of them. Yes.

Incidentally, Hugh Burns is somewhat of an enigma, in the sense that--and you having studied this perhaps and found this out, or perhaps you disagree with me. Whereas Tenney, for example, was a leader of the right-wing position, and a spokesman for the Tenney committee, which we liberals all hated that committee, as well as the successive committee which was the Burns committee. Although we detested that committee, we did not really link Hugh Burns to it to any great degree because he was relatively inactive. Hugh just lent his name to it. He was that kind of a guy. Hugh Burns and I, for example, coming up on opposite sides of the political spectrum, had no trouble getting along. None at all. Hugh always treated me with great friendship.

I don't recall ever asking for anything, since he was part of the "club," which you mentioned here in your outline, which is correct. And I, as a newly-elected legislator, was certainly not for a number of reasons: I was a liberal and I represented the urban area, whereas Hugh and his people represented the rural area and I was entirely different from all the rest of the legislators because of this crazy situation prior to "one man-one vote," in which I represented forty-two percent of the entire state of California.* As such, I was kind of set aside. [laughs]

Hugh could have either ignored me or attacked me or whatever. He didn't do any of these things. All that group were very friendly, very helpful whenever I asked for something of a mechanical nature, such as I needed more secretaries, I got them. I worked seventeen secretaries at one point there, which was the high point of my overly large constituency.

It would not be correct to assume that Hugh was of the same stamp, therefore, in our thinking as Jack Tenney. Hugh was sort of a passive conservative whose main job was to see to it that

*The "one man-one vote" decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964 ordered state legislatures to apportion themselves by population and not by arbitrary designations. The California Senate, prior to 1966, had been apportioned by counties.

- Richards: things went smoothly within the senate. We accepted him on that basis. We did not consider Hugh a personal enemy, therefore, as we did Jack Tenney.
- Rowland: But Hugh would be one of those Democrats who condemned issue politics?
- Richards: Oh, yes. Against issue politics, against clubs, and would normally find himself on the conservative side on an issue. And we accepted that, just like he knew I was normally on the liberal side, and he accepted that.
- Rowland: From our research in the office, we get the indication that Stevenson ran what you might call a sleeper campaign, without any parades and gallery packing--things that normally accompanied the presidential campaign.
- Richards: I think that's probably true. I think a lot of that can be attributable to two things. One of them is a lack of sufficient financing, which was very difficult for a man in his position. Because he was on the liberal side of the spectrum and did not have establishment support, he likewise did not have, therefore, a great deal of media support, nor did he have the usual money-raising facilities of the conservative branch of the party.
- Rowland: And by the establishment support, you mean the support of those east coast, primarily northeastern bloc of--?
- Richards: That's right. It would also be true in California, except that as you well know, California was relatively unorganized from that point of view. We don't have anything like New York or Chicago or any of the other established cities, by way of historic political organizations. Cross-filing is partly due to that, and the unique nature of California and also its rapid growth immediately following World War II is another reason.
- Rowland: It seems like you were really quite close with Adlai Stevenson. If you could give us a personality profile--
- Richards: Of Stevenson? Well, it would be somewhat consistent with what we all read, I think, in that I thought Stevenson was one of the smartest people, the most intelligent and articulate, that our generation has developed. He was entirely sincere, in my opinion. He was a man, therefore, who logically would cause idealists to flock to his banner because I think he was an idealist.

I'm not sure whether he would have made as great a president as we thought then, because as others have said, Stevenson's own knowledge of issues was such that it was rare that he didn't see

Richards: both sides of an issue, and struggle with both sides. He therefore had considerable difficulty in reaching a simple bottom-line conclusion, which is often required in politics if you're going to sell your point of view. Stevenson was in that way, for example, different from Truman, who had no trouble wrestling with his conscience or anything else. Truman simply came to a quick decision, said, "That's my decision. That's the way it's going to be." He'd lay it out. To the degree that it was right, this was fine. It's certainly easier to sell a position of that type. I think, therefore, Truman's leadership was more quickly recognized. He also was a more conservative man, of course, than Stevenson, so that not only Stevenson's tendency to be less than dogmatic made it difficult for him to be an ultimate leader.

But, I think Stevenson's liberalism, in that period of time, militated against his rapid acceptance on the part of the politicians nationwide whose support was truly necessary, if you're to put all the pieces together and elect a president.

Rowland: Now was it immediately after Kefauver lost the primary that you turned to the full support of the Stevenson camp, or did you have to warm up to the Stevenson camp?

Richards: No, I think immediately after. As a matter of fact, I think had the two been available alternatives, there never would have been, as far as I personally was concerned, any Kefauver support. It would always have been Stevenson. The only reason for the Kefauver support was as an intermediary thing, because that was all that was available at that point. Although Kefauver was a fine man, I do not link him with any great idealistic drive, so far as those of us who were then looking for leadership are concerned.

The Asilomar Meeting: Principal Personalities

Rowland: Turning to the CDC, one of the first big meetings of the CDC, as you well know, was the one at Asilomar in January 1953. Could you give us a picture of that meeting, what went on, the issues, the role of George Miller and Cranston himself?

Richards: Well, I think that was a pivotal gathering of the club people. The reason we all remember it is because it was after that that the CDC became a recognized public entity. You mentioned two people who were extremely active. George Miller was one of the liberals up north, like our group down south. You've got Miller up there, and he was a minority, because there weren't that many liberals up north. I mean, San Francisco later developed a lot of them.

Richards: But in those days, they were hard to find. George was one of the early ones, coming out of the Contra Costa group. He and Bert Coffey, who's now state chairman, by the way--Bert was always one of his supporters and right-hand men.

George provided leadership for that group up there, somewhat like, going back further, Jerry Voorhis did for some of us in the very, very early days down here.

Cranston was another articulate exponent of the club movement and of the things that could be done by grassroots Democrats and particularly, as all of them that we've now named, were doing. That was to provide some basis for local people to become activated in political activity in the Democratic party with an emphasis on issue orientation and the liberalism that goes with it, which was part and parcel of the club movement. Therefore, you found two groups who would necessarily be antagonistic to the club movement: one, those who wanted to maintain control without being bothered with the grassroots, or challenged by them; and two, those who wanted to maintain a conservative aspect of the party, without any interjection of the liberalism which was then being reflected, which they thought was far out left. Nowadays, we look upon it as being very mild, but it was considered far out then.

The fight in the county committee which I remember you mentioned--I think one of the clippings that you have has to do with the turning out of the lights at the county committee when I was presiding. Those lights did go out. The only reason that that is significant is because it was just before we reached a vote on the aid to Greece and Turkey, which was a Truman position and which some of us opposed, because we thought that it was a non-liberal position which might lead to international conflict, and which, by the way--

Rowland: --was a very important turning point in the Cold War.

Richards: Yes, that's right. And it's the same kind of thing which almost a generation later--not quite--led so many of us to be from the inception antagonistic to the whole Vietnam thing. It was the same kind of deal on a comparable level, but not as well formulated, because that never had reached the nationwide basis that those of us who opposed Vietnam did. Vietnam was a virtual crusade, of course, which has stamped its impact upon the lives of practically everybody who's active in politics today.

Rowland: Now, you talked about the meeting, but I'm not quite sure about the issues that were involved at that meeting. Was there unity in that meeting? Was there kind of factions that came out, was there factionalism?

- Richards: The reason I'm not being too helpful in that is that I do not lay claim to being one of the central leaders of that meeting. I was a participant, a supporter, and one who I think helped to make it a success. But I do not recall a great deal of conflict. There must have been some that I was not privy to, because of the tremendous amount of comment that has come in later years, referring back to the Asilomar meeting. I refer to it mentally and remember it was one of a series of organizational efforts to bring something on a statewide basis out of the club movement, and as one of the more successful meetings which helped do that.
- Rowland: I would imagine this by the date, January 1953, coming right after Stevenson's defeat, that this came out of inspiration from Stevenson.
- Richards: Oh, yes, no question about that. Those of us who were strong Stevenson people were active in the Asilomar formation.
- Rowland: They wanted to carry this on, before it evaporated.
- Richards: Yes. And again, as we saw it--and I think as history proves it out--it was successful. We were successful. Our faction was successful, in that the CDC was given a base of operation which later grew into the only real muscle that in those years the party had. It was sufficient muscle, incidentally, to sweep through the legislature and to help control California politics for a period of time.
- Rowland: Now we come to the Fresno meeting--I think that's November of 1954. Again, I wondered if there was unity on all fronts at that meeting.
- Richards: There never was unity on all fronts, but I think there was enough support for the positions which did prevail, of which again Cranston and Anderson and Miller and I and others were on the same side. So whatever lack of unity there was, we were all able to prevail and carry forward. I suppose the years have mellowed the degree of memory of antagonism that no doubt was present.

I remember, for example, being what I would now consider to be a little bit ruthless towards the opposition, following my-- I laid a campaign which was successful to get elected to the chairmanship of the county committee, and I recall spending at least four meetings simply eliminating my opposition thereafter, so that there would be no more fights like that. [laughs] And there weren't.

Richards: This no doubt took place on a relatively comparable level, within the framework of the CDC fighting. But I don't recall it. I don't remember individuals persisting in their opposition within the framework of CDC. I think that our faction prevailed to the point where the other faction simply dropped out. The CDC, therefore, became known as a liberal entity, so far as a political organization is concerned. All conservatives attacked it as that.

Rowland: Who were some notable individuals in the other faction that you mentioned?

Richards: Oh, golly. Those who were left over from the--let me put it this way. Those who had run the party for a decade or more prior to the advent of the CDC. That's the best way to put it, without attempting to go through names, which would be difficult for me.

Rowland: Again, down in Los Angeles, that would probably be Tenney and Yorty.

Richards: Yes, only a whole lot broader than that.

E. George Lucky, for example, both as a rancher and a member of the--I think he made money in the milk industry, and then later struck oil, incidentally, in Texas. His name, from a financial point of view, can be literally interpreted. There are many stories about him--very interesting. He lost a fortune, when the political support that he had, failed to prevail in Washington, and they allowed for a limited period of time the importation of Argentine beef. Since he was a big beef man, for that short period of time he lost an awful lot of money. He then took what was left of his fortune and went to Texas and bought a huge ranch that had nothing on it, including water. He went after water in order to support a rebirth of his ranching activity, and he struck oil. [laughs] There again, the Lucky fortunes developed and he became a millionaire. [laughter] This is an interesting life. Anyway, he was on the conservative side of the money raising entity in southern California and really statewide.

There were a lot of people that would be considered of that faction who would certainly be opposed to CDC and everything it stood for, and were, who were gradually pushed aside as the new organizational efforts developed and became effective. They weren't all pushed aside. Everybody still needed to raise money, and people did, to the degree that they were willing to hang on.

Rowland: Within the CDC, was there friction between northern and southern California?

Richards: Yes, to some degree, but not so much within CDC as there was simply politically.

I mean, when I was first elected to the state senate, there was a division that was like the Maginot Line. [laughter] I used to have a little sign that I hung on my microphone, which said, "I don't give a damn how they do it in Los Angeles." The reason I hung it on the microphone is because that was the customary statement made by everybody in northern California. However, riding with the punch and so on and attempting to turn the thing into something less than a serious opposition, after I began to be accepted--I'm not talking personally, I'm talking about merely being the entity, which was the senator representing Los Angeles.

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Richards: The rural senators represented far fewer people and who, also in northern California, represented a very different point of view. They considered the rapid growth of southern California to be an absolute threat to them, which plays a part of course in the water program, as we developed it. It plays a part in almost every piece of statewide legislation. Gradually it became understood that if I was to adequately represent my district I would stand for those things that my district needed: to wit, southern California interests. They accepted that without vitriol.

As I say, although I would find a good number of them voting against me when the issues, naturally, were distinctly of interest to them, and when my interests were of the opposite, this was accepted again without vitriol on the part of both sides, so we could get a job done, and gradually we worked it out. Now that you have "one man-one vote," with fourteen people representing this county instead of only one, it's a lot easier to get the job done. It makes better sense, and there's less effort, I assume, to isolate the south from the north.

Rowland: One topic we want to get more information on is women in the CDC. It appears that women played quite a big role and responsibility--

Richards: Yes, I noticed that in your suggested outline with some amazement. I hadn't thought of that as such. They were accepted without question because they, the women, were extremely active in the club movement. They were therefore active in the CDC.

Rowland: Those questions come out of an oral history on women in politics.

Richards: It was nothing like the women's lit deal. There wasn't any reason for it, in the sense that they were all accepted on their own merit, and a woman who was active would be accepted without

Richards: question, one who demonstrated ability was accepted without question. Those who had less ability fell into their--water finds its own level, whether they be male or female. There really wasn't any sexual discrimination that I recall on either side. It's quite true that there were many, many women in the club movement and therefore many, many women in positions of some leadership in the CDC. That's true from the beginning. But again, you're dealing with a group of liberals who had no chauvinistic feelings in their regard that were evident that I can recall.

Rowland: Did women enjoy greater equality in the clubs than in the central committee?

Richards: More than in the central committee? I don't recall that, no. Of course, the central committee by that time was run by the liberals too, the same people that made up the club, so what you say about one you could say about the other. Now when I first joined the county central committee that was certainly not true. It was run by the conservatives. That's where the internal fights took place, and we had to finally--

Rowland: When you first joined the central committee? You're talking about the--

Richards: --the county central committee. Yes, I thought that's what you meant.

Rowland: Right.

Richards: The county central committee, when I first joined it, was largely a component of the time and the calendar rather than anything else. The conservatives were running everything. When I was first elected to the county committee the conservatives were running that too. But the liberals gradually grew in their strength and we took over the county committee before the club was formed, in a central sense, and then gradually the CDC was always in liberal control, never conservative control. This is why Unruh and some of the others didn't like it.

Evaluating the CDC: Campaign Effectiveness

Rowland: Talking about Unruh, Unruh mentioned that he had his doubts about the effectiveness of the volunteer organizations versus the professional organizations. Do you feel the CDC's volunteer clubs was quite effective in--?

Richards: Well, I never would have been elected without 'em, that's for sure. Certainly they were effective. Jesse and others did not trust volunteer organizations for reasons I've already delineated, and therefore naturally would prefer professional--when you hire somebody, you control him, theoretically. And that's what happens among professional organizations. They are therefore by definition not issue oriented, and they are not volunteers because they believe in what they're doing.

Jesse prefers, as many do--I don't say it in a derogatory sense--there are a lot of quote "leaders" unquote who want to be leaders without interruption from those below. [laughs] And Jesse is one of them. And you're sure going to be interrupted from below if you're dealing with a volunteer organization. If you're dealing with people who are issue oriented, any time you depart from issues that they think are important, they're going to depart from you. So it's pretty important to keep the common drive going.

Rowland: That link then, between the candidate and his supporters is a close one with the volunteers.

Richards: Very, very close. I think the leader who is dependent upon a volunteer organization who ceases to himself be motivated by the kind of liberal drive, if that be what it is, or issue orientation that gives rise to the enthusiasm of his supporters, he's going to lose those supporters.

Rowland: Prior to the formation of the CDC, did the Democratic State Central Committee supply the campaign--?

Richards: It was never strong. It was never strong, and it, by the way, was almost always under the control of the conservatives. When the CDC came along, there was of course a mutual antagonism between the two. The state committee became even weaker as the CDC became stronger. But the state committee never did amount to much. It was merely a forum for the utilization of those who ran the party, who at that time in the early days were conservatives.

Rowland: But did they allocate money or did the campaign workers--?

Richards: Well, people with money would work through certain members of the state committee, if particularly they had a forum such as an officer--like the chairman of that state committee would be referred to as the chairman of the party in press releases, the same with the national committeeman. All it is, is a foundation from which to issue a position or press releases or whatever. Therefore people with money would work through them, but not that they

Richards: couldn't work independently: they could. The state committee was never a strong entity in California, as far back as I can remember, as a political organization.

Rowland: What was the relationship between the CDC and Washington in these early years?

Richards: In the early years, the national committee--as was evident, you I think have something here about our fight in one of the conventions when I was on the platform, working for civil rights, the civil rights and civil liberties issues were again liberal oriented. The national committee was, in the earlier years, controlled by conservatives.

Now there was, of course, as Stevenson came along, a real split that took place within the national committee. When Roosevelt came along, he was on the liberal side of the national committee effort, and he was a national committeeman, James Roosevelt, and he therefore represented a more liberal view for a limited period of time, one that was confused somewhat when the Dump Truman effort came along, which was not successful, of course.

Rowland: Going back to the women on the CDC, I have a list of women here, if you could make some comment on some of them. Nancy Swadish is the first one, and Nancy Sloss--

Richards: Neither one of them well known by me, both active.

In commenting on that, I can, for example--Suzie Clifton was one who was very active in the early days of the anti cross-filing campaign, and who although being somewhat more conservative than a number of the liberals who I mentioned, was nevertheless quite effective in developing political organization, because she worked so darn hard. Her husband was a judge. She largely I think was responsible for that, because of her year after year after year dedicated effort in the political arena. She was a Democrat, albeit somewhat more conservative than some of the rest of us, but one who we could work with, and one whom we did work with and one who you had to respect because of her work.

Rowland: Elizabeth Smith Gatov?

Richards: Yes, that was one from northern California, worked closer with Cranston.

Rowland: And Roger Kent?

Richards: Yes, that's right. Now Roger Kent was a good liberal who was one of the early monied liberals, of which we've seen a lot more in recent years. But in those days it was kind of rare to find a man with a lot of money who also was a liberal in his outlook. Roger Kent was one of them, and he helped raise money in northern California and sometimes statewide for liberal candidates.

Rowland: Is Libby Gatov the same as Elizabeth Smith? I'm not quite sure.

Richards: Yes. Because of the marriage.

Rowland: Clara Shirpser?

Richards: Yes, another one from northern California.

Rowland: She was Berkeley centered.

Richards: Yes, most of those names are out of the north, and I got acquainted with them because of when I was running statewide, I had the support of a number of these people, but did not know them well prior to that.

Rowland: Elizabeth Snyder is one that you had worked with.

Richards: Yes, Liz Snyder is down here. Now she too is a hard worker, like I mentioned Suzie Clifton. She too was a bit more conservative than a good many of those who were in the club movement. But on the other hand, she was a good organizational worker and she worked very hard over the course of many campaigns, and usually ended up loyally supporting whoever the Democratic nominee was, whether he'd be more liberal than her normal inclinations would be or not. She also worked very closely with labor, and in the earlier days of the CDC and in the earlier days of my involvement in politics, labor was a growing entity, much more powerful for a short period of years than they were in the conservative years before that, or than they are now. I think their degree of influence is considerably less than it was for awhile, which played a part in some of these conventions, by the way, because there was a hardcore labor group that was very active. You've just named a couple of gals who were very active in it.

IV CAMPAIGNS FOR STATE AND NATIONAL OFFICES

Challenging Jack Tenney and Mildred Younger: 1954

- Rowland: Now turning to the '54 campaign--I have the little xerox I sent you from the Sacramento Bee, which is just a little blurb there on how you defeated Mrs. Younger for the senate seat in 1954. [see: Sacramento Bee, November 4, 1954]
- Richards: That's true. [laughs] What would you like to know about it?
- Rowland: We have interviewed Mrs. Younger and she described a little bit about it.
- Richards: Yes, that was a very interesting campaign.
- Rowland: Do you recall the Hazel Younger campaign?* [See following page]
- Richards: Yes, but that wasn't any doing on our part. Jack Tenney--she knows that too, and probably said so. Though I haven't seen Millie since the campaign, I do see her husband from time to time. I think there's mutual respect there. I always respected Millie, and she knows darn well that we had nothing to do with Hazel Younger. That was kind of a cheap-shot deal, and an effort was made to confuse the voters by throwing in another Younger. It was generally assumed that Jack Tenney did it, though I have no proof of it, and I don't know why it would be done anyway, because it isn't going to help anybody.

*Hazel Younger was a recently released mental patient whose name was placed on the Republican primary ballot for Los Angeles state senator in 1954. It was alleged that voters would confuse the two Youngers, thus allowing Jack Tenney to win the primary.

Los Angeles Times

SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1954

Tenney Backers' Chicanery Exposed

It is not often that political chicanery can be as quickly and fully exposed as that involved in the filing of nominating papers of Mrs. Hazel J. Younger as a candidate for State Senator from Los Angeles County.

But the certified facts as well as admissions by the perpetrator of an obvious attempt to deceive and confuse the electorate reveal one of the most outrageous abuses of public confidence in the history of local politics.

Obviously carried out in the political interests of State Sen. Jack B. Tenney and designed to damage the Senatorial candidacy of Mrs. Mildred Younger, who is opposing Tenney, the name of Mrs. Hazel J. Younger was entered in the race by Dr. Samuel D. Burgeson, a Tenney supporter.

The sordidness of Burgeson's action, aside from his intent to trick the voters, is shown by his own statement and by official records revealing that Mrs. Hazel J. Younger is a former mental patient whose detention in an institution he recommended in June, 1953.

Actually, Mrs. Hazel J. Younger was committed to Camarillo State Hospital on July 3, 1953, and was on Oct. 2, 1953, returned to her home "on indefinite leave."

Although the doctor's recommendation in June was followed by her commitment in July, Burgeson, while freely admitting that he hoped to "split" the vote that would have been cast for Mrs. Mildred Younger, denies that he knew Mrs. Hazel J. Younger was on leave from Camarillo.

He even sought to justify his action, first by maintaining that his former patient seemed perfectly normal and, second, by a contention that he is "a good right-wing Republican."

Shameful Exploitation
Meanwhile, as most fair-minded citizens will join in condemning such a disreputable and shameful exploitation of an unfortunate woman who may not even realize either the purpose or consequences of her former medical adviser's

action, the name of Hazel J. Younger probably will remain on the ballot to deceive, mislead and defraud voters opposing Tenney and desiring the election of Mrs. Mildred Younger.

Obviously, the election law should be amended to prevent any such deception—and to provide proper penalties for persons who engage in attempts to violate or evade its provisions.

The Senator himself had the support of The Times over a long period of years, although this newspaper gave its endorsement to him four years ago with a degree of hesitancy.

Because of his associations, public utterances and conduct during the four-year period now approaching conclusion The Times felt it could no longer in good conscience or self-respect continue to recommend to the electorate a public official who had increasingly demonstrated his unfitness for the post he occupies.

When Tenney this year solicited this newspaper's continued support he was informed that The Times had decided to support his opponent, Mrs. Mildred Younger, whom it regards as a better qualified and better balanced aspirant for the Senatorship.

Tenney has, in response to inquiries as to the reason for this newspaper's support, supplied a variety of explanations, none of them relevant.

