

Howard E. Shuman

Legislative and Administrative Assistant
to Senators Paul Douglas and William Proxmire, 1955-1982

Interview #2: The Senate in the 1950s

(July 29, 1987)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

Ritchie: You said that when you were a child your father took you to see Franklin Roosevelt.

Shuman: In the early '30s, probably before 1935, my father took me to Chicago to see Franklin Roosevelt. He spoke to the convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation, one of the three groups for whom my father worked. Roosevelt came out to speak to them, at the depth of the Depression. I have two very vivid memories of that occasion. One was watching Roosevelt go by in his car at very close range at the stockyards in Chicago, and the second was seeing him in braces and on crutches, come in on the arm of one or two people. I saw him standing in his braces, which one never saw in pictures. It's illustrative of the interest that my father and my mother took in issues that were vital at the time that he would take me to Chicago to see the President (See [Appendix](#)).

I have a couple of other things that I wanted to mention concerning my father. He was a natural teacher, and he had great enthusiasm. He could take complex issues and simplify them (which was also the case with Mr. [Douglas](#)). Let me tell you of one thing he did, to illustrate that, when he first tried to get farmers in

page 61

the county we lived in, Whiteside County, to use the new fertilizers in the late '30s. He was the first one in the hundred and two counties in the state to have a soil lab, where farmer's soil was tested and then my father advised them what fertilizer to put on their soil in terms of potash and phosphorous and nitrogen. There was a road leading into town, to the county seat, and there was a hill along the side of the road. A farmer by the name of Schroeder lived there. What my father did was to take the new fertilizers and spell out the farmer's name along the side of the hill: SCHROEDER. And after a rain and in a matter of ten days or two weeks, that had grown two or three times as high as the rest of the pasture, and was much, much greener. It was so green that it seemed almost a deep black. Farmers had to drive into the county seat on this road, and they would see the name. Then they'd come into the soil lab and sign up. He did all kinds of things like that. He did the same thing in India. He spent ten years in the villages of India, teaching farmers there by the methods he used to teach the farmers in Illinois. Even though Whiteside did not have the richest soil in the state, or in the

Midwest, for several years the county had the highest average of corn yield in the country.

That reminds me of one other thing: when he was teaching high school agriculture at Atwood, he had a group of farm boys who were not from very literate or prosperous families, but

page 62

he inspired them enough that that class of students, in the agriculture course, produced a yield on their experimental plots of a hundred bushels of corn to the acre. This would have been in 1924, '25, when that was unknown. But he did it, and the students got all kinds of praise and recognition as a result. I use that to illustrate his ability, a) to teach, and b) to inspire people.

There are two or three other things I wanted to mention. I want to mention Alan Bullock, who was the dean of my college at Oxford, and who wrote *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny*. Later he was the Founding Master of St. Catherine's College, Vice Chancellor of Oxford, and now Lord Bullock. In my second year at New College, Oxford, I moved out of the college and into a college house, where he lived with his family. I lived in the front. Of course, I stayed up at Oxford during part of the vacations. Those who lived in England went home during the six weeks vacation, but I couldn't very well fly back to the states, so I stayed around for at least a part of the time. When he was writing that classic book, he came to see me one evening to talk. He talked about two things: one was whether or not we would have declared war on Hitler if Hitler had not declared war on us. The Japanese attacked us, but Hitler then declared war. If that hadn't happened, probably we would have fought the Pacific first and it would have been a very different kind of World War II. I told him I thought we would

page 63

have declared war, because of the tripartite alliance among the Japanese, Italians, and the Germans.

The second thing he told me was that all kinds of books were coming out then on World War II history. The generals were writing their books, from Guderian on the German side to Montgomery, and Eisenhower, and Patton and all the rest. He gave me a long list of books, which for the most part I read. Not only did I read them, but I read Churchill's volumes not only on World War II but also on the First World War, which are in many ways as interesting if not more so than his Second World War volumes. Then what I did during my vacations was to visit many of the battle sites in Western Europe, where the war had been fought. So while I'm here at the National War College teaching Congress and the Presidency, in some respects I have more knowledge of history of at least World War II and

since then, in terms of warfare, than most of the students and some of the faculty. But anyway, it whetted my interest and it's been a lifelong interest since then.

In the summer of '48 I went over to get into Oxford, and that wasn't the only thing I did. I spent three months in Europe. I flew to Glasgow first of all, which was really in a terrible condition. I thought I was back in a nineteenth century industrial town. It was so dark and gloomy and grimy. Part of the reason for that was that at that time people still burned soft coal in their fireplaces, and the coal and the soot permeated the

page 64

city. Then I went to Tonnypandy and Trealaw, in the Rhondda Valley in Wales, which was the heart of the mining area. I spent about a week there, which I found fascinating. Then I spent several days at the Olympics in London. Then, I went over to the World Council of Churches first meeting in Amsterdam, where Robert Taft's brother, Charlie Taft, was the most prominent American there. Tony Benn's mother, who was a Congregational layman, was part of the British delegation. There was a great ditty at the time: the three theologians who were most prominent were Dodd of Britain, Barth of Switzerland, and Niebuhr of the U.S. There was a little ditty that "Thou shalt love the Lord thy Dodd, with all thy Barth, and thy Niebuhr as thyself."

After that, I got into Western Germany. One couldn't go in then without a permit, and they were not easy to get. A tourist couldn't get one. I did get a permit at the Hague which allowed me to go from Amsterdam down to Switzerland, but I had some friends in Bonn and Bad Godesberg, and in Frankfort-on-Main. Once I got in, there wasn't much they could do to get me out until I wanted to leave, so even though I only had a three day pass I visited Reimscheid, and Solingen and Cologne in the Ruhr, which were then leveled. And Frankfort-on-Main was leveled, even two years after the war. In that period the Berlin airlift was going on, and I could hear the planes from Weisbaden go over, almost every minute of the day and night. I was struck then how

page 65

relatively little concerned the West Germans seemed to be that the Russians would attack, as compared with the anxiety at home about whether they would attack. People comment now about how the Europeans and the NATO allies are lackadaisical and really don't care as much as we do about the Russian threat. I'm not certain that's true, but the outward emotions about it were then the same as they are now. They didn't seem to be as concerned as some of us were.

Ritchie: Why do you think that is?

Shuman: I would say it's living near the threat for such a long time. But it was true then. I was struck by it. And then I went down through Switzerland and down to Rome, and then back to Paris. I spent two or three weeks in Rome, and I spent more than a month that summer in Paris. I had friends in the American Friends Service Committee, who were doing things like rebuilding bridges and bicycle paths. I did more than visit Oxford in the summer of '48. I also wrote an article every week for the local paper in Morrison. The editor said, "I want you to tell us what's happened to that Marshall Aid money." Of course, one never saw it, because on the whole it was used for balance of payments purposes, which then allowed the country to do things it otherwise couldn't do.

page 66

I have one anecdote which I want to tell about Oxford. When I was elected president of the Union, it happened at the time that an American, who was either the Regis Professor of Jurisprudence, or the Chichele Professor of Jurisprudence, a man by the name of Arthur Lehman Goodhart, became the first American to head an Oxford college, University College. There is a dispute about which was the first Oxford college, but University goes back to the mid-thirteenth century, and he was the first American ever to head an Oxford college. He was a very distinguished man, a cousin of [Herbert Lehman](#), governor of New York and later senator. But anyway, Walter Lippmann made a trip to Europe every spring, and Lippmann almost always came to Oxford. In 1952 he came to Oxford and stayed with the Goodharts at University College, and Goodhart had a small luncheon for several Americans, and invited me. I was the only student there. One of