The facts are simple. The Times is urging the voters not to re-elect Tenney because he has become in many respects a political demagogue, associating himself and his aims with leaders and groups dedicated to the creation and dissemination of racial hatred and public distrust.

He is a disciple of the hate-mongering exhorter, Gerald L. K. Smith, and shares with Smith the onus of all who advance the cause of bigotry and intolerance.

An informed, alert and fair-minded electorate will have an opportunity in the June primaries to express its disapproval of the Smith-Tenney leadership and of its tactics.

Richards: She had a great deal of media support. As a matter of fact, I think she was beaten in part because she had too much media support. The [Los Angeles] Times had her picture on the front page so often that it became monotonous. In those days, the Times was much more conservative than it is now, much more Republican oriented than it is now, and we had great trouble even getting press releases adequately covered.

That was a great campaign, though. It was an enthusiastic campaign with an awful lot of people involved. It was back in the days before the media blitz, and therefore it had to be done personally. There were all kinds of debates. I debated Jack Tenney with huge overflow audiences. Then I debated Millie many times. Since she and I were both debaters, these were rather interesting debates.

Rowland: I would imagine that Jack Tenney was probably charging you with Communist associations.

Richards: Oh, sure, but by then the effectiveness of that, by the way, had been pretty well shattered.

Rowland: --had been dampened by 1954?

Richards: I think so. Not shattered, but dampened is a better word, because later it was shattered. Like now it wouldn't be taken seriously, but it was still--the red-baiting technique, which reached its peak under Nixon when he ran against Helen Douglas, I think, and which was extremely effective earlier than that when he ran against Jerry Voorhis, had started to be recognized for what it was, by the time I was running in my first campaign for state senate. That was the campaign against Millie Younger. It was still there, because the press would use it. But people understood, I think to the point where it was less effective, even though it was used consistently. And of course, to the degree that it was felt effective, it was used against me and against every other Democrat that was running, particularly liberal Democrats.

The Younger campaign, as I say, was a very active and a very interesting one, one which was quite personal in that we--

Rowland: What were the major issues?

Richards: The issues, of course, first in the primary were the straight all-out liberal versus conservative that would be engendered by virtue of Jack Tenney having been the only senator from this county for many years and having represented the extreme right wing as well as being the Republican stalwart. So that was the fundamental issue.

Richards: In the final campaign, the issues were harder to define, because Millie was nowhere near as far right as Tenney, of course. She had to go left of him in order to beat him in the primary. I was already far left of him, as had been assumed. Millie did not engage in red-baiting as I recall. She attempted to deprecate my liberalism, I am sure. But it was not bitter from that point of view. Whatever the issues of the day were, we differed sufficiently so that we had, as I say, a number of debates. I can't recall the subject matter of any one of them, specifically.

Rowland: Freeways or water?

Richards: Well, her father was a lobbyist.

Rowland: For the Superior Oil Company?

Richards: No, he represented one of the teachers' groups, ITLA [Instructional Teachers of Los Angeles] or CTA [California Teachers Association]. He may have also done some work for the water district, but I don't recall that. I do know that he represented the teachers. And of course we used that, although not too negatively. He wasn't a bad guy. But he was a member of the third house.

We likewise pointed out, naturally, Millie's Republicanism, which was not too difficult to point out, because she had every right-wing support in the area, which included people far to the right of herself, which I used. There were a lot of things that sound like gimmicks that were, however, rather effective.

For example, billboards were being used in that campaign since television had not yet come into its own, though we used TV and used it much more than it had been used in years prior to that. Billboards were still important. I remember one of the billboards of the period was--who was this gal who is rather conservatively oriented who opened and closed refrigerators on television all the time?

Rowland: Betty Furness. [laughter]

Richards: That's right. She was--the company that she worked for had "Be Sure" as their then-slogan ["You can be sure if it's Westinghouse!"] and Millie adopted that, because I think they felt that they could gain from the fact that there had been so much, in effect, free exposure of that term, so they adopted big twenty-four sheet billboards saying, "Be Sure. Vote for Mildred Younger." My campaign, I thought rather effectively, picked up that slogan and said, "Be Doubly Sure. Vote for Richard Richards." [laughter] There were a lot of twenty-four that went up and a lot of smaller ones, too. I think we clobbered them on the billboard area.

Richards: I also had used what then was the first time the technique of having--when I beat Jack Tenney and Millie had beat Jack Tenney usually everything goes blank after that for a period of many weeks before the finals--but we didn't. We took our limited resources and just had in the same green and white signs that we had used all over the country. I had a lot of grassroots supporters, because of the CDC and the clubs, which were at their peak at that time. So we had kids putting up signs all over the place, and smaller billboards which we could then afford, which just said, "Richard Richards Thanks You," and nothing more. That created a lot of attention, and so on.

Then the name was beginning to get well known, and by the finals, we had a lot of TV. The effort was to get Millie to--since I knew that with a woman on one side and a man on the other, you've got to look out, you must remain a gentleman and you're not going to get anywhere with a frontal attack.

Rowland: What kind of special tactics did you use?

Richards: The special tactic was to get her to blow her top. And we did. For example, we had a song in which a cast of thousands, it sounded like, were playing this record of "Richard Richards, we want Richards, everybody's friend," as I recall, or some deal like that. Millie never went to a meeting that she didn't have to walk between banks of public address systems that played that song, boom boom boom! Every time!

And people called in, when she had a TV showing of any kind--if it was open to questions. Our people had made it a point to contact all of the media to know what was going on at the time, to simply make sure that enough questions came in of a difficult variety.

Rowland: Do you think a woman running for a state senate seat was a liability?

Richards: I don't know. It made it tougher, of course, because no woman had even been elected to the state senate, and was not then elected to the state senate. Only in recent years have we had any. So from that point of view, I suppose it was a liability, although certainly no effort was made by our side--it would have been stupid if we'd tried--to exploit any contention that you shouldn't vote for a woman. As a matter of fact, we didn't endeavor to put forth any negative campaign, as such as I recall, aimed directly at her. The whole thing was to build us up and to get a sufficient grassroots support simply to beat her.

Richards: And we did by a very narrow margin. When it finally averaged out, the margin was just a very, very small percentage of the vote, very few votes per precinct. I think the clubs helped do it.

Rowland: Do you think the Hazel Younger affair influenced the general election?

Richards: Not at all. I don't think it played any part in the election.

Rowland: That the voters might have still been confused?

Richards: No. I don't think they were ever confused. I don't think they ever reached the point of confusing the voter. Hazel Younger didn't get anything. I don't even recall that her name stayed on the ballot, did it? If it did, she didn't get enough votes to count.

Rowland: No, her name was on the ballot, but there were allegations that the Tenney people were trying to make press out of this.

Richards: Yes, but that didn't work.

Rowland: With a woman named Younger who was mentally ill--

Richards: No, no. It really had no effect whatsoever that I can recall, and I don't think anybody thinks it did.

Rowland: About your backing for that senate campaign in 1954--

Richards: Oh, incidentally, there is a place where, in fairness, I think Millie being a woman played a part, and that is, I had a back-door advantage which was not great, but which I would not have had at all had it not been for her being a woman. Those in the north, who I did not even know, who for reasons of their own did not want the senate club invaded by a female, saw fit to engender some support for me which I'm sure that I never would have had.

Rowland: Were these Republicans?

Richards: I'm not sure whether it was Republican, but it was conservative in the sense that it was not voting support, but they got some of the third house to give support to my campaign, I am convinced. It never became obvious, but I am convinced because after I got up in the legislature, I was congratulated with an amount of enthusiasm that was beyond that which I had earned, I think in large part because there were those among the conservative establishment in the senate who did not want Millie Younger to be elected.

Rowland: As a woman?

Richards: I think that being a woman played a part in that. It may have been more than that, but it was almost her link with the third house, and whatever else I do not know. What I'm trying to say, it was not pro-Richards support. I think it was anti-Younger that it gave me. This again was not a significant thing. It was not a large amount of money, if it could be attributed to money.

Rowland: Do you recall which third house?

Richards: No, I never knew, because it was merely made available for example through some of our finance committees would receive an offer for x-number of billboards, small boards or whatever. It was that kind of thing. I don't think I would have had that otherwise. Of course, I had people working for me all over the county, like everybody does in a campaign of that type, who I never met. So I don't know how much to attribute to this. I just had a feeling after election that there were those who were not happy, would not have been happy with Millie's election, who were apparently happy with mine, although I don't think I would have been their first choice either. [chuckles]

Rowland: Butch Powers elaborated on that.*

Richards: I'm not surprised. And again, Butch could tell you more than I could as to how much they did, if anything. I just had a feeling that that group, the so-called in-group in the senate, preferred to not have the boat rocked that much from southern California. And I think that helped me, in fairness.

Rowland: How did Younger defeat Tenney? Had he just kind of burned himself out?

Richards: Tenney burned himself out because he was too far out. He had gone to such extremes that I think the public was beginning to see it. His day was over.

Rowland: Now you had received the pre-primary endorsement of the CDC--

*Interview in progress with Harold J. (Butch) Powers, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley.

Richards: Every time I ever ran for office, I had the support of the CDC and the club movement, without exception.

Rowland: And they provided some money, the organization?

Richards: Yes. By that time, though money--remember, there wasn't any money in any campaign like there is today, in which large sums are spent on the media. Therefore, if you put it into context, it would be a much smaller sum but nevertheless terribly effective, because there were small sums and therefore a small sum could be effective.

The club movement--since in those years, in my judgement it had reached its peak, they were likewise more effective than any time before or since in raising money for campaigns that they supported. And they did raise money. In fact, I had very little money from any other source.

Rowland: Do you recall your other sources?

Richards: Well, it depends on what campaign you mean. When I was first running for state senate, I don't think there would be any source, other than the grassroots Democrats, most of whom would be active in the club movement, with the exceptions we've already noted, that I couldn't identify for you because I didn't know anything about 'em.

Recalling Statewide Races in 1954

Rowland: Now, if you could give us some information or your recollections of the CDC convention regarding pre-primary endorsement of Richard Graves, Ed Roybal--

Richards: That's the one where I think I made my mistake in helping Yorty get nominated.

Rowland: Why was Richard Graves asked to run for governor? He switched party several times, had he not?

Richards: Yes. This was a sort of a strange operation, in which it was a time, place, and setting that found us--us being the Democratic party--without any ready made candidate. He came in quickly, kind of like Jimmy Roosevelt did in an earlier time, I'm sure, though I was part of that and therefore don't look at it negatively. Jimmy came in from back east and all of a sudden was an entity to be dealt with. He had a little coterie of people, including me, around him.

Richards: Richard Graves came in from nowhere, and all of a sudden was an entity to be dealt with. This was not, again--rather like Kefauver, this was not one of those things in which you're talking to the right man, because I don't know much about Dick Graves. Neither was I ever a very enthusiastic supporter of his. However, I did support him because he was, quote "the available candidate." But as far as getting enthusiastic about it and saying, "Man, this guy's going to lead us. He will be one who will be effective in the development of the issues in which we believe,"--I don't think so.

As such, his star rose suddenly and set suddenly and never got very high in the sky.

Rowland: Now Graves's real support came from Roger Kent, did it not?

Richards: I think so, and there again you see, you're talking to the wrong guy, because although those of us who went along with it went along because a lot of our own people were in that camp, for whatever reason, we were--

Rowland: In northern California.

Richards: Yes, we were confronted with the Graves candidacy rather than developing it.

Rowland: What about Cranston? Who was pushing Cranston?

Richards: Same deal. I don't know. I think that Cranston supported it, but I don't recall with any great activity or probably, enthusiasm.

Rowland: We have a note here that Alan Cranston did not mention Graves's name at all in the keynote speech at the CDC--

Richards: I don't think he was ever strongly for Graves, as I recall. As I've told you, I don't think a lot of the rest of us were. But I don't think we were so far away from his support that we would want to oppose it unless we had a candidate of our own. It may be--and my memory fails me--that before Graves was available for nomination we had candidates of our own that didn't rise even as high as he did.

Rowland: Did that account for all of his money problems?

Richards: Possibly, in part. You're not going to hit much pay dirt with me on Graves because I don't know much about him, I don't remember much about him.

Rowland: [laughs] I tell you what. You might recall who made Richard Graves's speeches in October of '54, after he went to the hospital. It's kind of a missing link we'd like to--

Richards: I don't know. There were, in those days, there were a number of us that were on the platform consistently who did perhaps more speaking than others because this was our forte. There were probably twenty such people, of which I would always be one. Those people no doubt were making a lot of speeches for our candidate, whoever it may have been during that whole period of time. And that would include Graves.

But I'll tell you the truth--I can't recall ever making a speech for Graves, and therefore the statement I just made is one without a whole lot of meat on the bones. Now that doesn't mean I didn't. I no doubt made speeches which would include the support of the whole ticket, because all of us loyal Democrats always supported our ticket, and each of our speeches would be full of great enthusiasm for the guy that we were trying to push forward, and before the speech was over, we would always go through the litany of naming the rest of the ticket.

Rowland: Was it Gaylord Parkinson who said that the eleventh commandment of the Republican party was, "Thou shalt not speak ill of--" [laughs]

Richards: Sure. We had the same thing, although it wasn't so dignified by reference to the--[laughter]

Rowland: Well, turning to the Edward Roybal gubernatorial--

Richards: The real top of the ticket! Yes. Ed was a doctrinaire liberal in those days, and was supported by all the liberals. Ed's shortcomings did not have to do with a lack of ideology. He, in the earlier days, was not a truly effective speaker in his own behalf or otherwise, and therefore was not one of the candidates who would attract a lot of very enthusiastic broad based club people who did not otherwise know him. He was always popular in his own district. He was therefore relatively popular in southern California, where he had been active. Those in the county committee and those in the clubs would know Ed, and he would always be, in effect, "one of ours." But I don't think he was that well known up north.

Rowland: What other people were considered for lieutenant governor besides Roybal?

##

Richards: Steve Zetterberg was a good liberal and still is. He never, however, developed much of a statewide support and didn't go quite far enough to be therefore effective as a statewide candidate. Steve ran for congress on two or three occasions unsuccessfully.

Rowland: Was Zetterberg Graves's choice?

Richards: That I don't know. I doubt it. I doubt it. I would say, I think Steve would be of a different group than Graves, because Graves, again coming in from the north and Steve being known only in the south--now it's possible that for a purely geographic balance point of view, he might have been. I don't know. I do not remember that.

Neither do I remember a knock-down, drag-out fight between Zetterberg and Roybal, which you are implying took place. Maybe it did. But I don't recall that it was that rugged.

Rowland: We had a note that Graves did have a favorite son, favorite choice for lieutenant governor. We have a thesis in the office that says that Zetterberg--it might have been someone else, but I believe it was Zetterberg who was Graves's choice.

Richards: Could have been. Could have been. Steve Zetterberg was well known to all of us down here through the years. He was always a supporter of mine, for example, and I of him, when he ran, albeit he was unsuccessful in his campaigns because they never really got a broad base of support.

Rowland: Was [Peter] Odegard also a candidate for governor?

Richards: Yes, that again is also northern California, and one who we did not know well.

Rowland: What about Liz Snyder's position? Did she support Graves?

Richards: I think so, and probably with greater enthusiasm than others that we've named.

Rowland: We had a note that she was always against any of Roger Kent's endorsements.

Richards: Well, the reason that I said greater enthusiasm is because I'm linking Snyder to a bit further right than some of those that I've been mentioning before. It seemed to me that Graves had better support from Snyder's wing. Now I may be wrong on that, because Graves never made a hell of a big impression, frankly, in this whole group. Graves was not one that was born of the club movement, or of the ideology that motivated it.

- Rowland: You saw him kind of as a bolter who would change parties whenever--?
- Richards: Well, that was a problem. But we saw him more as an outsider, and one with whom we didn't have enough going in terms of common denominators to develop any real enthusiasm.
- Rowland: Common denominators such as--?
- Richards: Such as common background, common beliefs, common activities, and in the good fight for various issues. When you come in from the outside and these things are missing, they remain missing, unless somebody fills them in.
- Rowland: Why don't we just jump right into the Yorty episode that you talked about briefly. I think I asked you already why you supported Yorty in 1954?
- Richards: And I say that with some embarrassment it's because labor asked me to, and I thought that he wasn't as bad as he turned out to be. I wasn't very enthusiastic about his then-political record and after that, of course, I became much less enthusiastic. He got worse as time went on, and when he became mayor, I think he was one of the worst mayors this city has ever had. I said so often enough, so that all people had to do, if then wanted him to go through the top of city hall, was to mention my name. [laughter] We didn't get along, and we still don't.
- Rowland: Did Kent want Odegard to run against Yorty?
- Richards: I don't know. That's possible.
- Rowland: Because didn't Yorty run without an endorsement from the CDC?
- Richards: Yes, finally. You see, he stopped seeking the endorsement and then turned against it. Of course, he always opposed me after that. One time [1954] we found ourselves on the same platform. He ran against me once, when I was running for the U.S. Senate.
- Rowland: Right, in 1956.
- Richards: And he got beat bad. And for the endorsement, which he then turned against the CDC and said, "I didn't want it anyway," he ran without the support of the CDC.
- Rowland: Did he use kind of a red-baiting charge against the CDC?
- Richards: Oh, yes.
- Rowland: In that '54 primary?

Richards: Oh, yes, he always did. Then he got further--when he later became mayor, he went further and further to the right. He sounded almost like Jack Tenney before he was through. And still does. He's on a radio broadcast now, a periodic radio show, in which he has people on. If Jack Tenney were alive, he'd be the star of the show.

Rowland: Why did he seek the CDC endorsement? Because he wanted the volunteers?

Richards: Yes, he probably thought that he could get that extra support, and they turned him down.

Rowland: Who were Yorty's financial backers?

Richards: And incidentally, I beat him four to one in that [1956] campaign, as I recall.

Yorty's financial backers were only, in later years, from the extreme right. You know, for awhile he was in congress and he had a broader support--at first. But I think he cost himself that support by becoming more and more extreme in his own right-wing views.

He finally walked right away from the Democratic party. He's no Democrat now, and hasn't been for years. He followed almost exactly the pattern of Tenney, running extreme left to extreme right, making a full circle. It's amazing how these people can do that. [laughter] I think that all of us, perhaps, become a little more conservative as we grow older, whether we like it or not, and sometimes it bothers me, because I feel that on many issues I'm more conservative than I was. But I cannot understand those who make this full circle like a whirling dervish. It either means that either they never believed in anything, or else they must recognize that they were so dead wrong that they can't live with themselves.

Rowland: In Yorty's 1954 campaign against Thomas Kuchel, did he get conservative Republican support like from Henry Salvatori?

Richards: Sure, sure.

Rowland: And other anti-communists?

Richards: Sure, as far out as you can get. Go as far right as you can get, start there, and then work back. And you don't work too far before you run out of Yorty supporters. [laughter]

- Rowland: I have another question here about the '54 campaign, except that it seems like maybe some new faces came into this campaign and became prominent later on: Eugene Lee and Van Dempsey, do you recall them getting involved in the '54 campaign?
- Richards: Only as vaguely familiar names.
- Rowland: Eugene Lee, of course, is at U.C. Berkeley now; Dempsey was part of that 212 Gang on Sutter Street in San Francisco that worked on public relations for Democratic candidates.
- Richards: No. When it came to my running state-wide like in my first U.S. Senate campaign--no.

Building Support for the U.S. Senate: 1956 and 1962

- Rowland: You first ran for U.S. Senate in '56.
- Richards: Right, '56 and '62, '62 and then six years behind that, '56, right. In each of them, and a particular emphasis on the first one, northern California--since I had only been in the state senate for two years, and was then a candidate for and finally the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate after such a short tenure, my familiarity with northern California and my personal base was consequently so small that I was dependent entirely upon others to open up that base. They did.

Incidentally, that wasn't a bad campaign. That was the first campaign against Kuchel, which was a much better campaign, in my opinion, than the second one. The second one we didn't think we had much of a chance. The first one I thought we did and I think we did, because Kuchel had not yet become that well established. We had quite a bit going for us in terms of the novelty of my personality and of the campaign as such.

In any event, all of northern California should be placed in a secondary non-personal position as far as I'm concerned, in the sense that I was entirely dependent upon others to do for me the developing of whatever organization was willing to be used, in the sense of providing support. That did happen.

- Rowland: You didn't have such a Richard Richards following?
- Richards: No, not at all!

Rowland: We've heard of clusters of supporters in northern California, like Earl Warren people, and the--

Richards: That's right. And that's exactly what it was when I went up there. They had to ask their people to support me, who would otherwise never have heard of me, hardly, except for the fact that they were told that here's some character coming up from southern California who they ought to support.

And then in the course of the campaign, of course, I've made many speeches and people were kind enough to add to that support, so that it was a fairly effective--in fact, more than fairly--

Rowland: Are you talking about the 212 group in San Francisco?

Richards: I'm talking about all those who were established enough in San Francisco in a broad sense. And usually in a sense more conservative than my people down here, plus the liberals in northern California, such as the [George] Miller [Jr.] group, who were as liberal--perhaps more liberal--than my people down here, that dichotomy in the north, whatever it was, it was.

I would merely walk in and say, "Hey, fellows. Are you going to help me in this campaign?" And enough of them went to work to see that their people did help me, and they did. But it was all through the established leadership, such as it was. It was not created by me or my personal people. We had to go hand in hand and say, "Here I am. I want to be a candidate. Can you support me?"

They did, and they deserve the credit. I can't say that we built it. Down here [Los Angeles], we had it built.

Rowland: Now we have the names of a few people who appear to be strong financial supporters of the CDC and probably of your campaign-- Ben Swig?

Richards: Yes. Ben did support--and again, Ben would tend to be more conservative normally than some of my people down here, but Ben did support my campaign, both of them for U.S. Senate. And he raised money.

Rowland: Was this in your original campaign?

Richards: '56 and '62. And people around Ben who Ben knew and who Ben could ask for help.

Rowland: So he supported your first campaign for the state senate?

Richards: No. He might have, but not to any great degree.

Rowland: He supported your state-wide U.S. Senate--?

Richards: Yes, that's right, the two state-wide campaigns for '56 and '62. He supported both of them, he and his people, of which there were many.

Rowland: The Hellers?

Richards: Yes, the Hellers, with greater enthusiasm in '56 I think than in '62.

Rowland: In '56?

Richards: Yes. '56 and '62.

Rowland: And William Matson Roth?

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: I have the Lowenthals. I'm not quite sure what the first name is, but--

Richards: Yes, I think so.

Rowland; Did any of them support Yorty in '54?

Richards: I don't think so.

Rowland: Swig perhaps?

Richards: I don't believe so. I would be surprised if he did. And if he did, he would regret it, the same as I regretted my nomination of Yorty. [laughter]

Rowland: I have a note here that most of the CDC's new leadership--in quotes-- "must have felt the CDC must endorse Yorty in 1954 or disintegrate due to division."

Richards: Say that again. What's the first of that?

Rowland: Most of the CDC's new leadership--this is from a note we have at the office--felt the CDC must endorse Yorty in '54 for U.S. Senate or else disintegrate due to divisions.

Richards: I don't think so. I think that the only people who felt that it was an imperative from an organizational point of view were labor.

Rowland: The labor support from--

Richards: Or labor, organized labor and their leadership.

Rowland: The AFL [American Federation of Labor], primarily?

Richards: The AFL and the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organization].

Rowland: The CIO supported Yorty?

Richards: Oh, yes, because the labor group per se supported Yorty at that limited period.

Rowland: What did labor hope to get out of the Yorty--?

Richards: Yorty had an excellent labor voting record at the beginning of his congressional period. Don't forget, he started out as a liberal. In fact, he started out so far left that he was far left of anything I ever heard of. [laughs]

Rowland: He supported the repeal of the criminal syndicalism act in the 1930's.

Richards: Oh, he was an extreme left who was red-baited himself in the early days. Then he moved from that, as we've said many times, clear around the whole circle.

But you're catching a period of time, freezing it now--a very limited period, when Yorty's pro-labor position was reciprocated by labor, which incidentally was, as a labor entity: effective at that time, relatively speaking, and challenged by the club movement in that labor was more conservative than the club movement, and labor was still a factor in Democratic organization.

The effort on the part of many of us who were in the organizational period then--Remember I was an organizational Democrat long before I was running for office, and considered myself to be almost exclusively organizational during my county committee period. The efforts on that part of the organizational Democrats were to bring together these factions and make them effective, in order to destroy cross-filing, and build the Democratic party in California to an effective entity. And we would do it one way or another. The best way was to bring everything together. But at that particular point in time, it was feasible to bring them together. That accounts for my temporary lapse in supporting Yorty, because labor wanted it, and I was a voice for the liberals and was getting along with labor and had their support.

Richards: The rest of the liberals, that it was felt I could reach, were not willing to support Yorty. Therefore, our effort was to get that support for him and thus to bring together labor and the rest of the party at that time.

Rowland: Right, right.

Richards: In a very limited sense, it worked, even though we later had to regret it because of the unique temperament of this idiot Yorty.

Rowland: I don't understand why the CIO got involved behind Yorty. Yorty had always been--as a matter of fact, he investigated the CIO when he started the Yorty committee investigations of communism in state relief.

Richards: There was at that time no split, as I recall, in that particular convention, state convention. There was no split in labor's ranks. Now there were many splits, both before and after that. The AFL and the CIO split down the middle on more than one occasion. Incidentally, when the split finally took place I found myself usually on the side of the CIO with the three brothers in the UAW [United Auto Workers] and the CIO being close contacts at the time in my nationwide activity when I was, for example, Democratic nominee and I had the opportunity of attending conventions in that capacity. I was working with the nationwide leadership, the CIO leadership, and particularly the UAW leadership; the UAW and the CIO became leadership working contacts of mine and I of theirs. We worked together in many efforts, including the Stevenson efforts, and including clear on down through to the Kennedy nomination.

When Kennedy came up with Johnson, I was sitting with the CIO, who had talked me into staying with the Kennedy deal to include Johnson on the ticket in spite of the fact that we'd heard this was coming, and we wanted no part of it. They [the CIO leadership] said, "Don't worry, it won't happen," and bang! it happened. We had a real knock-down drag-out at that national convention, the first one that nominated Kennedy. I became less than enthusiastic at that point. This picture of myself and Kennedy [points to picture on wall] was taken when he was supporting me, long before that 1960 convention. I had supported him with enthusiasm up to that point, and then dropped my enthusiasm for awhile, and then rebuilt it after I watched him in the early days of the presidency come through so effectively. I'm glad he had that much chance. It's too bad it was cut short.

I was never a very enthusiastic supporter of Lyndon's, although you see our picture together [points to picture on wall]. He, as a good party man, supported my candidacy. He attended my dinner

- Richards: and so on, which I of course appreciated. Then again, when the Vietnam thing came along, that was just about the last straw. That took care of it. I could not even support him at all after that.
- Rowland: Now one last question related to Yorty and why Yorty ran without an endorsement from the CDC and then withdrew it, how did the CDC clear the field of non-endorsed candidates?
- Richards: By beating the tail off of them. When you have the endorsement, they work for you, and worked aggressively against those who did not have the endorsement. That's why the endorsement meant something. And wherever the clubs were effective, Yorty fell on his head and hard! I was able to beat him, as the record will show, most effectively when he ran against me for U.S. Senate right here in my own county, which was also his own county. The reason for that is the effectiveness of the club movement right here in L.A. County, where the votes were and still are.
- Rowland: It's odd that Yorty would jump around politics and still end up as mayor for as long as he did.
- Richards: Well, the mayor was in a position which was almost separate from party politics. It was always played that way by the business community here and by the media. As a matter of fact, most of those who ran for mayor were inclined to go along with that gambit: that is, to keep it non-partisan and to not use partisanship. So Yorty's weakness from a partisan point of view was not a weakness when he became a candidate for mayor.
- He also became a candidate at a very strange time. He never would have made it if Poulson hadn't lost his voice. Poulson's voice went absolutely blank in the early part of that campaign and never recovered. And Yorty walked in through the back door. I think any good Democrat or any good candidate could have beat Yorty. But he just happened to be there, and once he was in, then he stayed in, to the detriment of all of us.
- Rowland: Can we go on to the '56 campaign and maybe get as far as we can?
- Richards: How long?
- Rowland: It's four o'clock. Let's pick it up next time.
- [Interview II: December 22, 1978]##
- Richards: Los Angeles and San Diego had a uniform interest in water development in relation to the north, which heretofore had taken an adverse position to the water development for any part of southern

Richards: California, at least opposed to that kind of development which we all thought was required, and has since been proven to be required for southern California.

On the other hand, San Diego and Los Angeles were in some respects competing entities. Therefore, Hugo Fisher becoming late in the game really in relation with some of the rest of us, a representative of one of the interested parties, became quite active.

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Rowland: If you don't mind, maybe we could hit the water plan a little bit later--

Richards: Sure, go ahead.

Maneuverings During the 1956 Democratic Convention

Rowland: --and go on the the '56 campaign, something that we just began in our last interview and didn't really have enough time to go into. It appeared that some people wanted Pat Brown to run for the U.S. Senate before you made your bid. Do you recall that in any way? For instance, perhaps Ed Pauley, a big donor of the party, played a role in trying to convince Brown to--

Richards: No, I don't recall any resistance to my running from that group. Neither do I recall Pat making any overtures in that direction. The problem that I had with Pat vis a vis U.S. Senate was on a different level, when much later the opportunity for an appointment to the U.S. Senate developed. He had considered me for that appointment, and I had of course seriously considered the possibility of it.

Rowland: This was in 1964, when Salinger was--?

Richards: It was when Brown appointed Engle.

Rowland: Oh, when he appointed Engle at the '58 CDC convention?

Richards: That's right. I was a potential for that appointment and Pat felt that Engle being from northern California should get it. Although Pat did not at that time particularly agree with Engle's voting record in the legislature up to that point, he did feel strongly that there should be a northern California appointee, and that's what swung the difference.

Richards: But in any event, if you're talking about the '56 presidential race, my activity on that (aside from the fact that I was a candidate for the U.S. Senate myself at that time, and became nominee for the U.S. Senate in California), my activity was almost limited entirely beyond my own candidacy and work in support of Adlai Stevenson, who was a close friend of mine; our friendship developed through the years. It continued right up to the time of Stevenson's death. So obviously there was no problem as far as I was concerned as to where I was going to put up what support I had to offer.

Rowland: In our last interview, you had briefly mentioned your opinions and feelings about the position of the U.S. Senate. I'm wondering why you actually chose to run for the U.S. Senate and challenge Tom Kuchel?

Richards: Well, I've always said that the U.S. Senate is finest political job that America has to offer. I still think that's true. I think that the U.S. Senate carries with it the dignity and the status that makes possible accomplishing on the legislative level a great deal. If I have any talent in any particular direction, insofar as politics is concerned, I have always envisioned them to be on the legislative side. The U.S. Senate therefore was a natural goal for me, and always was.

When the opportunity came to run in '56, I did so with enthusiasm. The fact that Kuchel was the incumbent had nothing to do with it. You run against whoever is in office, so long as the incumbent happens to be a member of the opposing party.

Rowland: Did you feel that Kuchel was especially vulnerable in that election year?

Richards: Not especially, no. Of course, as history shows, he was not vulnerable, although in '56 he was much more vulnerable than he was later in '62, and I was the nominee both times. But the '62 campaign was quite different, in the sense that somebody had to run at that time, and since I was in a position to do so, I was placed in that spot with my agreement that I could be the candidate, but without the kind of enthusiasm that existed in '56. '56 was a good campaign. '56 was a campaign in which everybody, myself as a candidate included, went all out. Again, it was a reasonably close vote. Kuchel had not yet established himself as solidly as he did a number of years later.

Rowland: You had run in the primary against Sam Yorty, is that true? Sam Yorty started lodging some rather vicious things about you being associated with red communist organizations, sympathetic to communist--

- Richards: I don't think Yorty ever ran against anybody in his life that he didn't accuse the opposition of being communist inspired.
- Rowland: That was standard?
- Richards: The standard Yorty technique. Incidentally, by that time both the technique and Yorty himself were almost totally ineffective. I beat him by more than four to one, as you know.
- Rowland: Right.
- Richards: So he was never a threat.
- Rowland: Was there some other motive behind those Yorty battles with the CDC and battles with you? For instance, wanting to reassert the "old guard" prominence in the party?
- Richards: I think so. I think that Yorty wanted to reassert himself in any way that he could. He always has a tendency to do that. But he did at that time still have some vestige of conservative support, and he was trying to pull that into a meaningful campaign effort, but it didn't develop.
- Rowland: Now Roger Kent passed around a questionnaire after that '56 campaign, a questionnaire regarding smear tactics in the campaign, and you and several other people, Wanda Sankary was another, replied that there had been smear tactics against your campaign.
- Richards: I remember that much of it. You've already touched upon about all that I remember. The facts are that there were smear techniques used. That's not unusual.
- Rowland: Was this in the Sam Yorty primary, or are you talking about the Kuchel--?
- Richards: No, no. The Sam Yorty primary. Again, I've already said it's typical of Yorty, and if you go back to those years, it was the tail end of that which had become a typical campaign technique for the decade preceding that, and which was fading at that time as an effective technique, because the public was pretty well on to it.
- Rowland: Now you had been a state senator for two years and you ran for the U.S. Senate. You undoubtedly had to answer charges of being overly ambitious, of being new to politics for someone who was trying to challenge Kuchel for a national office. How did you answer those charges?

Richards: Well, I was not exactly new to politics, I had been in it for more than ten or twelve years to that. Prior to that, I'd been county chairman for a number of years. I had been active in a great many campaigns, both state and federal. As I told you, I managed a couple of congressional campaigns before that time. I'd been active on the administrative side in all of the important campaigns. I'd been a delegate to a number of the national conventions. I certainly was not new to politics. As far as public office is concerned, I'd only been in it for two years, that is true, but I was also the senator who represented the largest state senatorial district in the United States, and as such had developed enough support politically so that it was a meaningful campaign effort. That fact, I think that I was nominated proves that it was; and nominated with a rather handy vote.

Also, the fact that I was running against an incumbent--the final vote was close enough to be respectable. Therefore, I think that the charges [of political inexperience] were without merit. You're quite right the charges were raised. Naturally, they would be.

Rowland: Now what kind of charges and tactics did you use in the general election against Tom Kuchel?

Richards: It wasn't so much an anti-Kuchel effort. Kuchel at that time didn't stand for much of anything. Since that time, by the way, he has established himself as a reasonably liberal Republican, and became much more difficult, therefore, to attack, let alone defeat, from the standpoint of an active Democrat.

At that time, however, he hadn't created any legislative record to speak of. What we tried to do was merely not to deprecate Kuchel, because that would be a rather meaningless effort, but merely to point out that in our opinion and the opinion of the campaign, I would make a more effective senator, and the whole effort was one of a general state-wide build up. Bear in mind up until that time I had not been a state-wide candidate, and therefore we had an awful lot of organizational work to do.

We did it with a great deal of help from people all over the state. It was a good campaign.

Rowland: Now did you get the Los Angeles Times's endorsement or other newspaper endorsements?

Richards: In those days, the L.A. Times was traditionally Republican, and it was very rare to have any Democrat supported. When I ran for re-election, I had at least the acquiescence of the L.A. Times.

- Richards: I don't recall that I got their endorsement even then, when I was running for re-election.
- Rowland: Re-election for--?
- Richards: Re-election for state senate, yes. Certain other Republican papers, such as the Long Beach Press-Telegram that had opposed me very heavily in 1954--by the time I ran for re-election in 1958, they supported me. The difference, incidentally, was rather remarkable. I attribute a lot of that difference to that particular newspaper. It was effective at that time. I had lost Long Beach, specifically, in the first race for state senate. Although I won the race, I lost Long Beach by a margin of four to one. When I ran for re-election with the support of the Long Beach Press-Telegram, I carried Long Beach by exactly the same margin, four to one, which is quite a reversal, and I do not take credit for that personally. I give the newspaper credit [laughs], because that was a significant difference.
- Rowland: Did you get a labor endorsement?
- Richards: I had labor always, in every way.
- Rowland: Even though labor also endorsed Yorty?
- Richards: They did not support Yorty in that campaign.
- Rowland: They didn't?
- Richards: No. He had one or two technical endorsements and got virtually no labor support. Labor supported me both with money and with votes, as against Yorty.
- Rowland: Now did Ed Pauley financially back your campaign?
- Richards: In some of my campaigns he did, and in others he did not, and in that one I honestly don't remember.
- Rowland: You don't recall?
- Richards: No. I think Ed may have given a small amount of support to me and he might have given some support to one of the other candidates at the same time. This is not unusual. Ed was at one point very active politically. He did not limit his support to simply one race or one candidate.
- Rowland: How about Ben Swig?

Richards: Ben Swig I believe supported me in both state-wide campaigns, both in '56 and '62.

Rowland: William Matson Roth, do you recall?

Richards: I don't recall whether we had that support or not. I know we had Ben's. Through Ben Swig and others like him--with whom, by the way, at that time I was not really well-acquainted, as I said, coming from southern California.

Rowland: Yes, he's from northern California.

Richards: That's right. The northern California people I took on faith and they took me on faith, to the degree that they were willing to organize their usual power base and help me, it was of course much appreciated. They obviously did so, otherwise I would have fallen on my head. But they did come through. They came through in a good sort of party loyalty sense. Because I don't think they knew me very well at that time.

Rowland: The Hellers also?

Richards: Yes, they supported me in both campaigns. When we get around to '62, as you can already tell from what I've said so far, and as you probably know, there was a vast difference between the campaigns. The support that I had in '56 I also had in '62, almost without exception, but certainly at a very different level of enthusiasm.

The '62 campaign was not a good campaign by comparison. The first one was a good one, the second one was not. The second one was pro forma, the second one was an uphill fight, the second one was against an established incumbent, the second one was--somebody had to run, so it might as well be you, was the sort of approach that was taken by everyone, including me, because by that time I had decided that eight years in the state senate was enough, and therefore I was either going to go back to law practice, in any event, or go on to the U.S. Senate if lightning struck.

Rowland: Now in '56, with the national campaign, did you try to seek as much national publicity through the Stevenson campaign process?

Richards: Well, national publicity wouldn't do me much good in California, except insofar as it rubbed off in California. I had some national publicity because of my work at the national convention.

Rowland: So you'd try to come off as the real pro-Stevenson supporter--

- Richards: Oh, sure. That's right. As a matter of fact, the Stevenson campaign accepted me wholeheartedly, as near as I could tell, and there were no rough edges there. But I can't say that publicity was sought at the national level for any express purpose other than as a part of the California campaign. For another thing, there was the small amount of money raised back east, which I presume could not have been done were it not for--
- Rowland: From the Stevenson camp, you mean?
- Richards: Well, from people that I met because of my activity in the Stevenson campaign, and because of other work on a nationwide basis rather than local. It didn't amount to a whole lot.
- Rowland: Do you recall the donors?
- Richards: No, can't name any of them. Some of them are in New York, some are in Washington. But it helped a large amount, except that there wouldn't have been any, had there not been some exposure, both through the national conventions and through the Stevenson campaign. I knew Eleanor Roosevelt at that time and prior thereto, and she was heavily in the Stevenson campaign. People of that type had their own supporters who they, in some instances, spoke to, and otherwise I never would have met them, let alone obtained their support.
- Rowland: Now you might recall this little news clipping I sent you from the Sacramento Bee. It's from Herb Phillips's column on your campaign tactics, which he calls the "Kefauver technique." [see: Sacramento Bee, September 19, 1956]
- Richards: I'm not sure what the reference was. I guess it's a matter of the populist approach of going as far as one can go by way of making contacts throughout each of the communities of the state. If you can't do it on the precinct level, at least you can do it on a community level, and that's what we tried to do.
- Rowland: And this was conducted in conjunction with the CDC? I mean, did you have the full support and organizational efforts of the CDC behind you in the senatorial campaign?
- Richards: Yes, without question. If I had not, I would not have been able to do that kind of campaign work, because this required pretty well grassroots support at every level. Again, I was not well known up north or in the central part of the state, and therefore the CDC organization and the local politicoes within the Democratic framework provided the base which was necessary, as it would be for any candidate in that position.

- Rowland: Now during the convention, there was a bit of tension on the convention floor--
- Richards: Which convention?
- Rowland: The national convention of 1956, over the civil rights plank. There was the Lehman minority plank, which you supported, which was a strong civil rights position, and there was a weaker majority plank, which Elizabeth Snyder supported.
- Richards: Yes, I got in the middle of that fight, and the whole delegation was involved in that fight, as you have correctly stated. It was split. I was on the side of the strong civil rights plank. I had the opportunity of addressing the convention, and also being on nationwide TV. You talk about national publicity--that was probably the zenith of my national publicity at that point.
- Rowland: Was that your idea, to seek national publicity?
- Richards: No, it was my idea to support the civil rights plank. And it was my idea to stay in the middle of the fight, and to try and get the thing through. The result of the fight was that I was in a good deal of activity at the convention, and the convention was covered as it always is by the media very thoroughly. When I therefore was given the platform, and given the opportunity to speak, I grabbed it. I was happy to do so, in an effort to win that fight. The result was nationwide publicity that came simply as an adjunct.
- Rowland: Do you think it helped or hindered your campaign?
- Richards: Oh, I think it helped. People watched that and saw me on nationwide TV who had not seen me in any of my efforts state-wide.
- Rowland: You had mentioned that during that campaign, the entire delegation was in favor of the Lehman minority. Pat Brown said that the entire delegation was not in favor.
- Richards: No, the entire delegation was not. It was split, but I think we had the edge, so far as our delegation is concerned. This was a fight which one could enter with enthusiasm. I mean, there was no question as to who was right, in my opinion, as I sit here today. [laughs] We were. It was a good fight, and one that I'm very proud of, and the people I fought with were good people. In other words, I am fighting shoulder to shoulder with good people.

Richards: The division at that time, even on the national level, were clearly the division between the old guard that had theretofore held sway in the House and, in part, in the Senate, and the very conservative group nationally, which was opposed by a rising liberal tide within the framework of the Democratic party. I think it was epitomized by that fight and that convention. Putting it another way, if I had it to do all over again, both from the standpoint of rectitude and from the standpoint of political effectiveness, there's no question but what I would do.

Rowland: One picture we have--one person we haven't really talked about in the previous interview that I want to expand upon is Carmen Warschaw's role, particularly her role in this campaign, since we're talking about this. Could you tell us more about Carmen Warschaw and her role in the party and perhaps in this campaign?

Richards: Well, Carmen found herself quite often on the more conservative side of the Democratic politics, but on the other hand, over the years I have always been able to get along with Carmen, as with Elizabeth Snyder, for example, who likewise oftentimes found herself on the more conservative side. Both of them were very active gals. They contributed a great deal to party organizations, and where possible--I mean where possible within the framework of their beliefs--supported the candidates of the party. Therefore, although one might assume that someone like Carmen and her husband, Louis Warschaw, would be found in the more conservative side and not in my camp, to a rather surprising degree they helped my campaign.

I cannot break down in which campaign they were more help or less. It may be that in some of my campaigns they were definitely no help at all. But by and large, they were party loyal and of assistance, rather than a hindrance.

Rowland: Did Warschaw side with Yorty many times, particularly on an issue such as foreign policy, for instance?

Richards: Well, it depends on when. I think back in Yorty's heyday when Yorty was still in congress, they probably were with him. I think when Yorty was trying his state-wide efforts, all of which fell on their head, they may have been with him in the earlier portion of those efforts, but Yorty became pretty well discredited later on.

Rowland: Were Yorty and Warschaw known as war hawks within the CDC for instance?

Richards: Well, Yorty was always against the CDC. He's the one that when he found out he couldn't get the endorsement, said that the convention was wired, rigged, racked and stacked, or some such phrase.

Rowland: Right, I remember that, yes. [laughs]

Richards: And you wouldn't find Carmen Warschaw being that militant, although she might have simply quietly been against some of the positions of the CDC, which were too liberal for her, I'm sure, in the earlier days. That may have even been true of a Liz Snyder, although Liz was usually found in the ranks of labor. When labor was with the CDC, Liz would be there too, albeit perhaps on the more conservative side than some. But only when labor split completely with the CDC, which was not often, would there be a split with Liz. Carmen, somewhat to the same degree. It's a little more difficult, because Liz was an organizational worker, whereas Carmen was a money raiser, and an organizer on the money side rather than on the organization side.

All these are to a matter of degree, because you know they're both active in both areas. You can't be active politically--truly active--without working for candidates, working in organizations, working in administration, and trying to raise money. You've got to do all of them.

Rowland: One personality that also comes to mind, when you said you had labor support, is John Despol of the CIO.

Richards: Same kind of thing. Johnny got off on that anti-communist kick to the degree that he saw one under every bed, and therefore had great difficulty with the CDC and with liberals of any kind, because he wasn't able to distinguish between the two, whether they were too far left or not in his thinking. That was during part of Johnny Despol's activity. But the whole spectrum changes as the years go forward, with almost all of these people. I guess we all mellow one way or another.

I would say that through the bulk of my political career, I had Johnny Despol's support. As a matter of fact, I cannot recall any specific time when I did not, although I am sure there were times when he did not go out of his way to support my candidacy.

Rowland: I'm curious about Despol, because during the McCarthy years--that's a major scene in the fifties, the McCarthy years in the early fifties, with the CIO always coming under attack, by the Tenney committee and by the [U.S.] House Un-American Activities Committee, as being communist controlled.

- Richards: This is why it's hard to categorize Johnny. We were all curious about him. You know, why he got into almost paranoid positions vis a vis the alleged communist threat at a time when others were beginning to see that this thing was vastly overdone and was merely a device in order to develop political support or political opposition. It had little to do with the merits of the charge. At that time you found Johnny hanging on longer than many others. As you say, the UAW-CIO was generally on the liberal side of most of the political splits. The UAW-CIO was a supporter, by the way, of mine without exception in every campaign.
- Rowland: Even though Despol was--I'm curious about Despol's relation to the CIO.
- Richards: No, he functioned as an individual, largely.
- Rowland: As an individual--he wasn't some kind of a window dressing for the union to allay charges of communism?
- Richards: No, I really don't think so. I think Johnny voiced his sincere fears, and they simply were not necessarily in line with the bulk of the CIO labor organizations nation-wide, in a good many instances. There had been a time way back when they were. I mean, Johnny goes back in his roots with the labor organizations further in point of time than do I, and therefore it behooves me to try and say what happened in the very early days. But I know that the ebb and flow changed, as I've just tried to describe, in later years.
- Rowland: Now one thing that's jogging down here is a comment by the Western Political Quarterly that I'd like you to remark on. This is a comment that the Democratic party didn't have the funds or the organization to mount a good campaign. It didn't have the professional backing that the Republican party had.
- Richards: When?
- Rowland: We're talking about the 1956 campaign.
- Richards: Well, there's some merit to the fact that we certainly didn't have as much money as the Republicans did. That's true. I think that as far as--you may take this comment with present company excepted, if you wish, in order to get the flavor of it, because I think it's true of all candidates, although egotistically I will include myself. During that period we had the best candidates we've ever had, because they came with the support of large numbers of people.

Richards: It was in the years prior to that, if you go back a decade, when both parties had very poor organization and the people had little to say--if anything--concerning their own candidate selection. The result was politicians were selected, to use the cornball term, in smoke filled back rooms, by very few people participating.

It was with the advent of the CDC--

Rowland: With the incumbents in charge?

Richards: Well, sure. When the advent of the CDC challenged the old incumbency rule and brought people in large numbers into candidate selection, this was a good thing.

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Rowland: Also, talking about money sources--

Richards: Well, that one I don't differ with, because we did not have, when the CDC was growing up, in those early days--we did not have large sources of money, and money was rather afraid of CDC. It took time to build a monetary force, and as a matter of fact, all through the years money sources never did equate with the Republican ability to raise money.

In terms of funds--the Democrats now, in the ebb and flow of political supremacy, and we've all seen it, and we'll see it again. You have periods in which one party tends to dominate. We've had a long period of Democratic domination at the moment. The period we were talking about on this tape earlier [1950s], however, was just at the opposite end of the spectrum, at which the Democrats were just beginning to come into their own, and the Republicans were just at the tail end of a long period of political domination.

Certainly in that earlier period, the Republicans had almost full control of whatever moneyraising sources existed that amounted to anything. The Democrats had to scratch in order to find a monetary support, and they found it largely in the earlier days in small contributions from large numbers of people.

As the party strength grew, the ability to raise money, the ability to hold dinners which would command a fairly large figure for the purchase of a ticket, and therefore a fairly large margin of money at the end of the dinner--that ability increased as the Democratic strength increased over the course of the political spectrum.

Rowland: Now focusing on Ed Pauley as a financial arm of the party, was he primarily an old guard incumbent supporter, or would he go outside to back the CDC?

Richards: No, no. He would be considered as most of those individual large money raisers in the earlier period of this political spectrum that I've been speaking of. He would be on the right wing of it, but on almost an individual basis, however. In other words, he would not be CDC, that's for sure. Therefore, you would assume that he would not be pro-Richards, to take an immediate example. That was true at the beginning.

However, I got acquainted with him once I was in office, and had no trouble talking with Ed. As a matter of fact, he later became a client of our law office for a limited period of time. That had no relationship to his support for my candidacy, except that it enabled me to get better acquainted with him. Once I was acquainted with him, he helped raise money for some of my campaigns, which shows the individuality of that kind of money raising effort.

Dan Kimball, for example. Not as far to the right as Ed. There was E. George Lucky, who was further to the right than Ed. These are individuals. They raised money individually, and they knew other wealthy people, and through those other wealthy people, they were able to raise the money. But again, it was on an individual basis. And their support of candidates, although at the outset dictated in part by their political ideology, which would be on the conservative side of the Democratic party, however, not the Republican party--they would support candidates after they got to know them, irrespective of where those candidates fitted into the spectrum.

Then as the party developed broader strength, the organizational efforts became more important than these individual efforts of people of that type. That goes for moneyraising as well.

Rowland: Right. Now turning back to the campaign, to the Democratic national convention of '56, at the beginning of this whole interview you were talking about the vice-presidential battle there with Pat Brown. The notes we have in the office on Pat Brown are that Brown pledged the delegation to Kennedy, without a delegate vote.

Richards: The vice-presidential--I tried to indicate to you earlier, because I was a candidate myself and because to the degree that I had any time beyond my own candidacy was devoted to Stevenson, I had no part in the vice presidential fight, whatever it was.

Rowland: Do you recall at all Pat Brown being the vice-presidential candidate?

Richards: Only that that was a fact, but it wasn't any great factor in the thinking of most of us at that time.

Rowland: Now one last remark on the '56 campaign, and that's that we have record of the remarks you made against the Los Angeles mayor, Poulson, and in which you were attacking him for supporting the Hughes Tool Company lobbyist, and blocking the tidelands oil deal between the state and the city of Long Beach. This is during your campaign in the general election.

Richards: I don't remember the attack, if it was an attack, on Poulson. I do recall this, that there was a tidelands oil fight that involved my district, in the sense that both Los Angeles and Long Beach were important sections of my district. After I was in office, it became one of my responsibilities to try and settle that hassle, otherwise the whole southern California area would lose in the legislative alignment, which at that time was strongly against southern California, when you got north of the Tehachapis.

So in my efforts to bring the groups together, and to protect, incidentally, part of the city of Long Beach's interests, which were under heavy attack, I probably did speak out rather strongly on whatever at that time I thought was the right approach to take, concerning the settlement of the differences.

My biggest problem in the early days of the state senate was to see to it that we could one way or another minimize the anti-southern California feeling that had been rather rampant in the state senate, in the areas north of the Tehachapis which had the heavy majority vote. At that time we didn't have "one man-one vote." My one vote represented forty-two percent of all the people in California, and the other thirty-nine senators represented the other one-half plus. So this was an awkward situation that required both aggressive representation and what diplomatic efforts I could bring to bear, in trying to minimize the anti-southern feeling.

Rowland: Why would Poulson want to block the tidelands oil agreement with--?

Richards: I really don't recall why Poulson did, and incidentally I got--

Rowland: He was the only one. He and the Hughes Tool Company lobbyist were the only two people to speak at that senate hearing on the tidelands contract.

Richards: Well, apparently that's why I teed off on both of them, because I thought they were wrong, although as I say, I did not have any strong antipathy for Poulson albeit the fact that he was a Republican. He nevertheless was a guy that I could always get along with. He and I became fairly close allies in the latter stages of his mayoralty. As a matter of fact, he supported me to be mayor following him, which was a time when--

Rowland: Did you actively seek that?

Richards: No, I was considered for that position. We can get into that later. I would have sought it, but for the fact the Poulson changed his mind. He was going to retire, and I would have walked into the position of being a candidate for mayor after I left the senate and after I had ceased being a candidate for the U.S. Senate. The only other job that I considered at any time was the local job, because I wanted to spend more time with my family, being possibly a candidate for mayor.

I would not have run against the incumbent Poulson because by that time, he and I, as I say, were getting along quite well, and I thought he was doing a good job as mayor. He had indicated that he was going to retire, and that he wanted to support me as a successor. I took the thought seriously enough to give it some consideration, and to discuss it with him.

In the course of those discussions he changed his mind. Not because of any discussion with me, but simply on his own and for whatever reason, decided to run for re-election. It was when he was running for re-election that Yorty came out of nowhere, had no support from anywhere, but was running against him because nobody else was running against him, and Poulson lost his voice. When Poulson lost his voice, he became unable to campaign, and this is why Yorty became mayor. No other reason! That's the total picture on that.

Rowland: Now on the tidelands oil revenues--of course, that was a major-- there were some court decisions, as I recall, which forced the

- Rowland: city of Long Beach to go into negotiations with the state on revenues. But what were your plans for the revenues? What did you hope the money would be used for?
- Richards: My plans were that I did not want to see the city raped by the anti-southern California group in the senate. That was my basic plan.
- Rowland: The city of Long Beach?
- Richards: Yes. Long Beach obviously had too big a chunk of oil revenues, when you consider the overall state-wide interest. However, the effort up north was to take everything away from them, and I thought that was not right. Therefore, compromise had to be reached. In order to reach a compromise, I had to take a rather aggressive position in favor of the city of Long Beach, and I did.
- Rowland: Now what was your plan for the allocation of the money?
- Richards: Oh, that was expressed on the floor again and again. I can't go back into it now, because it was a compromise position.
- Rowland: Did you want it into a general fund or allocated to parks and recreation?
- Richards: In part. The main idea was to see to it that the city did not lose all of its base, which the effort was up north to do just that. That was the main thing. Once the compromise was reached, in which the city kept part of its base and the state got part of its base, then the utility of that money became a separate issue.
- Rowland: Now, this is kind of overlapping into the California Water Plan, which we'll be talking about later, but did you foresee the use of this money for the California Water Plan?
- Richards: In part. The California Water Plan was so big that it needed every kind of funding you could think of, including the bond funding, which we ultimately developed. Oil revenues were part of potential sources. At that point, in the early days of the California Water Plan, no one was quite sure how much it was going to cost, but they knew it was going to cost an awful lot more money than we had.
- Rowland: Now I think this will be a really brief topic here, your '58 campaign, because your opposition wasn't that strong [laughs] for re-election in 1958 to the state senate.

How serious was--? I noted two people here: Ernest Stewart and Ernest Wargo in the primary election?

Richards: I don't recall--there was no challenge.

Rowland: There was no challenge from Bradford Trenham, who was the Republican candidate in the general election?

Richards: Not really. Not really. The re-election was more or less a cinch. I was re-elected handily. The campaign was no great effort. At that time, which was after four years' work in the state senate, I had as near as I recall the support of every meaningful group on both sides of the aisle, and even most of the newspapers which had heretofore been Republican and certainly opposed to my election at the outset, but as I recall, we had pretty solid support from almost every group that meant anything. So it was not a tough campaign. It would not be proper to imply that it was.

Rowland: So there wasn't any relationship then to the Big Switch between Knowland and Knight and the swing of the election towards the Democratic party?

Richards: Oh, I'm sure that helps. You see, by that time, when I was first elected--oh, there's no question that that helped. But when I was elected the Republicans were--

Rowland: Many Democrats came in on the coat tails of that whole sweep into the--

Richards: That's what I'm trying to explain. My first election was before the sweep took place. It was just the beginning of the whisper of the trend that was to come. Two years later, the trend got stronger and four years later it was in full flight, so that there was a heavy switch to the Democratic party in that year. Of course, I benefited from that, as did all Democratic candidates. Being an incumbent made it that much easier. Incumbents have a tremendous advantage. Staying in office is not all that difficult.

Rowland: There's an odd little thing, here, and I don't know--

Richards: In fact, it's too damn simple, if I may stress my political philosophy on that. I think that I'm opposed to cinch districts, and I'm opposed to cinch elections. I think they all should be hard fought, and I think the degree to which you have almost even divisions brings about better campaigns and better government, both even division in the districts and even divisions between the parties.

Rowland: There's an odd little thing here--this is from the Sacramento Bee [see: Sacramento Bee, May 13, 1958]--of a link to your campaign to Goodwin Knight's campaign, through some billboards put up by

Rowland: the Retail Clerks' Union, saying that you backed Goodwin Knight's U.S. Senate bid in 1958. You commented that you weren't consulted at all, you gave no consent to the billboard in question.

Richards: That's right, that's right. When I was first in the senate, I was strongly anti-Knight, and said so perhaps in some statements that were not as diplomatic as they could have been. As the work went forward, I found that I could work with Governor Knight, particularly in the water area. He had appointed me to the water committee, which preceded my work in the legislature. I found that once I was in the legislature I could, to a degree--

This was, to me, a then-neophyte, surprising, that I could get meaningful support and assistance out of the administration on matters of importance, such as the water plan. This had a salutary effect on my heretofore political aggressive opposition. Therefore, as I think everybody in public office learned, when they haven't been in office before, they're always surprised at the degree to which they can get along with the guy on the other side of the aisle. Political differences aren't all that difficult to surmount. They come out in campaigns. They come out in differences concerning issues, as they should. But it's not impossible, and as a matter of fact, you get a whole lot further on matters that are not divided by those political differences. You can reach an understanding to work together for a common end.

Rowland: I guess your opinion and feelings about Goodwin Knight changed certainly after the Big Switch.

Richards: Oh, yes.

Rowland: A lot of Democrats did.

Richards: It changed as the years went forward, as I've tried to explain to you, and I found out that I could work with the man. In fact, I developed a rather high regard for him as an individual, and as a man who was willing to accept me on a basis far more generous than I had any right to expect [laughs], because of the negative comments I had made concerning him in the press. But he rose above all that.

Rowland: We're trying to probe everyone's theories about the Big Switch, to put together a composite picture of the whole situation. Do you have any theories or any sort of information on it?

Richards: I think the basic thing is, if you're talking about the Big Switch from Republican domination to Democratic domination--

Rowland: No, I'm talking about the sudden reversal of Goodwin Knight's gubernatorial campaign, when he dropped out--William Knowland became the gubernatorial candidate.

Richards: Oh, that. Well, I of course am not on the inside of any of that. That's all Republican internal politics. But I observed it, as you did and we all did. I think that basically Goodwin Knight was much more of a liberal person than we had perceived him to be from the outside, back in the days when the Republicans controlled everything. He found it, I guess, advantageous to play up his more conservative side. Given full reign of his true beliefs, he like Warren, for example, showed himself to be more liberal in his basic approach to issues, which were important to a number of us, than we had theretofore thought.

Knowland was no such liberal. Knowland was a hardcore right-wing Republican--in the eyes of most of us, quite reactionary. When the fight took place inside the party, and the party decided to dump Knight for Knowland, I think it became much more apparent, the differences between those people, and that in itself probably served to push Knight further left and Knowland further right. And it would appear that that's what happened. But I'm on the outside looking in.

Rowland: You're right. We all are, unfortunately. But you think the Los Angeles Times might have gotten involved in the decision to dump Knight?

Richards: I don't doubt they played a part. I sure don't know what part, though. You can talk about the Oakland Tribune and all the rest of them. [laughs] The internal politics--that's between the important and powerful newspapers of this state--is a subject unto itself, and requires an insight that I don't have, but which I'm interested in, as I guess we all are. The history of that would be a book in itself.

Rowland: Now one other issue is the reaction of the Big Switch--the effect of the Big Switch on the Democratic party. This helped the CDC--

Richards: You're talking again about the Knowland-Knight--when you talk about the switch, is that what you mean?

Rowland: Sure.

Richards: It helped the CDC. It broke a hole in the Republican ranks. Any party is in a position to take advantage of that kind of internal hassle in the opposition. And the Democratic party inherited, therefore, the benefit of the ill wind which was born of the Republican Big Switch.

Rowland: Do you think there might have been--do you suspect some Richard Nixon involvement?

Richards: I don't know. I always suspect him as being on the wrong side of every issue at any time, but I don't think he at that point had much to do with that, and if he did, I don't know anything about it.

V DEVELOPING THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN

Role of the Metropolitan Water District

Rowland: Why don't we go on to the California Water Plan, because that's the big thing you've got right here. That is really a detailed and complex thing to talk about, but we'll try to work through it as best we can. I'm just working out chronologically here some things I picked out of the Senate Journal, beginning in 1955, some statements you made that had been printed in the Senate Journal.

The first one is January 10, 1955. This is regarding your remarks on the opinion of the attorney general--i.e. Pat Brown--in response to a request by Senator Regan interpreting the water code sections. You went on to say that it was true what Pat Brown said in the opinion, that the water code exceptions could result in a bitter battle between north and south over the water issue.

Now what I can't find is what exactly was Senator Regan's request to Pat Brown that resulted in Pat Brown's opinion on the pending battle--

Richards: I can't help on that specific information. It's too remote in terms of time.

To put this in context, as you probably know, I became active in the water development of the state even prior to my being elected to the state senate. I was interested in it when I was county chairman, because of the interest that southern California had in very necessary water development. I had been appointed to a Sacramento committee made up of legislators and outside water leaders very early in the game. I served on Goodwin Knight's first commission on water state-wide, and therefore had sort of

Richards: a running start on this when I was elected to the state senate. I was active in '54, '55, and straight on through in the whole development of the water plan, quite naturally.

So with all of that, however, and to try and go back and piece together those many years the water plan development, the specifics, would be most difficult. Suffice it to say at this juncture that I was looking for that which I envisioned to be the interests of state-wide water development, with particular emphasis on the absolute necessity of water development for southern California, with a recognition of the opposition of the north, which had to be overcome in order to make it successful.

This work of mine extended through the administrations of both Knight and Brown, both of whom did yeoman work in helping to develop the water system, because both of them took a state-wide view, even though both of them came originally from northern California. Knight, perhaps, had a better southern California base than Pat Brown. When Pat was first active in politics, he was strictly northern California. But of course, he, like Knight, broadened his base and had a broad understanding of the state-wide needs, which certainly included the necessity of water development for all of the then terribly rapid populations expansion and economic expansion south of the Tehachapis.

Rowland: Now you were talking about the water interests in the southern part of the state. That's another topic that we want to expand on. It appears to us that the major southern California water interest, of course, was the Metropolitan Water District. [MWD]

Richards: I think that's right.

Rowland: But they were involved in litigation with the state of Arizona over the Colorado River.

Richards: They sure were, over many, many years. They had special counsel that spent years in handling that litigation. And it went to the [U.S.] Supreme Court on more than one occasion.

Rowland: And the question that has been raised in other interview sessions you've had is that the Metropolitan Water District was not that much interested in the California Water Plan because it expected a favorable decision in the suit against the state of Arizona, and a large allocation of water from the Colorado River.

Richards: Well, I would differ with that. I would think that the board of directors of the MWD was always interested in state-wide water development, particularly the smarter ones. I think that it has proved that they saw one safety valve in winning, hopefully, their fight with Arizona. But I don't think that any of them felt that [the suit against Arizona] was: a) a sure thing, or b) sufficient if they did. So they were active in helping our state-wide efforts.

As a matter of fact, each of the water elements in southern California became increasingly active as the fight went on, and increasingly helpful--irrespective, incidentally, since we've been talking about politics, of their political makeup. A good many of them, including certainly the board of directors of the MWD, would be found on the conservative side of the political spectrum.

Rowland: Republican?

Richards: Sure. And I say that only by an assumption, because it never came out and it never stood in the way of their work with any of it. Nobody, as I can recall, in the water fight let the political issues, Democrat versus Republican, play any part whatsoever. And thank God for that, because it was a close fight. In many instances, we were close to losing this thing, in many, many cases. Had politics reared its head--of course, it did on the floor of the senate and the assembly once in awhile--but if it had reared its head in the local effort, the MWD, the San Diego water people, the Metropolitan Water District here, the city people and so on, all of whom were in varying degrees of expertise, water development--had they let politics get in the way, the whole thing would have fallen apart at the seams.

Rowland: Going back to your early campaigns, how did you build up your knowledge of the water problems?

Richards: Well, reading and talking and working in the area, research and conversation with people who were active.

Rowland: Did you rely on any particular individuals, or did you rely on information from the Metropolitan Water District?

Richards: Well, I think largely through my earlier political contacts, and as a lawyer, in which I had some contacts on the legal side and knew some of the lawyers who were involved in, for example, the Arizona fight. I kept in touch with the judicial side of this whole thing, quite naturally, as a lawyer could. Also, because of my political interests in southern California, we recognized this as one of the basic requirements of political involvement, so far as southern California was concerned.

- Rowland: Now, in the '54 campaign against Mildred Younger, how did you deal with the water issue?
- Richards: I don't think she had been equivalently active, but so far as the issue is concerned she would have been on the same side, so there wasn't anything that separated us. Certainly she could not have run for office representing southern California and been opposed to southern California interests in the water development. It was not an issue between us.
- Rowland: Did you feel that in the '54 campaign, you had a thorough knowledge of the water interests of southern California? Or was that something that developed when you got into office?
- Richards: I think I had a basic knowledge of the need without any doubt. But I can't say that I had a thorough knowledge of the water picture until after I got into office. After I got into office I found out where many of the bodies were buried and how difficult and complex an issue it was. I was never under any illusion that it was simple, but it became terribly complex. It required all of the expertise we could find, all over the state.
- Of course, a great many people contributed a great deal of effort in order to make this thing possible. Anybody who tries to go in and take individual credit is out of his head. And that includes two governors. Nobody can take full credit on that. It's a matter that--it required everybody's efforts. Incidentally, both of those governors--I don't mean to be deprecating, because Goodie Knight and Pat Brown spent a tremendous amount of personal effort in making the thing possible.
- Rowland: Now Paul Taylor, who you undoubtedly know, said that the idea for the project originated with big landowners in the Central Valley, who wanted more water but wanted it at other's expense. So he said the project was sold as industrial and urban water.
- Richards: Well, I would say that each of those things played a part. There's such a thing as political jiu-jitsu. You take your support where you can find it.
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- Richards: Central California would have been very opposed to most of the interests of southern California, but for that which they envisioned to be in their own selfish interests or in the development of their own area, which includes big landowner interests in the Central Valley. Their support was used naturally in the support of the plan, but for different reasons. We in southern California had to have the water. If it were purely sold on the basis of our own personal interests only, it couldn't have been sold. This is the science of the possible in the area of political involvement.

Rowland: Now the big issue was the 160-acre limitation. As the federal government got more involved in the formation of the California Water Plan on a massive scale, they were liable to step in and enforce the 160-acre federal limitation on the Westlands agricultural district.

Richards: It reared its head many, many, many times. An effort was made, of course, to bypass that as an issue where we could, because the 160-acre limitation had been a political issue, in, and of, and by itself since it was first born. It remains an issue to this day, as to where it should be honored in the breach and where it should be honored literally. It, in and of and by itself, was often a political issue between the parties, particularly in local fights between Democrats and Republicans in the Central Valley. That's where you found the differences between the quote "large individual landowners" unquote, and the small farmers.

But in the development of the California Water Plan, our effort was not to solve every problem that was involved with water. It was to avoid all the problems we could, and that included the 160-acre limitation. We couldn't avoid it entirely, but we went around it wherever we could.

Rowland: Well, you had the support of the Central Valley big farmers.

Richards: And we got 'em.

Rowland: Now I have another little explanation of vote in the Senate Journal. This is dated January, 1957. Your vote against the Oroville dam creation--it's a rather lengthy statement by you. You go into the whole makeup of the senate being dominated by northern state senators who wanted to keep the water in their area, and not send it down to the southern half of the state. And they you call for a state constitutional amendment to insure that southern California gets water to the southland.

Now one problem I have in reading this is on the second page here, it says--and I'll just read this to you: "I deem it in the interests of simple justice to southern California and all other water-deficient areas of the state that the bill must be opposed in its present form and either killed outright or ultimately sent to pre-conference in a final effort to bring back a mutually equitable approach to sound development."

Now what is the pre-conference? We're not quite sure of that.

Richards: Pre-conference is a committee which is appointed by a representative of both houses in order to solve the differences between the houses, which developed in the course of legislation after it hits the floor.

Richards: This whole thing, as I recall, was a political pressure fight in which the time had come for me to try and draw some lines in bringing to a head and in attaining some state-wide publicity concerning the overall then-effort of what I envisioned to be an adamant northern California group opposed to the southern California interests. If they're going to do that, then let's play that way. Therefore, the development of the Oroville Dam became a shift in the game. It was being played out.

Rowland: Now did you sit on the pre-conference?

Richards: I don't recall.

Rowland: You were nominated at the pre-conference?

Richards: I don't recall. I probably did, as the pre-conference developed. I can't even remember if a pre-conference did develop. I don't know if I won that fight or not, to tell you the truth. I know we wanted water from northern California, the overall war. But we lost a lot of battles in the meantime.

Rowland: Now, if you clarify this, I'm not quite sure: what was the Feather River Project that the Oroville Dam came out of?

Richards: Yes, again, the Feather River Project's a pretty big thing, and the Oroville Dam is an important element within the framework of the total development of that part of the state. The Feather River Project was a project which was developed almost separately by a group of senators and others outside of the legislature, who envisioned this as a project which involved a good deal of local benefit, and played a part, of course, in the overall state-wide water development; but was an entity in and of itself.

Rowland: You voted for another bill in '57 that created the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Rights Board. You just mentioned that you voted for the bill, Assembly Bill 4, with reluctance. Did the Metropolitan Water District support your vote on that, the creation of the two bodies, because that was a pretty significant group?

Richards: I would gather they did. I don't recall any basic break between the MWD and my position. If we had any breaks, we tried to solve them quietly outside of legislative involvement, and certainly outside of press coverage, so when the time came for a vote or for a position that I would take in the legislature or in press coverage, I do not recall that at any time, the MWD differed from my position.

Rowland: Even in the early stages of the water plan?

Richards: That's right. After I was in the legislature, and after I started taking active legislative positions on the water development--I think we had developed sufficiently so that any differences that we may have had, and there could have been several, would have been solved outside of press coverage and legislative involvement.

Rowland: With the MWD?

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: Were these differences primarily ideological, because of the conservative nature of the board?

Richards: Not necessarily, because each one envisioned himself, you know, as an absolute water expert. Everybody you talked to in those days was a water expert. There were a lot of differences as to how the job was to be done. Not very many, as I've said, if any, in terms of political ideology.

Now when you talk about ideological differences outside of politics, if you talk about the geographical differences between whether you are a northerner or a southerner, if you want to put that in the area of ideology, naturally the whole battle was conducted within the framework of that involvement, in that there were strong stand-pat northerners who wouldn't give the south thing one, and vice-versa. It was that that kind of a thing had to be overcome. It finally was, otherwise we wouldn't have won the war.

Rowland: You said that AB 4 was crippled by senate amendments, which didn't give southern California equal representation on the State Water Rights Board.

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: Again, is that reflective of the--

Richards: Yes, I think that was true, at one point in time. The State Water Rights Board was going to be given a good deal of authority, as far as developing the water resources of the state is concerned. We required southern Californian representation, which would be adequate within the framework of northern California opposition.

Governors Knight and Brown on the Water Plan

Rowland: What was Goodie Knight's position on that State Water Rights Board?

Richards: I don't recall at that juncture whether--there were a few places where I found it necessary to raise the level of, again, press releases in opposition to not only certain northern California interests but even the governor's interests, in some instances. This quickly subsided, however, as the developments went forward, even while Knight was still governor.

I felt that in the later portion of his administration, he had the state-wide interests at heart, which included the interests of southern California. Therefore I did not envision him as being a spokesman of the north, in a chauvinistic sense. Some of the senators always were, and would remain so. I did not feel that the governor did. Therefore, that's the closest I can come to answering your question, because I don't remember it specifically on any given vote where he stood.

Rowland: So then Goodie Knight played a significant role in pushing for the Feather River Project then during those years?

Richards: Yes, yes.

Rowland: And mainly it was the state senate--you would see then the state senators being the primary block to any creation of an equitable water plan for southern California, without question?

Richards: In the early goings.

Rowland: Now, when you're talking about the early going, later on when Pat Brown came in, there was a change?

Richards: Things were better then. We had, in the first place, here I think a partisan flavor may have entered the picture, in the sense that we had a Democratic governor and we had more Democratic voices in the senate. That partisan flavor would not change the geographical difference, but it would increase the area of cooperation between the administration and the majority vote in the senate.

You see, when I was first elected, I had to not only oppose the geographical fight against a geographical heavyweight, against southern California, but I had to the degree that politicians all were involved at all, to fight against a very heavyweight Republican opposition, in that the Republicans controlled the legislature. The Republicans had the majority of both houses with a heavy majority in the senate, and they controlled the administration. And here I was a newly-elected Democrat, coming from southern California. The environment was not exactly the most friendly from an automatic point of view. [laughter]

Rowland: Right, right.

- Richards: But in fairness to all the others up there, they gave me a chance to function and to function, I think, effectively.
- Rowland: Some of our interviewees have commented that Pat Brown was only building on Goodwin Knight's ideas for his California Water Plan. It really wasn't new.
- Richards: All developments of this magnitude require a base and a growth. There's nothing original, I think, in any of them. To that degree that's true. I think that Goodwin Knight and his administration and the work that took place under Goodwin Knight laid a base for the water development. I think if Pat had not taken hold of it aggressively and devoted a great deal of time to it, it would not have succeeded on that base. But he did take hold of it, and that base was taken advantage of, and it was built on. Therefore, though it cannot be said that Pat Brown started it--of course not! But Pat Brown was the governor under whose aegis it was brought to a head and a successful conclusion.
- Rowland: Now the water issue certainly must have overlapped with a national campaign. In '56, you have some notes that you were working for a water plank on the national platform.
- Richards: Yes, to the degree--that was probably born of the fact that I was very active, of course, in water development here, and therefore naturally would have had an interest in it, as far as anywhere, although I do not recall that as being a central fight to conduct this--
- Rowland: There wasn't any battle then?
- Richards: No, no, I don't think so.
- Rowland: There was a specific reference to the San Luis reservoir, and the move to put a reservoir in Los Banos, in 1956.
- Richards: Well, the water plan, as it was developing, required as I said earlier, support wherever we could get it. That included federal support, obviously. We wanted to have federal assistance in developing the state plan, certainly not federal opposition. It could have been on that latter level. That too had to be avoided in the development of the plan.
- Rowland: But again, going back to the 160-acre limitation, there was a degree of how much the federal government can get involved.
- Richards: That's right, that was a factor, that was a factor. Our main effort was to avoid any federal oppositions. Our second effort was to bring in as much federal support as we could, within the framework of the practicality.

- Rowland: Yes. And your third position was not to get the federal government too involved, is that true?
- Richards: Well, that's right, that's right. Because the state plan is indeed a state plan. Federal regulations would not coordinate with it. In other words, if the federal government ran the show, to the exclusion of the state, we would have had a lot of trouble. And they didn't.
- Rowland: Now Proposition 1 that came on the ballot in 1960--did you help write that proposition?*
- Richards: I had a hand in it, as did all others who were active in the water picture at that time.
- Rowland: And did Bill Gianelli help write it, also?
- Richards: Oh, yes. And before Gianelli, there was Harvey Banks. Oh, yes. Harvey was very active.
- Rowland: What was Harvey Banks's position?
- Richards: Director of Water Resources, State of California, before Gianelli.
- Rowland: During Knight's--
- Richards: And during the early Brown administration. I worked very closely with all the hierarchy for the department of water for the state, of course, and that meant getting well acquainted with both Harvey Banks and with Bill Gianelli. Gianelli was an assistant to Harvey Banks, at the time when we were doing most of this work. Then after Banks left as director, Gianelli carried on.
- Rowland: Why did Banks leave?
- Richards: Oh, I don't recall. I think it was because of offers in the private sector, in which he had developed nation-wide reputation as a water expert. He's a water engineer now in the private sector. I don't really remember--we'd have to ask him--but I think that it was a matter of alternative offers. He had done most of his work--he was the water director during the whole formulative period of setting up the water plan.

*Proposition 1 was a water bond initiative to complete the California Water Plan.

- Richards: Gianelli, who in effect served under him, carried on that work effectively. So Harvey was able to leave without feeling that he was sacrificing what amounted almost to a life work for him.
- Rowland: Now the California Water Project and Proposition 1 did not include any constitutional amendments, did it?
- Richards: Well, Proposition 1 itself--
- Rowland: No, I mean assuring water for southern California.
- Richards: Well, yes, you needed both. You needed to get the legislative enactment, and the constitutional support to back it up.
- Rowland: Because I thought there was a certain irony to the whole battle, and the fact that there really wasn't any constitutional amendment in the California Water Plan. There became a statute rather than a--
- Richards: That's right. It became a statute so that the legislature would have the opportunity--this was one of the things, I think, required by the northern interests. That is, they felt that if this thing fell on its head--which a number of them thought it was going to at any time--that they would have at least some power to change it. You can't change the constitutional position as easily as you can a legislative position.
- Rowland: Right.
- Richards: So the effort was to get through the legislative position first.
- Rowland: Now we have two other names who might have played a role in the writing of Proposition 1--Francis Lindsey, if you recall him.
- Richards: Yes.
- Rowland: And Ralph Brody also?
- Richards: Sure. Ralph Brody was quite active. Ralph Brody was working with Banks and with others.
- Rowland: What position did Francis Lindsey have?
- Richards: I don't remember the positions, but--
- Rowland: You don't recall Ralph Brody's position?
- Richards: No. I recall those individuals, and a lot of work on the part of both. I simply don't remember the technical position they held at the time.

Influence of Senator Hugh Burns

- Rowland: Now what was the role of Hugh Burns in the deal with the California Water Plan? He seems to have played a major role in that.
- Richards: Hugh Burns was President pro tem of the Senate, very influential senator, a Central Valley representative and one who normally sided with the north, as did most of the old guard and the conservative wing of the senate, of which Hughie was a part.
- Rowland: Wouldn't that conflict with the--
- Richards: Well, I haven't finished. [laughter] In spite of those positions, he utilized his position as president pro tem to see to it that those of us with differing views had full and fair opportunity to express them. And he protected, incidentally, in spite of the fact that he would normally be: a) more conservative than I, although we're both Democrats, and, b) on the opposite side of the water fight. He protected my position, and I required his protection, because he was the muscle of the senate at that time. He protected my position in giving me every opportunity to express it and to fight it out fairly--in other words, to see to it that although I was a neophyte in the senate that first year or so, that I was not taken advantage of from a legislative or parliamentary point of view. I think he was very fair.
- Rowland: Tell me, how did Hugh Burns work, then, if he was taking the position of the northern senators, but also representing constituents, many of whom were large farmers in the Central Valley who needed water--
- Richards: Sure, Hughie had a lot of different pressures on him as did virtually every member of the senate, with the exception of some of those up around Eureka, I suppose, who would be solidly northern California and didn't have to worry about population or anything else.
- Rowland: Such as Ed Regan.
- Richards: Sure. And incidentally, I managed to get along with Ed all right. The whole group, you know, began to work together, because they recognized, including the older senators--and at that time I was a younger senator--the need of each senator to represent the interests of his district. If there was any rule that was adhered to, it was a rule that gave each senator an opportunity to do just that. Therefore there wasn't any cutting of corners in order to make it impossible for one who, at that time, like myself, was an

- Richards: unpopular position on an unpopular issue such as water. So far as the extreme northern California group is concerned there was no effort to cut corners and to make it impossible for me or even extremely difficult to do the job which I envisioned I had to do, and which they recognized I had to do.
- Rowland: Tell me, wasn't there a tradeoff with Hugh to get his support ultimately for the water project?
- Richards: Again, not at my level, but at the governor's level I am sure there were many compromises that were made in order to see to it that-- Of course, Burns had difficulty, as you've already pointed out, in the sense that he had several interests in his own district. He normally would find himself with northern California, and yet his Central Valley people needed water development quite definitely. So the effort was to get that water development, and to see to it that Burns' northern proclivities would not stand in the way of the southern development.
- Rowland: As Hugh Burns once said in an interview with me, his interests represented both the east side of the valley and the west side of the valley.
- Richards: Sure.
- Rowland: The west side of the valley needed water and the east side didn't need anything. [laughter]
- Richards: That's right. And you have the canal problem and all these other things that he had to worry about. Sure, that water development in the Central Valley is a complex thing in and of itself.
- Rowland: You have a note here that Hugh did balk in the eleventh hour on the water project, and he wanted some tradeoffs. I'm not quite sure exactly what those tradeoffs were.
- Richards: I don't recall any basic tradeoffs being given him.
- Rowland: Do you happen to recall some balking by Hugh, and later moves on the--
- Richards: Not specifically, although it's possible, because they were all kind of right up to the vote, on vote after vote. And there were a lot of them. They were close. Therefore, each one of these things involved infighting, no question about it. It involved the need for administrative activity to help pull the gang together and make the thing go.

- Rowland: Now there are two, perhaps even opposing third house forces. One would be, of course, the Metropolitan Water District, which backed your moves. But there's PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric].
- Richards: That's all northern California.
- Rowland: That's all northern California.
- Richards: And that involved me not at all, but I'm sure that it played a part--
- Rowland: But the PG&E third house was really--
- Richards: Oh, sure. They would have direct contact with some of these senators that had been in for years and had worked with or against the PG&E over those years.
- Rowland: Now what northern senators did you finally swing to your position?
- Richards: Well, you'd have to look at the total vote.
- Rowland: Well, Ed Regan for instance.
- Richards: Yes. Well, Ed Regan would be one of the more difficult ones, although on a personal level he and I got along very well. On a good many issues that did not involve north versus south, he and I saw pretty well eye to eye--more closely, for example, than Hugh Burns and I, because Ed was the more liberal person on some of the issues than Hughie. But in terms of north versus south, Ed was a dyed in the wool northerner all the way. It would be very difficult, except that we could talk these things out. But as far as saying, "Here, Ed, I will offer this deal to you and you offer this to me," no way. That's not the way it was done. Not the way it could have been done, on the water issues.
- Rowland: Was it seen as really a bipartisan issue?
- Richards: Primarily, yes.
- Rowland: Or did it break down between parties?
- Richards: I've already tried to explain that. I think that it was bipartisan basically, virtually in its entirety. I think that there is an overall atmosphere which is affected by partisanship, as for example when the control of the senate changed from Republican to Democrat, and when the administration changed from Republican to Democrat. You therefore had an environment in which cooperation was a bit easier to attain for those of us who were Democrats. But that doesn't mean that the water issue became--

- Rowland: How was this cooperation maintained?
- Richards: Maintained because we can sit down and talk more. We're all part of the same plan, albeit with differences geographically.
- Rowland: And constituent differences?
- Richards: Sure, sure. And they don't disappear.
- Rowland: How were the Republicans drawn to support the project?
- Richards: Goodie Knight brought them in to begin with. Again, they recognized it wasn't a political issue.
- Rowland: It was really a district issue?
- Richards: Of course. It would be unduly damaging to try to delay it in terms of partisan politics.
- Rowland: Now what was the relation of the county committee and the CDC [California Democratic Council]--the position of the Democratic State Central Committee and the CDC on the whole process?
- Richards: The state committee is largely--the state committee is not a potent force, but to the degree that it is a force at all, it is purely political, and therefore had little to do with such things as the water development. The CDC you could almost say the same thing, although the CDC, reacting from a partisan point of view, is one of those elements that tended to support the Democratic majority that developed during the period we've been discussing in the legislature. Of course, after Pat Brown became governor, he then is the governor of the Democrats as represented by the CDC, as well as all other elements of the Democratic party.
- So to that degree, they became a part of whatever the administrative program was. The water program was part of the administrative program; therefore, they tended to support it as a partisan entity. But this still does not make water a partisan issue, and it still does not overcome geographical differences.
- Rowland: I have a note here that in the '61 assembly, there was a bill, AB [Assembly Bill] 1326, that planned to put the 160-acre limitation into the California Water Plan. Do you recall moves from the assembly that were perhaps crushed by the senate?
- Richards: I don't recall them. I recall the fact that they were considerably unpopular with those of us who wanted to maintain the integrity of the water plan, which was still in the process of development.

- Rowland: What was Governor Brown's position?
- Richards: Probably the same.
- Rowland: Here again, with the support and pressure of the Central Valley large farm owners?
- Richards: Probably, although that again would be a matter of using it rather than developing it, because it happened to be coincidental with our interests, albeit we would be split right down the middle if you started talking about, "Are you or are you not in favor of an acreage limitation." So we tried to avoid it, to keep the plan going. The big thing was to get the plan built.
- Rowland: Paul Taylor--I have a note here--testified in the assembly water committee and favored the bill, because he always had been in favor of the 160-acre limitation bill. But the bill died in that committee.
- Richards: It had to be killed for a very practical reason, as I've already said. You might favor an acreage limitation, that's fine. You might want to see the big farms split up and prefer it, that's fine. But if your real interest is in developing total water resources of the state, you had to keep that out of the fight.
- Rowland: Now the San Luis reservoir project became an issue in the '62 campaign against Tom Kuchel, did it not? You said that the reservoir project had been stalled because Kuchel had not been active in the Senate, pushing for federal funds for the project. You were questioning Kuchel's position regarding support for the big landowners in the Central Valley.
- Richards: Well, my question is effectiveness, primarily, in this whole area. Albeit he was better established, as I told you earlier, by '62 than he was in '56, this was merely one of the many, many issues, all of which could be lumped together, as to whether or not he was an effective Senator for the state of California, that's all. I would be the first to indicate that he was obviously more effective by '62 than he was in '56. In '56 I don't think he was an effective Senator. I don't think he'd gotten his feet on the ground. I don't think he stood for much of anything. By '62, he was damned hard to beat, because he was a reasonably liberal Republican, who although not as effective in the opinion of many of us as we thought he could be, nevertheless was pretty hard to attack from a Democratic base.

It was just like in the Knowland-Knight split. The only way you could get rid of a liberal Republican of that type was to get him beat by someone in his own party coming at him from the right side. That's exactly what happened.

Funding the Water Plan

- Rowland: I think we talked about the investment fund going towards--becoming the major funding for the California Water Project. Now most of that money came from tidelands oil revenue, did it not?
- Richards: Well, I wouldn't say most. I'd say a good deal of it did.
- Rowland: Now did you support the allocation of the tidelands oil money for the California Water Project?
- Richards: Sure.
- Rowland: Did you see the tidelands oil money as a kind of good source of backing?
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- Richards: One of the monetary supports which was available was oil, and we used it where we could find it.
- Rowland: But this wasn't your position early on in the years, for instance in '56, when you made remarks favoring Long Beach?
- Richards: Well, the early one was the internal fight regarding Long Beach. You had to save Long Beach. It was part of my constituency, and keep them from getting taken apart down there.
- But once we had that accomplished, then we wanted to distribute the portion of the oil revenues which were available for distribution into the proper sources--for where they were needed, in my opinion, and in the opinion of others. That certainly included water development, which required a heck of a lot of money, in addition to the bond issue.
- Rowland: What were the merits of the sales tax versus the bond issue to fund a water plan in 1960?
- Richards: Well, the sales tax is considered by many of us--again, here I suppose there is a Democrat, rather, a partisan overlay to it, because we as liberal Democrats have felt from time immemorial that the sales tax is a retrogressive tax, and that therefore, though it's an easy way to raise money, it's not a good way to raise it, because it comes out of the pockets of those least able to pay it. A bond issue would raise a large amount of money, which is what was required.

Richards: As a matter of fact, in the opinion of many of us, it was the only way to raise that much money and make it work, by a very large bond issue that would require a tremendous amount of campaign effort to put over. We figured that's what we had to do, and we did it.

Incidentally, that "we" is a broad base, because it required the united effort of almost everybody who's been active in the water plan, in order to put the bond issue over, and it would be a great mistake to minimize that effort. That effort was, I think, as important and as difficult and as concentrated as any other part of the overall history of the water development of the state, the effort to pass the bond.

Rowland: The question I have is regarding senate reapportionment. It would seem from studying your remarks in the Senate Journal that you're certainly between a wall and a hard place.

Richards: Sure I was! [laughter]

Rowland: And the only state senator from Los Angeles County--

Richards: That's right.

Rowland: --and the natural question would be, of course, you probably supported senate reapportionment.

Richards: Sure.

Rowland: But according to my research you directed remarks to Frank Bonelli, the late Los Angeles County supervisor, that pushing for a senate reapportionment initiative for the '60 ballot would sacrifice the rather delicate negotiations with northern state senators for the California Water Plan.

Richards: That's purely political, very frankly. As you say, I was in an awkward position. There was no question but what the senate, particularly the northern-dominated senate, was opposed to its being reapportioned and thus watering down their influence. Therefore--

Rowland: No pun intended. [laughs]

Richards: That's right. [laughter] To the degree that I had to get along with these people and obtain their vote and support, I was in no position to fight that.

Richards: On the other hand, I could say and did say--and certainly now that I'm out of it, I can say with great freedom [laughs]--that the reapportionment of the senate, although a good argument might be made for not having the assembly and the senate on the same basis, a better argument must be made that it was so far out of proportion that an adjustment had to be made. To put it differently, fourteen senators now do the job that I did as one senator, and it makes a lot more sense to have more people doing it, because no one person can represent more than five million people on the state level in a state legislative body sufficiently effectively. It requires just too much work. The hardest work I ever did in my life was when I was in the state senate, trying to represent five million people in L.A. County.

I have since filled a lot of other positions and done a lot of other work, including building my own law firm, and I have never worked half as hard [laughs] to do any of that as I did trying to represent all those people in the senate. For example, I worked seventeen secretaries. Now, one man can't work more than seventeen secretaries. If I could, I would have had eighteen or nineteen or whatever I asked for. They gave me anything I needed, in terms of mechanical assistance and personal assistance.

Rowland: That was handled through Hugh Burns's office?

Richards: Yes. Hugh Burns felt that way and the governors, both of them--one Democrat, one Republican--felt that way. Everybody recognized, in fairness to them, recognized the tremendous requirements of the job, and therefore they cooperated to try and help me do it. But all I'm saying is, I don't care how hard you work, you got to split that job up. It has now been split up by the reapportionment, which, I repeat, makes better sense.

Rowland: Your success in the California Water Project probably reflects your able representation of Los Angeles County.

Richards: I think I helped a great deal in achieving that success. I certainly hope so. I really believe so. But I surely wouldn't take anything like centralized credit. This was my job, and I did it as effectively as I could, and I had a lot of help.

Rowland: Who would you give the major credit for the California Water Project?

Richards: Well, I think it was a combined effort. I think the major credit has to go to the various people we've discussed throughout the last two tapes.

Rowland: In L.A.--?

Richards: I think it goes to the water experts in each area, that rose above the limited requirements of their area, and certainly rose above partisanship. I think it goes to both governors, Goodie Knight and Pat Brown. I think it goes to the water committees that worked behind the scenes and outside of the legislature, as well as those in the legislature. I think it goes to those people in the legislature on both sides of the fight that we've discussed, who worked their tails off in order to make this thing possible, myself included. We all worked together at it, and had we not done so, it just simply could not have come to pass, a thing that big and that controversial and that difficult and that new in a state growing like California. It could not have been put together were it not for the cooperative effort of everybody we've named on these tapes.

Rowland: I think that's a good spot to come to a close.

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VI RECALLING SENATE ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES

[Interview II: February 5, 1979]##

Electing Hugh Burns as Pro Tem

Rowland: The first set of questions here are dealing with senate operations. The first question to start this topic off is, you were in the senate when Hugh Burns was elected as pro tem in 1956. Could you recreate that?

Richards: Well, there was much of a fight for the pro tem position. I don't recall who the fight was conducted by, because my memory of Hugh was that he always was influential, particularly during the earlier years of my tenancy in the senate.* He was always on the rules committee, as I recall, and the rules committee pretty well ran the senate. The pro tem came from the rules committee, in effect. I remember Hugh Burns as pro tem during a good deal of my earlier years. I didn't, frankly, recall the date of his election, nor would I have, had you not reminded me right now.

Rowland: It was 1956.

Richards: Yes.

Rowland: Now normally those meetings--the election is held as a closed-door meeting, is it not?

Richards: Yes.

*Donald Grunsky (Republican-Santa Cruz) competed with Hugh Burns (Democrat-Fresno) for president pro tempore of the senate in 1956.

Rowland: Do you remember a push by Republicans to have that vote put on the record in the Senate Journal?

Richards: No, I don't. Had they done so, they would have done it for political reasons. [laughs]

Rowland: Well, tell us about two people in particular, Randolph Collier and--

Richards: Randy was a man with considerable seniority, and was a Republican but was not a very solid Republican. He cooperated with the Democrats rather often. Collier, as a matter of fact, as I recall, openly considered changing his registration on more than one occasion, and was, therefore, not considered hostile to the Democrats during most of the time that Collier was in the legislature while I was there.

I was vice-chairman of transportation, for example, while Collier was chairman of transportation, and partisanship made no difference whatsoever, either to him or to me.

Rowland: Now did Collier play a particularly important role in that vote on Hugh Burns?

Richards: Well, I think that Collier was an ally and friend of Hughie's during most of this time that I was there. I considered them to be allies, and I don't recall differences of opinion. I would say that Burns was considered a bit more of a political heavyweight than Collier, but other than that, therefore to a matter of degree, would be the difference between them, rather than any basic partisan or political or even area differences.

Rowland: What do you mean by "political heavyweight," in describing Hugh Burns?

Richards: In that he had more influence within the legislature. He was considered a leader in the legislature, I think to a greater degree than Collier was. Although Collier had considerable seniority and high respect, Collier tended to specialize. He ran the transportation committee with an iron hand, for example. He was very influential in matters of highway development and gasoline tax distribution. He was also influential concerning the administration of the California Highway Patrol. But aside from those specialties, he didn't have the influence that Burns had in general legislation.

Then again, Burns was often disinterested concerning various specific political issues. He was more interested, it seems to me, in the handling of the household duties and the running of the senate from an internal point of view. He was quite influential in committee appointments.

Rowland: And rallying votes for certain important legislation among senators?

Richards: Not so much as seeing to it that the committee appointments were made, which I believe would place people into office whose judgement Burns trusted. Then he left it pretty much to them. I don't recall Burns being active on the floor for or against legislation, except in those rare instances where negatively he thought legislation was bad, and should be killed. I can recall his efforts to defeat certain bills. Beyond that, I don't recall his being the father of legislation to any great degree, not even as much, for example, as Collier was in the area of highways, which I just mentioned.

Rowland: When we talk about committees and the designation of chairmanship of committees, did seniority play a role in that, or was it particularly Burns's decision?

Richards: I think seniority played a heavy role. I think it played a heavier role than anything else. Next heaviest would be geography, in those earlier days when geography was terribly important in the senate, long before "one man-one vote," the kind of thing I've discussed earlier on these tapes with you, as is some of the things he gave me difficulty, because of my geographical position in southern California, and the geographical differences reflected in the urban-rural differences, which we've also discussed previously. I would say these factors played a very significant role.

Then comes the "buddy" approach, which you were mentioning, and, that is, who knows whom, and who's in the club, so to speak, and that revolved around the group of people who were close friends of Hugh Burns, and of other members of the rules committee. But it certainly was not partisan. For example, you'll find George Miller Jr. being very influential and a very close friend of Hugh Burns and a very influential senator, who was in comparison with Hugh Burns, a liberal.

Rowland: Wasn't Miller a Democrat?

Richards: Yes. So was Burns.

Rowland: But you said you didn't think it was partisan.

Richards: I don't. And didn't, correct. I don't change anything I just said. Partisanship would be way down the line, in terms of degree of importance, having to do with selection of committee or senate leadership.

Rowland: What was your working and personal relationship with Burns, as pro tem of the senate?

Richards: A very friendly relationship, in which when I had any problems, I could go to Hughie and I would have personal cooperation from him. I would expect to have less than cooperation from him on certain issues involving liberalism versus the conservative picture, in which I would be a liberal and he a conservative, in most instances. I would expect less than cooperation from him on urban versus rural, in which he would tend to side with the rural and I with the urban. He and I were both Democrats, and I would expect to have no difficulty therefore, and did not have, from a partisan point of view.

Though he was way, way ahead in terms of seniority, and others with him handled the rules committee, and I did not expect to walk in as a freshman legislator and be on the rules committee, nor was I--

Rowland: Were you ever on the rules [committee]?

Richards: No, never on rules, never tried to be on rules. It would not seem to be particularly appropriate, because again, in those days of the urban versus rural, it would be most unusual to find a Los Angeles representative [laughs] on the rules committee, because the senate prided itself on being somewhat different from the assembly, and much less dominated by urban representation. Putting it differently, I don't think I could have made the rules committee had I tried, which I did not. My hands were full trying to handle the legislative load representing Los Angeles County. On that side of the ledger, I had full cooperation from these men who were closer to the inside of the senate, including the rules committee.

Rowland: [Stephen] Teale, Collier, Burns, Miller--

Richards: That's right. All of them rural representatives, by comparison, every one of them. Even Miller, who came from Contra Costa [County], which is not exactly rural, but it certainly not as urban as L.A. And nor did he side with the urban people, except in some liberal-conservative splits, in which Miller was a true liberal.

Rowland: Would you call people like--well, I don't know about Burns, but Teale and Miller, of course, would be a reform Democrat, but would Teale and certain other Democrats from the rural section of northern California, rural counties in northern California--?

Richards: I don't know what you mean by reform?

Rowland: That is, supporting liberal legislation, yet coming from conservative districts.

Richards: Oh, yes, in the sense that I would other than myself, in this group that you just named, I would put George Miller as the closest to being a true liberal, within my life.

Rowland: And Joe Rattigan?

Richards: Rattigan would probably be next, and then Teale next to him. Then you get over to Collier, who is considerably more conservative, and Burns even more conservative than Collier. Everyone I've named was a Democrat except Collier, who was as I say, a nominal Republican, but actually a functioning conservative Democrat.

Reorganization of Fact-Finding Committees: 1959

Rowland: Now the next question deals with something that I might have to jog your memory on, and actually, many of the senators I've questioned about this really have kind of a vague recollection of it, but it deals with certain major changes that occurred in the senate fact-finding committee in 1959, that the entire senate unanimously voted for. It was an interesting occurrence in that fact-finding committees structures, staffing and financing were changed. Burns introduced two measures: one, to reduce the number of fact-finding committees from twenty to thirteen, thereby restructuring them into topical committees rather than broad ranging individual committees that occurred prior to '59.

Then he dumped the un-american activities committee into a subcommittee of the newly-created general research committee and replaced it with the water resources committee. Do you recall that major change in 1959?

Richards: Yes, I do, and I think I recall the reasons were not esoteric. I think the obvious reasons played a very strong part. Item one, by 1959 the red-baiting activities of the un-american activities committee, both state and federal, had pretty well run their course. They at least had decreased considerably in importance in the public eye and in the legislative eye. This was reflected in Burns's attitude towards it. I don't think he ever was extremely active in the darn thing, except that his name was connected with it, and in the very early days he may have been much more active than I recognized. But in later years, as the un-american activities committee lost its influence, for the many reasons we've described--not just internal to the committee, but external insofar

Richards: as public interest in concerned, they no longer were in the eye of the hurricane. They no longer were getting publicity, and of course, a committee like that has to have publicity to survive, because that's what they functioned on. It was a negative, red-baiting type of operation. Without the white light of publicity on it, it was a nothing.

As a result, I think in '59, when there was a reorganization of the committee, that reorganization merely reflected the change that I just mentioned in decreasing its importance and making it into a subcommittee. There were those, myself included, who would have been perfectly happy to vote for its going out of existence. But I don't think we could have mustered enough votes to do it. It was better to just sort of let it fade away. And it did.

Rowland: Was there any concern that now that un-american activities was a subcommittee, its appropriations would be obscured along with its staffing and senate membership?

Richards: I don't recall that. I recall merely this being the first step in--or one of the many steps in sort of a fading away procedure of the committee itself.

I didn't quite finish my answer because I think another reason for the committee reorganization is reflected in the elevation of the water committee. Water resources was then a major issue, and it became a major committee, along about that time.

A third reason is that there have been so many committees whose function largely consisted of a good deal of travel--and I might add, aimless travel--on the part of members of the legislature between sessions, in which they would roam up and down the state, and they had committee budgets to work on, and they would hold hearings. I think that by '59 it began to be recognized that there was a good deal of waste in this procedure. It required reorganization, and I think the effort was an honest one--bring more centralization and therefore more efficiency into the interim committee activity, which is what these factfinding committees are all about.

Rowland: 1959 also brought in about nine, I believe, freshman Democratic senators from the Pat Brown Democratic sweep.

Richards: Again, the beginning of a change in attitudes in the senate, sure. The picture was changing. There were younger faces that were coming in. This was reflected in the attitudes throughout the legislature.

Rowland: What kind of changes occurred from the influx of nine new freshman Democrat members?

Richards: I think it was part of the overall trend away from Republican domination and towards what later became Democratic domination in both houses and throughout the state government. Therefore, the change was an increase in Democratic consciousness, perhaps Democratic partisanship, slower to come in the senate than in the assembly. The senate was never as partisan as the assembly. Neither one of them were very partisan when I was elected in '54. They both were more partisan by the time I left the legislature in '62, and the increase in Democratic strength is during the period that you're now discussing.

As a matter of fact, two years after I was elected, there was the beginning of the big Democratic push. When I was first elected in '54, as I believe we mentioned before, there were just darn few Democrats. There weren't too many that went in that year. But the next year, quite a number went in, and the year after that--that is the election after that [1958], in two year intervals, it became a Democratic sweep.

Rowland: Can you tell us about an orientation meeting for the freshman Democrats at Big Springs in 1959, why that meeting was held for the nine new Democrats?

Richards: It doesn't even ring a bell to me. I was not a new Democrat.

Rowland: I mean, for all the senators. This was an entire senate--

Richards: I don't even recall if I attended.

Rowland: This was at a PG&E or Southern California Edison recreation area.

Richards: I don't recall a thing about it. There's a difference between PG&E and Edison. They each had their own little summer camp deal. I don't remember--

Rowland: Right. This was an area called Big Springs, down at--

Richards: I remember going at one time with an Edison Company tour to see their facilities. It had little to do with legislative orientation. I don't recall ever going with PG&E, because PG&E being a northern California utility concentrated on northern California people.

Rowland: Can you tell us something about the clubbishness that various senators have described in the state senate? How did that--?

Richards: Well, it's a small group. It's only forty men. It was considered as sort of a club, as is the United States Senate on a higher and broader level. I think that's inevitable, because they become rather clannish in the sense that everybody knows everybody else, and we know how they function. People become close and lasting friends, incidentally, right across the board, almost irrespective of personality locations, politics or anything else. And to that degree, if you've got a forty man organization of any kind, including a tennis club, I suppose it gets rather clubbish. Working together day by day, year in and year out, it becomes a rather close-knit group.

The differences, of course, are apparent. We fought extensively over all kinds of legislation. But on a personal level, people were rather close friends, and that is demonstrated by the fact that even through the years, those friendships have lasted without abatement. Almost any senator that you talk to has a friendly feeling and it reflects itself in his conversation, if you start talking about other senators. That's not because he's afraid to criticize, it's because he's sincerely learned to like the people with whom he was working.

Committee Status and Operations

Rowland: You've talked about committee status, assembly committee status-- for instance. Which were the most powerful committees in the senate and how did they operate?

Richards: Well, the important committees I don't think have changed too much through the years, within the framework of senate organization. Obviously, the most powerful committee was the rules committee, which we've already discussed--a very small, closely-held group that had the power over committee assignments and through that power, also the power of determination as to where bills would go for hearing, which is a very great power. If you send a bill of a given subject to a committee which you know that the personnel thereof are opposed to, you are in effect killing the bill before it's even heard. And vice-versa, if you send it to a committee that you know the personnel is friendly to this particular bill or the subject matter of the bill, you tend to breathe life into it. So that's an important power.

The other big powerful committees consisted of finance, transportation--

Rowland: --governmental operations.

Richards: Yes, G.O. That's sort of a catch-all committee, but it was one which, for that very reason, could pick up legislation which might be considered controversial, and depending on the change in personnel in that committee, which changed considerably through the years. In the earlier years it was considered a sort of a hanging committee, and in later years it was not. There were times when it was criticized for holding impromptu meetings over dinner, for example, to decide what's going to happen to a bill. I don't know that that was ever established as a fact. I know that the criticism was leveled at it. There may have been some merit to that criticism.

Rowland: And Parkman was chairman of that committee?

Richards: Yes, Parkman was one of the older ones. He's a man who plays everything very close to his vest. A hard man to know, one who I never did get to know very well, because he was out shortly after I came in.

Rowland: Now, this is a quote from Hugh Burns. He started, in describing legislative operations, that in the assembly there were more individual ambitions evident, than in the senate. In the senate freshman senators should be seen and not heard, and there should be respect for senior members.

Richards: Well, the respect for senior members I certainly agree with. I think we each view these things subjectively. I've heard all those views. Of course, they've been repeated since George Washington's time at every legislative level, from federal and state. But other than respect, I think it's extended, to some degree, on the personality of the new member and certainly, to some degree, on where he came from. Certainly it didn't apply to me as being seen and not heard. I was on my feet, very often, every day. If I may say so, I was "excused" for that, unquote, because everyone in that legislature knew that I had to be. Roughly half of all the bills that were in the legislature during the time I was there were my bills, or affected my district directly. As a result, I had to be heard, and perhaps more often than any other member. This could have been something that would get people either awfully tired of hearing my voice or they would outright criticize me. Certainly, if they got tired they didn't tell me, although I don't doubt that they got tired of hearing my voice. Criticism was not heard. None. Zero. If you have heard any, I would be surprised, because I would have discussed the criticism with them.

I knew full well that being a relatively new legislator, tending to be a little bit volatile on my feet anyway, and not hesitating to speak out, that I might well be subject to criticism

- Richards: for doing it. So I discussed that, and each of them assured me that there was no such criticism in the wings. As far as I know, none ever developed.
- Rowland: One of our senate interviewees mentioned an interesting thing that always occurred in a typical day in the state senate: by voting alphabetically, and because so many bills came up to the floor for votes on a particular day, the voting started, ostensibly, with Senator Stan Arnold, a liberal, followed by Senator Beard and then Senator Berry, who were both conservatives. If Stan Arnold voted yes, and Beard and Berry voted no, then senators immediately would turn around and make sure that they examined the bill. [laughs] Do you recall that happening?
- Richards: Well, these are little tipoffs. The unfortunate fact is that there were certain members who never read the legislation and therefore you couldn't tell much about how they had voted, except that they listened to somebody else. I'm sure that took place. There were other members who consistently read the bills, and you listened to them, because you figured that how they voted was predicated on a little bit of thought that went into it.
- You also did--you tended to read in the well-known prejudice if any, of the legislator doing the voting. There are some who, when listening to them vote, you pay no attention to whatever, because you knew that they didn't pay any attention to the bill.
- On the other hand, I repeat--there were others who you knew darn well had paid a lot of attention to it. Of course, you always checked it out. I always attempted to read all the legislation. I'm sure your interviewee did too. Several of us did. In the course of reading it, you also know who the authors are and you know what the shading of the legislation is. And you interpolated that as you listen to the vote as it's being--the oral vote has certain advantages, because it gave you the chance to do just what we are both talking about, and that is interlineate some additional information in the course of the vote.
- Rowland: You probably remember Senator Swift Berry, who was called Swifty from Fifty. He was always pushing to complete route fifty through his district.
- Richards: Yes, and he was a well-liked guy. Purely rural all the way, a hundred percent, and quite conservative, but well-liked, as was true for many of the fellows from up in the Mother Lode country.

Rowland: Just briefly touching on the un-american activities committee, what was the reaction of senators to the report of the committee? Why don't we touch particularly on the '61 and '65 report? These dealt with the university, attacking the University of California for harboring communists--

Richards: I think the reactions were more attributable to the senator and his background and his political motivation--political in not the partisan sense but in the sense of liberal versus conservative--more than in what was said in the report. Because those of us who were against the un-american activities committee were against its reports and considered them totally irrational, not to mention libelous and without merit as to the facts, whereas there were some at the extreme other end of the spectrum who, if they ever bothered to read the report, would no doubt swear by the report and say that it was gospel.

Rowland: Like Senator Nelson Dilworth, who was--

Richards: Yes, that's right. Although, again, I don't know if even he ever read it often. I don't think Hugh Burns read it most of the time. [laughs] But the stuff was there to be used by those who wanted to use it for vilification purposes. I remember a speech I made on the floor of the senate, saying it's high time we stopped smelling each other's armpits and started voting on what the issues are. That was a comment directed to this matter of trying to determine how far left or how far right are your proclivities.

Rowland: What about the reaction to attacking the university? Was that kind of a sacred cow in the senate?

Richards: Well, again, I think that the liberals felt it was wrong to subject the university to any political tests of left-wing, right-wing, or alleged red proclivities, which is what the report attempted to do. Beyond that, I don't recall a lot of comment on the floor of the senate as to the report. I don't think it was used on the floor of the senate virtually at all. I think it was used by the outside press, and of course, by certain individuals in political campaigns when they found the material useful to them.

Role of the Third House

Rowland: Now the next set of questions deals with the role of lobbyists and legislative representatives. This is an interesting batch of questions, because this is kind of the more mysterious aspect

Rowland: of legislative operations. We were trying to find out exactly how lobbyists worked with both houses and how much they did oppose or support or influence legislation. So from your own perspective, what do you believe is the proper relationship of lobbyists to the senate?

Richards: Oh, I think lobbyists are essential to any legislative function. I do not find them an evil, let alone an unmitigated evil. I think if anybody's half intelligent, he can separate the men from the boys as far as the people he talks to to gain information. Lobbyists are there to give you information. Lobbyists don't twist your arm. If they tried it, you'd throw them out of the office. It would certainly be counterproductive in any event. Neither are the purchases of a dinner or a lunch or two to be given any weight as to whether or not it's going to get any votes. It doesn't. Now, people who are willing to sell their votes for a lunch--although I never met such a person [laughs]--I'm sure wouldn't last very long in any legislative circles. I think the public tends to overestimate all these alleged nefarious aspects of lobbying.

I think the thing to worry about in lobbying is whether or not you're dealing with competent people of character who will give you a true reading within the framework of their own knowledge. And when they do, they have considerable influence. You learn to rely upon them. You know that they don't lie to you. And if you ever find any of them lying, even to the point of exaggeration, you then certainly downplay any influence they might have with you. Again, if you're half bright, that's the way you last out there.

I would suggest that the best lobbyists are the ones who will come in and say, "I have a bill. My people want this bill for the following reasons. Here's what the bill will do, and here's what's wrong with it. Also, here are the people I think will oppose it, both inside and outside the legislature." For example, the Girl Scouts are against it and Joe Blow is for it, or it's an oil bill, and the oil companies want it for this reason, and some of the ecologists do not want it, and here's their reason. And lobbyists will lay it out just as flatly as they can. On the basis of that kind of information, it's nothing but a plus in which, it seems to me, the legislator weighs those things, gains that information, and then votes as he thinks he should, predicated on his own knowledge, and in part upon his own district representation.

Rowland: Now with the press, of course, the lobbyist seems to be the good ol' whipping boy for any attack.

Richards: Yes, it's been used as a negative term from time immemorial.

Rowland: Right. Studying the press--particularly the California Journal, which I think six months ago did a study of the most powerful lobbyists in Sacramento. They seemed to give a picture of the good ol' boy lobbyist versus the new technocrat lobbyist who comes in with a show-and-tell chart and with all the facts and figures. Which style would see as the most effective style of advocacy? ##

Richards: A number of lobbyists who have been in there for years remained influential during the years that I was there. But largely because they had other things going for them other than the fact that they knew a lot of people, the public would assume that that's why they got votes. But that's not why they got votes: they got votes because they were solid representors of their position.

I would say that in those cases--a good example is Howard Allen, who was a relatively young man at the time that I went into the legislature, who represented the Edison Company and therefore the utility point of view. He was an excellent lobbyist in my opinion and an effective one, because he was the type that you and I have both mentioned. He came in telling you the good and the bad of the legislation. He did not exaggerate. He was truthful. He was one of the younger ones at that time. He did not rely on the number of people that he'd known and the length of time that he'd known them. He relied upon his knowledge of the issues.

He was important to me because representing a major southern California utility, and I being a Democrat, I would have two broad, conflicting views to settle in my own mind. One of them is the general feeling on the part of the Democratic party that utilities were far too conservative in the positions that they had taken in the past, and, therefore, that a lot of their positions were not necessarily in the public interest, and I was looking to the public interest. The other view being that this is one of the major utilities serving the people of southern California, so I damn well had to work out the positions that made sense. And Howard Allen helped me do it. To that degree, Howard Allen was a good lobbyist. I take that as an example. There were a lot of others, the same way.

Rowland: One theory holds that in the assembly, activist lobbyists preferred to work to initiate legislation, where status quo lobbyists tend to work with the senate to inhibit legislation.

Richards: I think there's some merit on that, certainly in those earlier days when the status quo tended to run the senate. Back in the days when I was first elected, for example, you had a number of the older senators who had been entrenched and who were there for a

- Richards: long time, and who were quite conservative in their view, quite rural in their views, and therefore new upstart legislation in the interest of, for example, city groups--let's say, social legislation--would tend to be more easily initiated in the assembly, which had newer faces in it, and more rapid change among the membership. When you wanted to kill a bill--and that kind of bill I take as an example--it would be easier to kill it with a status quo senator. What you say is true, only I think it was changing year by year, and now has changed almost completely.
- Rowland: How did the increase in specialization with consultants and administrative assistants affect the style of lobbyists?
- Richards: It merely gave them another dimension to their job, and that is they spent time with those influential members of the administrative side of the legislative assistants--to wit, committee assistants and administrative assistants [A.A.'s] that every senator had. I had two or three A.A.'s, and had to, to help me. As I told you before, I worked as many as seventeen secretaries. And the more influential of those people around me--when they [the lobbyists] couldn't see me, they would see them. This is, I think, just as true of all the legislative offices. That's one of the major differences that it would make for the lobbyist. I think it made for more efficient handling of legislation, and the ability to assimilate more information as the specialization trend grew and as more administrative assistants were obtained.
- Rowland: You came in direct conflict with one particular lobbyist, and that was Vincent Kennedy of the California Retailers' Association [CRA] when you were introducing your consumer council bill. This was to create an agency, I believe, with Pat Brown, a consumer counsel. Senator Dolwig and the CRA lobby were against this particular form of legislation. There was a compromise worked out--in the press it was just reported as a compromise. Could you recall that in any way or comment on that?
- Richards: Well, the compromise was worked out not between myself and the lobbyist, but rather between myself and the key legislators representing the lobbyist's point of view, Dolwig included. I knew Dolwig quite well, and I could sit down with him and work out those issues within legislation which would enable the bill to survive rather than die, and of course--as has been said so often that it's hackneyed--the whole art of legislative activity involves the art of compromise. If you're not willing to make certain changes, you're not going to get anywhere. My object in that case was to create an entity, which ultimately we did create, which we thought would be helpful, particularly as the years went on.

Rowland: I imagine that in a body of forty men, there even must have been lobbying among senators themselves for those swing votes.

Richards: Sure there is. There is still quite a bit of that. That takes place on the floor of the senate, as well as in committee, and it also takes place in the--it's not unusual to go over to another senator's office and sit down and say, "Look, Joe, what about this?" and see if we can't work something out.

Rowland: Now you authored quite a bit of freeway legislation?

Richards: Yes. I was vice-chairman of transportation for years, and also southern California needed freeways.

Rowland: How did you work with Randy Collier?

Richards: Quite well, actually. Randy ran that committee, there's no question about that. He even ran it to the point where, in my first year as vice-chairman, when Randy left the state for a short period of time, he took all the bills with him, so that nobody could mess around with them. [laughter] This gave us all sort of a kick. In later years, Randy came to trust me, I think, with a considerable feeling of friendship and personal trust. I don't recall any real differences with Randy. When I felt my district needed something that Randy would tend to oppose, I could sit down with Randy and talk him into it. And he would go with it.

I did carry a lot of freeway legislation, because in those days, the bulk of the automobile traffic was centered in southern California and the need for freeways was tremendous. Which required, incidentally, the need for considerable money, including consideration of distribution of the gasoline tax, which is something that northerners, of course, hung on to as hard as they hung on to their water. Over the years, we also fought for a larger share of the gasoline tax.

Rowland: Could you elaborate on the gasoline tax distribution?

Richards: Well, the gasoline tax division--that's where the money largely came from in order to build freeways and highways. And the freeway and highway need is down here [southern California]. The largest percentage of the tax was paid down here, because the largest percentage of people and automobiles was down here. And yet the division of the tax was 55-45 [south to north], as I recall. There was a constant effort to increase that share of southern California.

- Richards: In the years when we were pushing to change that percentage, whereas some of the north fought hard against the change, they also went out of their way to give us the benefit of their vote in the things that I asked for, in part to avoid the facing up to the need for a change. In other words, keep the lid on the pot sufficiently loose so that the steam doesn't build up and blow the whole thing wide open. That was often the psychology of northern California as they saw southern California grow in strength. That psychology applied to many of these basic issues-- water, irrigation, distribution of gas tax, powerboats, lots of things.
- Rowland: Now reporters have said that the transportation committee and Randy Collier were very accessible to lobbyists. Would you comment on that?
- Richards: I think that's true. I think that Randy had close friends among those who lobbied in the transportation area, but that's not unusual. He'd been there for years and so had they. I don't think his susceptibility to their blandishments was any different from that of anybody else. Randy was a pretty self-willed individual, and if a lobbyist took a position which Randy had been traditionally opposed to, the lobbyist might as well forget it. He's not going to change.
- Rowland: Now what of the role of consultants in a committee? It seems that there's sometimes a vague boundary between a consultant and a lobbyist.
- Richards: I don't think so. The consultants that I recall were in a position of administrative assistants to the committee, full-time or part-time, paid employees of the committee. They weren't lobbyists.
- Rowland: Do lobbyists sometimes suggest consultants?
- Richards: Oh, they might. Lobbyists would undoubtedly talk to consultants and work with them, or even attempt to influence them to their point of view, and again, nothing subversive about that. They would merely say, "Here's our point of view and here's why," the same as they would to an individual. The consultant, in turn, would be responsive to and responsible to chairman, vice-chairman, and other members of the committee. The lobbyists would not. So I see no connection between the two.
- Rowland: Could you describe the function of a lobbyist? For instance, do many of the powerful lobbyists today, like James Garibaldi--do they attend hearings, give testimony, generate reports for a legislator, or does it depend on the individual?

Rschards: Well, the latter is true, although an effective lobbyist does all of those things. I think that the lobbyist who had been around what you call the "old guard," the old boys' school, would tend more to go in and talk to key legislators to persuade them and ignore other people, and might even ignore the committee hearing itself. The modern lobbyist would tend to touch base with each member of the committee or perhaps even of the legislature itself, and would tend to make more of a presentation for both the legislature and the committee, largely, however, at the request of a member of the legislature.

If a man is carrying a bill, and a given member of the third house is in favor of the bill, the author would tend to look to that member of the third house for support, including informational support. He needs information and needs a presentation before the committee in addition to making the presentation himself. The legislator might well call upon the lobbyist and ask him to fill in and to please give us the answers to the following questions, and get them in the presence of the whole legislature. This is often done.

Rowland: The next set of questions deals with assembly reapportionment in 1961, the Crown committee reapportionment. What was your position regarding the reapportionment of the assembly prior to '61?

Richards: Well, the effort was to keep the senators' hands off it. The assembly considered that their bailiwick. The senate lines would be within the control of the senate, the assembly lines would be in the control of the assembly. That was the effort.

It didn't always work that way, of course. Lots of times we consulted with each other, went in, and in effect lobbied our own position, as I did with Bob Crown on several occasions when I thought it affected districts which were being incorrectly lined up. It really had no effect on me, because up until the one man-one vote deal, my district as such--my senatorial district covered the whole bunch. What was it? There are now fourteen senators, I guess about twenty-eight assemblymen that were in my own district, so I couldn't go around--nor would I even attempt or think of attempting--to go around and draw district lines for twenty-eight assemblymen. But if I thought that some lines were wrong for some reason, I would say so.

My information would merely be waved along with the rest. I didn't try to use any muscle on it. There wasn't an effort that said, "Look, if you don't do so-and-so, I'll try and kill your bill

Richards: in the senate." I suppose it could have reached that point, had there been real differences of opinion. But Bob Crown was a Democrat trying to do an honest job, in the eyes of the rest of us, who were Democrats, myself included. Therefore, I don't recall any great differences, nor do I recall any tremendous activity of my own. It was a tough job, and from the standpoint of a guy like Crown, it must have been murder for a whole year, handling those reapportionments. Everybody has their own axe to grind, and it's a real tough thing to do. I was involved in reapportionment long before that, even before I was in the legislature, and even from the outside, trying to work on reapportionment.

Rowland: In '50?

Richards: Yes. Way back with Susie Clifton and others who did work in that area. I was active with that group for a year or so, and the work was horrendous. It is mechanical work, it is map work as well as political work, you know. Where are the people? Who are these people? What are their registrations? Are they being represented or aren't they? How many minorities in this district? The whole thing--you have to weigh all kinds of conflicting information, and it's not all easy to get. And once you get it, it's not easy to sell.

Rowland: What was your reply to Republican charges of reapportionment gerrymandering in 1961?

Richards: The party out of power invariably says that the party in power gerrymanders, and invariably there's an element of truth to it. It never has any effect because within the decade that follows, although the first instinct is for everybody, including the press, to scream that never again will the party out of power be able to succeed or come back into power because the gerrymander is too effective--I have never seen a decade yet that that didn't change and reverse itself, and the party out of power became the party in power.

Rowland: What was your reaction to the 1950 assembly reapportionment?

Richards: The same thing.

Rowland: Were you satisfied with that reapportionment?

Richards: Same thing. I don't think that any of them have been a very strenuous gerrymander. The party out of power always claimed it was, but I don't think in any case it's been sufficient as to really change the ebb and flow of politics, which invariably cuts down the

- Richards: party in power sooner or later. They become less popular, and the party out of power gains strength, which is happening right now. It's happened as far back as I can remember, watching the political scene. It continually ebbs and flows, no matter what you do to district lines.
- Rowland: The next set of questions is dealing with the 1960 presidential campaign. To start that off, maybe you could just comment on the strategies and tactics of the Kennedy campaign in California.
- Richards: Let's see. This is the first time that any Kennedy entered California, isn't that right?
- Rowland: Yes, this is JFK in '60.
- Richards: As I recall it, just from my own vantage point, as the Kennedy group came in, they were strangers to us, and their method of campaigning was strange to us. Some of them seemed to be rather high-handed. The warmth didn't go through. What I'm trying to say is, the Kennedy charm had to grow on you, and it did. I became acquainted with Jack Kennedy, who incidentally had prior to that helped me in a campaign or two of my own, although I never was well acquainted with him.
- Rowland: In your 1956 senate campaign?
- Richards: Yes. He, as a good practicing Democrat, came out and we got acquainted to some degree, but in '60 we got much better acquainted. My respect for him increased very rapidly. Bobby, who I also met at that time, I thought tended to be somewhat autocratic. I later changed my mind about him too. But at the beginning it was a little hard to get acquainted with any of these men. Jack I became much better acquainted with as time went on. My admiration for him grew rapidly in the course of the campaign. After he was elected as president, it grew tremendously, because I think he did a terrific job. He would have been an even greater president than he was had he had the opportunity to live.
- Rowland: I think that even from my vantage point, when I was in junior high school watching the Nixon-Kennedy debates on TV, even my parents changed their vote to JFK, because Kennedy came off cleaner looking and young.
- Richards: Oh, I think Kennedy just beat him hands down. Nixon looked like--
- Rowland: How did television spots change the nature of campaign methods and financing?

Richards: Considerably! TV, as it began to come into its own as an effective media, of course affected the whole method of campaigning. This is a separate and long story with which we're all familiar. But it was happening during that time. Kennedy no doubt was an effective user of the TV media [medium].

Rowland: It also changed financing too, did it not?

Richards: Oh, sure. TV spots are terribly expensive, although in the early days, not so expensive. If I can make a personal reference, I think one of the big factors in my own success, in getting elected in my earlier campaigns, was the utilization of TV and particularly, in those days, free TV, because there was much less by way of professional competition--both on and off the tube--and as a result, we had the discussion programs, in which it wasn't too hard to get an invitation in order to fight and yell on the tube about various political issues. Sort of a poor man's debate forum. And this was free. The more you did of that--

Rowland: On public television?

Richards: No, no, on all the channels, because in those days, the TV channels were having a hard time filling up their day, and their evenings even. There wasn't enough to feed the monsters. As a result, they were glad to utilize this kind of discussion program technique which played right into the hands of the budding politicians. Those who were reasonably good on their feet profited by it. Certainly Kennedy was one of those who was good on his feet and good in the utilization of the media.

Rowland: Turning to your '62 campaign, which is kind of an interesting study--how did the Cuban missile crisis affect your campaign against Tom Kuchel? This is your second campaign against Tom Kuchel in 1962. I remember the Cuban missile crisis occurred right at the end of your campaign.

Richards: Well, it hurt.

Rowland: Kuchel appeared in a photograph worth a million votes.

Richards: Yes, it was the picture in which he was getting onto a jet fighter aircraft and putting on gloves to fly back to Washington. The ironic thing was, he arrived too late for the vote [laughter], and therefore it had no practical effect whatsoever, but it had one hell of an impact in terms of politics because it was a dramatic picture. That's not to say that he could have been beaten in any event; I don't think he could have, as I told you in the last taped session.

He was pretty well entrenched by then, and I was having trouble with some of my own support, because Kuchel was considered a terribly liberal Republican, and they didn't see any reason to, in effect, fight Kuchel. Those two were supporting me because they always had, and continued to. But you can't win an election on that. You've got to have a broad base. It was pretty hard to get. This picture merely helped strengthen what already existing, entrenched strength Kuchel had. And it was effective.

Rowland: Western Political Quarterly said that the '62 campaign against Kuchel was one of the worst smear campaigns in California history by the Kuchel camp against you.

Richards: I don't think so. I think that's an overstatement. I think that we all feel that when we're being opposed or being smeared--and the Kuchel people did do some of it, but not much. If you're talking about smear in the old sense of lying about your opponent being a red when he's not, and all that kind of thing--the

Richards: implication that the Kuchel campaign made was that I was too far left for good government, in their opinion as I recall, but I certainly don't call that a smear. I was certainly left of Kuchel, although apparently Kuchel was far enough left so that it was hard for a Democrat to beat him, and ultimately a Republican did for that same reason for that same reason.

But I can't say that I was beaten on any smear. I don't believe it. And I don't believe that Kuchel was a smear artist as such, I don't recall him making any statements which--although I had no personal love for the man at the time, which is not unusual between political opponents, I certainly had no disrespect for him, nor, I think, he for me.

Rowland: Do you recall a Steve Horn, who was the leader of Kuchel's campaign in '62, who put up quite a bit of literature against you, claiming that you were a communist or an alleged communist sympathizer?

Richards: Well, I recall some of that. Again, I don't recall that any of that took. I really don't think it was taken seriously by anybody, including my own opposition, and certainly not by my support. I only recall the name, nothing else. I don't think it was very effective.

Rowland: Now, the Western Political Quarterly also said that Kuchel attracted upper middle class Democrats and native born, long resident Democratic Californians. How would you analyze this as a voting trend in that '62 campaign?

Richards: Well, I've already told you. His being better known, better entrenched, and reasonably liberal from a Republican point of view would cause middle of the road Democrats to be not hostile to him. I spelled that out, and I would put in the same category.

Rowland: So he did swing those middle of the road--

Richards: I think to some degree. It's hard to tell how much. My campaign wasn't as good as the first one, as I said again on an earlier tape. His campaign wasn't any better than his first one, but by the same token, he was better entrenched. It's not hard for an incumbent to win. It's just darn hard to beat one. And when I was an incumbent, I won with great ease. The problem is, how do you unseat an incumbent? It can be done, but it's rare, and in this case and the case of Kuchel, it was not done until he was beat by his own party in his own primary.

Rowland: Did you use any special campaign techniques in that one?

Richards: What, in the second campaign?

Rowland: Yes. [tape turned off and restarted] Remember that Herb Phillips in the '56 campaign said that you were using a Kefauver technique of campaigning in small towns, meeting the people, shaking hands, giving small speeches--

Richards: As I said--and I think we touched on this earlier--the first campaign required a great deal of travel, because I had in the past been centered in southern California and was not known up north. Therefore I spent a good deal of time in statewide campaigns, since it was my first statewide campaign, trying to get better known in northern California. That includes central California, and that included a lot of the rural areas. Therefore, if that be known as the Kefauver technique because it involved a lot of travel, so be it. It did.

The later campaign involved less of that, my second statewide campaign, for again obvious reasons. One of them is I already had some base in northern California. Two, I had been in office awhile and was better known through the state. Three, I had an organization in a good many of the counties up north, and four, the general techniques of campaigning were somewhat different in that TV and radio was used to a greater degree--certainly TV was--than had been true in my first campaign, so that we used that in the urban areas all through the state and were able to finance our campaigns somewhat more on the sense as it is being done now, in which proportionately less is done on a hand-to-hand basis, and more is done by the expenditure of money for publicity on whatever level.

Rowland: Now dealing with those post '62 years, after you left office, why did you no longer seek public office after '62?

Richards: Well, I had felt that even without the second U.S. Senate race, that I had in effect served my time in the state legislature. I enjoyed my work in the senate, but very frankly I had in the course of eight years, taken from the senate about all it had to give, and given to the senate about all I had to give. Therefore from there on out, I felt it would be purely repetition, to a large degree, and I also felt that if I had gone for more than eight years in the state senate, this would become a career. It would be too late to do anything else, including build my own practice, or seek any private--

Richards: Incidentally, as anybody who's ever spent much time in that kind of public office knows, there is no private life that's left to you. I have two children, and they were growing up pretty much without contact with me. It was time to give some time to the family, and time for my law practice.

Since I was leaving the [state] senate, I felt that one more run for the [U.S.] Senate was worth it. Lightning might strike, and if so, then that is worth spending your life in a senatorial position, to wit: U.S. Senate. I don't know of any other job in the United States which is worth it, and therefore I willingly went back to a private practice, to which I've devoted myself since, and with a good deal of outside public activity, and with a good deal more control over my own life.

Rowland: What can you tell us about the interference in Stanley Mosk's primary campaign against Alan Cranston for the U.S. Senate in '64? Though you were out of office, you were still involved in politics at the state level, I believe--at least Democratic politics.

Richards: Oh, yes, I've been involved in politics ever since I left office.

Rowland: This was in '64.

Richards: I haven't stopped that at any time, nor do I intend to.

Rowland: The '64 Democratic primary with Stanley Mosk.

Richards: I don't get the word "interference," though. I don't know what you mean by that.

Rowland: It's been alleged that Pat Brown played an interfering role against Stanley Mosk to persuade Mosk to back out of the race against Alan Cranston.

Richards: Well, that's possible. I have, of course, heard the same thing many times, but I think you've got to go to the source to find out about that, because I don't know any more about that than anyone else.

Rowland: It's been alleged that Stanley Mosk and Unruh had an alliance, and that was the reason for the alleged interference by Pat Brown.

Richards: Well, Unruh is a hard one to figure on some of these. Normally he would not be an ally of Mosk or Cranston, although he would be a factor to be dealt with. Cranston and Mosk are pretty much

- Richards: of a similar stripe. Both, in my opinion, are good liberals and both great intellectuals. It would be unfortunate to have the two of them oppose each other. When that did happen, it was good to avoid it, by whatever method.
- Rowland: Now when Salinger came into the state and won the primary, and then--the Senator who died of brain cancer, a tumor--
- Richards: Clair Engle.
- Rowland: Clair Engle died--why did Pat Brown appoint Salinger? Did your name come up as a possibility for that appointment to the U.S. Senate?
- Richards: Well, yes, except that Pat had already passed over me at the time when he should have endorsed me prior to the CDC convention. As I may have mentioned earlier, when the opportunity came around [in 1958] and he endorsed Engle at the CDC convention, I was in line for that endorsement and that's when Pat told me--Pat sat on my front steps and said, "I'm going to endorse a northerner, and that's the reason that I won't endorse you." He gave the reason that Clair was a northerner. And my name did come up again, by the way, when Clair was ill. At that time, however, there was much less emphasis on the potential of selection because when Clair was first endorsed, it was a closer question. He had a voting record in the lower house nationally, which was no great shakes.
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- Richards: It would not have been at all unusual to pass over Salinger for an appointment at that time. I think Salinger's problem was--there again, you have a man who is really much more of an intellectual that he shows up in the public eye. He had a terrible image on television. Salinger always looked like a cigar chewing politician with no depth whatever. The truth of the matter is, he is a very cultured and sophisticated person. But it certainly didn't show up on the TV. Therefore he was not the greatest candidate state-wide.
- Rowland: So your name did come up then in the '64 period, when Engle died and Brown appointed Salinger--
- Richards: Yes, but without an real emphasis on--
- Rowland: Why did he appoint Salinger?
- Richards: I can't answer that. You've got to ask Pat. Have you talked to Pat?
- Rowland: No. [laughs] He's the hardest guy to get to.

Richards: Well, that's a good question to ask Pat. I'd like to hear his answer. He probably thought Pierre would make a good Senator, which happens to be true. But he obviously failed to recognize that Pierre was a lousy candidate.

Rowland: Now one quick thing here, if we can squeeze this in, and that is the death penalty controversy, the Caryl Chessman case. When you were on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which met over the Chessman--

Richards: Well, to clarify my position, I was and always have been opposed to the death penalty. I said so many times on the floor of the senate, and carried some bills on the floor of the senate, knew that we did not have popular support at that time, felt that the time would come when we would have popular support, said so, and I'm still waiting [laughs], because popular support is still lacking in that area. I had a position, then, somewhat like Governor Brown has now, and that is, whether people agree with me or not, I think it's a bad thing, and I'm opposed to the death penalty per se.

As a matter of fact, I think today the support for the death penalty is probably greater than it was then, and we didn't have enough support then to pass a bill that would have opposed the death penalty. In those days, as you have already implied, Chessman was very much in the news, and therefore strengthened the hand of those who were in favor of the death penalty because of that publicity. Nowadays, because of the trend towards crime in the streets, and the general fear of the public, and the feeling that the laws as well as the courts are quote "soft on criminals " unquote there's even more support for the death penalty. I think it's an absolute legislative waste of time to try and get rid of it at the moment, although that is my philosophic position. It was then and is now.

Rowland: Do you want to expand on how you were a candidate at one time for the mayor of Los Angeles?

Richards: No, I was never a candidate.

Rowland: Were there feelers out for your candidacy?

Richards: Oh, yes. I considered it, and apparently so did many others, particularly at the time when Mayor Poulson was considering retiring and for his own reasons, called me in and indicated that he wanted me to be groomed as his heir apparent--a little bit surprising, since he was a Republican, as you know, and I was and am a Democrat. But I got to know Norrie quite well, and I had

Richards: an interest, of course, here in L.A. which has existed ever since my political life began; it was not an illogical thing, particularly in view, as I have said, that I had given up any intention of going into state politics. The mayor's office would enable me to stay in this area.

Although this was never raised to a high degree of probability, it was kicked around for awhile as a potential on a couple of occasions when the mayor's race was being considered--in other words, when a campaign was being looked at. The only time it reached a serious level was when Poulson suggested that he was definitely going to retire and he did need to make the run for his replacement--I did take a serious look at it and discussed it with a number of other people who indicated support.

Then later on he changed his mind and decided to run for re-election, and, therefore, at that point, because he had been friendly to me, and because we had always worked it on a friendly basis, I immediately withdrew my consideration to replace him. At that time Yorty threw his hat in the ring and wouldn't have even had a prayer, except for the turn of events: Norrie Poulson lost his voice, and a good chunk of his health which he never regained, and Yorty went in just as an accident. Once he was in, he stayed for awhile. Again, it's hard to beat an incumbent, even a bad one.

Rowland: Well, thank you for your active participation in our project.

[Interview IV: April 6, 1979]##

Richards: Politically, if you're going to be a public servant, you're a public servant and everything that the name implies, and whether you like it or not, you're going to do it right.

Rowland: You were in the legislature during the days when you received something like six hundred a month, and it was a part time--?

Richards: Five hundred a month, I believe, when I started at least. Ironically enough, I get more than that by way of the pension now from the state, more than I got working full time! [laughter]

Rowland: Right, right. [laughs]

Richards: It is indeed ironic. [laughs] A little bit ridiculous too, but that is true. It was ridiculous then, it's ridiculous now at both ends.

Rowland: How do you feel about the increasing pay scale of legislators?

Richards: Oh, I think increasing pay for those who are active is justified, inevitable, and required, as a matter of fact, because of the increasing cost of everything else, and because you have to compete at least roughly with the private sector. I think, however, increasing pensions for those who are no longer active is far overdone, including my own little pension.

Rowland: What are the restraints on that?

Richards: Well, it's all written into the law, on a percentage basis, and there aren't any restraints within the framework of the law. Cost of living increases, and increases in the salary of those who succeed you have an effect of increasing the pay-out for those who are retired, and I think that's overdone. I also think it's far overdone and multiplied geometrically when you have the double dip and triple dip, with people who are retired from more than one job. At least I am not guilty of that, but those who are, I can't say as I blame them for taking it, but I can say that the thing is overdone in the concept and in the formula.

On the other side of the coin, I think those in political activity in the days that I was serving were grossly underpaid, in view of the job and the responsibility. That didn't have much effect, insofar as our decision to go or not go into public life.

Rowland: How did that reflect upon the quality of the legislature?

Richards: Not much, because if anything, it might have been a plus, because those who went into it went into it not for the money under any circumstances. [laughs] They went into it because they wanted to get into it for other reasons, which I think is a healthy thing. I don't think it's healthy to have at least the elected portion of governmental activity predicated upon the amount of money that it paid.

Rowland: What would be that opposing argument on that?

Richards: Well, there isn't any opposing argument, because you have to pay a living salary, at least. It's just that I think it's not necessary to compete with what that same individual could get in the professions, for example.

Rowland: I think it was Jesse Unruh who had the argument that the low pay of legislators made them more vulnerable to lobbyists.

Richards: I don't believe that. I think it might even be the other way around. I think those who go into political activity for the money--if there are any--are: a) misled, and b) it's a poor

Richards: motive, and c) if that is their motive, they're obviously going to be more vulnerable to anyone who offers them anything. So I would disagree flatly with that contention. On the other hand, I think that to grossly underpay those who are in public office is a mistake, because there does come a point of diminishing returns when they can't afford to stay.

Those who went into the legislature in the time when I was there who were paid only five hundred dollars a month and who lived a long way away from Sacramento, as did I and as did those from San Diego or elsewhere in southern California, and had to support two homes, almost always had to also support a family either in Sacramento or at home or both, if they split 'em. The amount of money simply didn't allow for it. So you always went into the hole. I lost money every year I was in Sacramento, without question.

On the other hand, that's not why I quit. I had a profession behind me. I think that some who had no other source of income whatsoever were in pretty bad shape, as far as the potential of their future was concerned, because they're giving up productive years, not because they couldn't live on what we got. You could, but you couldn't live well. [laughs] But that didn't make any difference, because that's not why you were there. You were there because you enjoyed it, and because you thought you had something to contribute.

Rowland: Did the request for raise in pay emerge mostly from a specific house, either senate or assembly?

Richards: Well, I think it was pretty well unanimous that the legislature as such was underpaid in the fifties, and it was. As a result, it was understandable that both houses supported a raise. I think on the other hand it tends to get out of hand. Like right now, you have some complaint--and I think a justifiable complaint--as to what congressmen and senators, as far as Washington is concerned, and to some degree in Sacramento, are they being paid more than they need be paid? I don't know. That's a hard question, because it's hard to tell what the cost of living is now. It's so darned high that you can't really tell. I think we're reaching again the point of diminishing returns at the other side of the spectrum.

Rowland: Why don't we get into our questions here, just some cleanup questions, as I told you, on the water plan.

VII ADDED COMMENTS ON CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN: SUPPORT FOR THE
WATER BOND

Divisions in the Metropolitan Water District

- Rowland: Basically, the first question that I have here is, how were you persuaded to drop your request for a constitutional amendment and support the water bond issue?
- Richards: By the fact that the way the water bond issue ultimately was drafted, if it passed, it had the same effect of committing the state completely, north and south, and you didn't need a constitutional amendment.
- Rowland: Did Pat Brown personally talk to you and try to win your support?
- Richards: I don't recall that. I do recall several conferences with him, and in which I think we agreed. After the framing of the bond issue, I was convinced--I don't remember whether it was in a session with the governor--I imagine I discussed it many times with many people, because it was such a subject of continuous discussion in those days at every level. At least I was convinced, as were others, as we went along, that the bond issue, if it did pass, would be a full commitment of and by the state, and that's what we were interested in.
- You see, the reason we talked constitutional amendment is because we didn't want a bill which, in the very next session of the legislature, would be abrogated by a north-south vote. As soon as we had the bond issue framed in its proper form, the whole state was committed and everything in the state fiscally was committed so that you couldn't do that. They couldn't change their mind in the next session without sacrificing the financial integrity of the whole state.
- Rowland: What was Goodwin Knight's view on the constitutional amendment?

Richards: I think he favored it, same as I did, when we were first discussing it, because we were all under the impression that it was the only way to go. We had, at that time, not contemplated the bond issue as a viable alternative. As it developed, it became a viable alternative. So although I don't want to speak for him, because I honestly don't remember when he made his change or when I made mine--I think all of us collectively participating in the discussions that led to the bond issue finally ended up being full supporters of it on the theory that it would do what we wanted.

Rowland: What was your position in the battle between Pat Brown and the Metropolitan Water District [MWD]?

Richards: Well, the MWD, of course, was in my backyard, so I listened to the MWD probably more than I would anyone in the legislature outside of my own area, as it has to do with water in particular, because these guys were pros. I thought then and I think now that those who were directing the fortunes of the MWD had the welfare of southern California in mind as well as the Metropolitan Water District per se, and I don't think there's any question but what they were all water experts, when you stack them up against the rest of us, who in effect were laymen as far as water is concerned. It's a specialty, and these men were specialists.

Rowland: Tell me about your relationship with Joseph Jensen, the chairman of MWD?

Richards: It was good. Joe Jensen was, even then an old man, and a little bit opinionated, somewhat crotchety, not the easiest guy in the world to get along with, but highly regarded, highly respected, and extremely well informed. Beyond that, I don't question for a moment his integrity and his dedication to what he considered to be the welfare of southern California and the people in southern California, so far as water is concerned. This was his area, this was his life.

Rowland: Why was there a split among the ranks of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Water District?

Richards: That's something that would be better discussed with the MWD, because it became rather esoteric. We never did understand all the ins and outs of the splits. Some of it may have been personality, some of it may have been power struggle--who's going to succeed who in running this show, you know. It was a great big powerful entity, no question about it, a great deal of money involved, and I don't think these men as such were interested in

Richards: the money from the standpoint, in the negative sense, of what they could get out of it, of that I am sure, because they were all wealthy men in their own right anyway, or well-paid, insofar as even staff were concerned. But I think they were interested in the power that it represented, and in, therefore, being a moving force in determining the direction of the MWD, which throughout history had a lot to do with the direction of the growth of southern California.

Position of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Rowland: What was the position of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power on the water bonds?

Richards: Well, the department of water and power functioned very much like the Edison Company, although in disagreement with Edison in those many instances where there is a difference between a public and a private utility. But other than that, they were more like Edison and more like a utility than they were like the MWD, that had one thing in mind only, and that was the bringing in of water to southern California. The department of water and power had to function as a utility which could exist on its rate base and make power as well as deliver water, and they were one of the major customers of the MWD and as such, they looked on MWD more--had to, you see--through the eyes of a customer than they did as a developer.

Now the other side of that coin--because again, it's not all that simple--is that they too were developers of water as well as power, but on a smaller scale than the MWD, and played a smaller part in terms of the policy, it seems to me, of overall state-wide water development than it did the MWD, understandably. Both of them have a big tax base. The department of water and power has always had a very healthy tax base, and the MWD has one unmatched in the country. So the written-in potential is tremendous in each case.

Rowland: I think we went over this before, but I'd like to clarify it again, in that we have, in our notes and research, that the Metropolitan Water District looked upon the Feather River Project and the California Water Plan as supplemental water to the Colorado River water it was expecting to get as a result of favorable litigation against the state of Arizona.

Richards: Yes. That Arizona water fight has been going on for a long time, before the California Water Plan was even in an embryonic stage. And therefore historically, the older people--and this no doubt

Richards: affected their view, including Jensen and some of the others on the MWD--historically, they had spent a good portion of their life fighting the battle on the federal level for water from the Colorado, of which the Arizona litigation played a major part. It is therefore, it seems to me, understandable that they would look upon that as a cornerstone of water development for southern California, and any other development, such as the then-very new, very young, very experimental California Water Plan as augmentation.

I think as matters went forward and the potential of the water plan became known, most people viewed it as a good deal more than augmentation. It became another major cornerstone, and still is.

Rowland: This is, perhaps, a little bit too detailed a question, but we'll struggle with it. I'm wondering if you could reconstruct for us how Pat Brown or his staff approached you on the water plan. Did they approach you on it during the campaign and ask for your support then, or was it after he was elected, after he defeated William Knowland and he started instituting this twelve-point campaign pledge--

Richards: Pat knew before he was governor that I was in the water plan operation, and therefore I was already accepted as one who had some activity, some background, and some limited knowledge concerning the potentials of the California Water Plan before Pat became governor. He was attorney general, and he knew that I had worked in this even before I was elected to the state senate, and I was in the state senate under Goodwin Knight before Pat was governor. I was working with Goodwin Knight in the California Water Plan development under Knight as one of the water committee for two years before Pat became governor. As a result, when Pat and I started to talk about water development, it was on that basis. I don't think it was a matter of his trying to convince me that it was a great idea to support water development for southern California. He knew that that had been one of my major aims for a long time. Nor was it up to me to try and convince him of that.

Rowland: I think we're talking about his reasoning versus Goodwin Knight's reasoning.

Richards: Yes. I think those differences--and again, I may be oversimplifying--but in my memory now, which is far less sharp on such matters as day-to-day differences--causes me to feel that as Pat took over, as he became governor, he took over with the aim of doing everything he could to develop water for the state and for southern California. In spite of his northern California background, he recognized, I think, the southern California need.

Richards: This was already recognized, in my opinion, by Goodwin Knight, who had a much broader southern California base than Pat Brown did, because Goodie was down here [southern California], and he had been for a long time. To the degree that there were differences, it was more a matter of development, it seems to me, of a growing plan. In other words, Pat took over with the aims and motives I just described. Goodwin Knight, as the ex-governor, moved out and Pat moved in. although the plan in its specifics changed considerably, it changed largely because of the give and take of matters far beyond the differences, if any, between the individuals and the individual views of Goodwin Knight and Pat Brown. Any governor who was not opposed to water development, which I think any governor would not be, and any governor who recognized the needs of southern California, which one might assume originally Pat Brown didn't instinctively do, but he sure had done so by the time he became governor. Any governor, therefore, so organized and so motivated is going to roll with the development of the plan and do everything he can to support it and to make it work, and that's what each of these men did. Pat is the one who brought it to fruition.

Hammering Out a Unified Endorsement

Rowland: In going through your papers at UCLA, I came across some differences between the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and Mayor Poulson on the one hand, and the Metropolitan Water District on the other, over the water bond issue.

Richards: No, I gathered from your papers that that is true, and I don't remember much about those differences. If you can refresh my memory, maybe I can comment on it.

Rowland: They were requesting that you speak to certain members of the Metropolitan Water District to try to persuade--

Richards: Who was asking me to?

Rowland: This was Mayor Poulson's memos to you, and various other memos from members of the chamber of commerce, asking you to speak to the Metropolitan Water District on--

Richards: Well, I was in touch with the mayor's office, and I was in touch with the chamber of commerce, and as we've already said, I was certainly in touch with the MWD. It's possible that they considered me a liaison that would be effective. I honestly don't

Richards: remember how effective I was, if at all, in resolving those differences, but I do remember trying to resolve a good many, not just differences between those three entities, but between any entities of importance. You see, the water plan wasn't just something that fell into place. It was a hell of a tough operation all the way.

Rowland: Right, right. The Chamber of Commerce in the city of Los Angeles, including Mayor Poulson, made some rather bitter comments about the stubborn position of the MWD against the water plan.

Richards: Yes. I think they thought that the MWD was being obstructionist, and to some degree, perhaps they were at some points. Again, my overall view is that which I've already expressed. I think basically they were not obstructionist. I think basically they had simply a different set of backgrounds and different set of priorities. They weren't about to view this growing embryonic water plan as a substitute for what they'd spent their life developing. They thought that the more reliable source of water was still the Colorado water, and that every effort should be made to win the Arizona fight and get as much Colorado [River] water as we could and then add to it, wherever we could.

I think they probably also thought, being basically southern California oriented only, that it might be impossible to ever win the north over. There were a lot of people that thought that. It did look pretty impossible in the early fifties. But the job was done. I think that's the miracle of the whole thing, that it was really put together. Kind of like the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty] treaty now, only even worse. [laughter]

Rowland: I have a list here, and I gave you the list too, of the MWD board of directors. There's a group of names under the Los Angeles column--this was in your papers--[going through papers]. There was Ransom Chase and William Peterson. Representing Santa Ana was H. Allen. I was wondering if you had any special relationship with these individuals.

Richards: Not special, no. I've probably dealt with all of them, but the men I've dealt with most often are the three at the top--Jensen as chairman, Butler as vice-chairman, and Heilbron as secretary. I had frequent conversations with each of these three men.

Rowland: Fred Heilbron became a Pat Brown appointee.

Richards: Yes. Everyone of them was in his own right well-known, well-versed, and quite controversial.

- Rowland: My question comes to mind--Heilbron must have been opposed to Jensen or the MWD's position, and Heilbron later became an appointee of Pat Brown's. Did he take a more liberal view on--?
- Richards: A little bit. I think it was part of the internal struggle, which I can't comment on very intelligently, because I don't know enough about that, within the framework of the MWD. Perhaps that would be true more than the external attitudes towards the water plan, because I don't think, when you got right down to it, as things began to develop, and as Pat Brown began to be more effective as governor in the forwarding of the water plan--I don't think any of them that we've talked about were other than in support for a water plan that would work. The question became merely, how do you make it work? There are broad differences of opinion, of course, in the policy that should be pursued.
- Rowland: The last question, the last two question--the first one is, what was Mayor Poulson's position regarding the constitutional amendment?
- Richards: I'm not sure that I can answer that, except that my recollection is that he favored it. I don't really remember. Do you have anything in my papers or anybody else's papers that indicate which way he was?
- Rowland: I don't think he favored it at all during the Goodwin Knight period, but then my next question is, how was he brought around to support the water bond, because he became the southern California chairman for the water bond in 1960.
- Richards: I think the same way I talked about it just a moment ago. I think his pattern would be pretty much my own. I think, if anything, he would tend to perhaps take leadership from those who were more active, because I don't think Poulson felt that, although he wanted to be supportive, certainly for his district--understandably so, as mayor of the city--of anything that would work in terms of bringing in more water and guaranteeing the supply. I don't think he considered himself any expert in water, and I think he would look to a great many others who were more active than he for support, including the representatives of the MWD, including even myself and others who were in the legislature at the time and had worked on it for a long time, and including, of course, his own DWAP [pronounces it "Deewap" and designates Department of Water and Power] and other groups that were closer to the city, and of which he was a part and for which he was responsible.
- Rowland: The last question deals with comment by various news media that the MWD financed Proposition 15, the Bonelli reapportionment plan, in an attempt to redistrict the state.

Richards: Well, in the early days before I was elected to the state senate-- and there was a carry over during all times until reapportionment actually did take place, which includes when I was in the senate-- there were various groups and various runs at attempting to get a larger voice for southern California from a numerical point of view. It was, as we've said in earlier interviews here, a warped situation which everybody in the state recognized as being out of balance, where forty-two percent of the entire state was represented by one senator--and in that case, it was me--from '54 to '62. That was one of the last groups of years in which that was true. It wasn't too long after I left that reapportionment, in fact, did take place, and we went through the "one man-one vote" routine at the [U.S.] Supreme Court and national level, and this reflected itself ultimately in the reapportionment of California.

But up until that time, there had been a lot of abortive attempts to obtain reapportionment earlier, based upon the same difficulty. And that is, southern California had all the people, and it didn't have all the voices in the seats of power, and they wanted more voices. They wanted more power. It was understandable. I found when I got into the legislature that I had more help, more cooperation, more muscle and less opposition than I had anticipated, as I've said earlier on these tapes.

On the other hand, I could not say that I had a voice commensurate with forty-two percent of the muscle of the state. Certainly not! And therefore, the state was under-represented, no matter who sits in that seat. This, I think, is reflected by the drive in the Bonelli effort and in many other efforts to gain a stronger voice and to do it by way of reapportionment.

Rowland: How accurate were the charges the MWD financed--?

Richards: That I don't know. I don't think that that went very far or very deep. I think they probably were very anxious to see something like that succeed. But I doubt that they put a whole lot of money behind it. They weren't in a good position to be a strong lobby group, in terms of spending money, because they're a quasi-public entity. That's like saying the DWAP did, or that Mayor Poulson did. You just can't do it that way, because they were not as much of a public utility as DWAP. They perhaps could control through influence, more money raising activities than, for example, a strictly public entity could. But not all that much. You're talking about reapportioning in the senate, you're talking even in those days about millions of dollars. There is no question in my mind but what Metropolitan Water District did was never put up millions of dollars. If they had, there would have been a deeper inroad in the vote.

- Rowland: Did you consult with the MWD when you continued to push for the constitutional amendment?
- Richards: I consulted with everybody that had anything to do with water at all times; but I attempted to run my own show. I don't think there was any time when anybody tried to tell me how to vote, or what to do. There was an honest effort at persuasion all the time, as there should be. I can't point to any wrongdoing vis a vis the development of the water plan in California, insofar as my personal participation in it is concerned, which came to my attention, my personal attention. None. That doesn't mean there wasn't any, but if there was, it went over my naiveté. I don't know of any.
- Rowland: That's the end of our interview. Again, I most appreciate your time and involvement in our project and I do hope we can tape you again sometime for more history of the California legislature.

Transcriber: Leslie Goodman-Malamuth
Final Typist: Matthew Schneider

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Gabrielle Morris

Graduate of Connecticut College, New London, 1950, in economics; independent study in journalism and creative writing; additional study at Trinity College and Stanford University.

Historian, U.S. Air Force, documenting Berlin Air Lift, other issues of 1945-1952; public relations and advertising for retail and theater organizations in Connecticut; research, writing, policy development on Bay Area community issues for University of California, Bay Area Council of Social Planning, Berkeley Unified School District, League of Women Voters.

Interviewer-editor, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, 1970-present; coordinator, Government History Documentation Project, 1979-present.

James H. Rowland

Holds B.A. from Western Connecticut State College and M.A. from San Francisco State University, with additional studies at Hunter College and Columbia University in New York, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Teacher and administrator in public and private schools for five years. Developed specialization in California legislative history through master's studies on higher education and legislative affairs.

Interviewer/Editor for Regional Oral History Office, 1978 to present.

Author of articles in professional journals.

Sarah Lee Sharp

B.A., University of California, San Diego, 1971,
with major in history.

M.A., University of California, San Diego, 1975,
with major field in United States history;
Teaching Assistant in Comparative Americas,
1972-1975.

Ph.D., University of California, San Diego, 1979,
with major field in United States history;
dissertation entitled, "Social Criticism in
California During the Gilded Age."

Interviewer-Editor for Regional Oral History Office,
1978 to the present, specializing in California
political and legal history.



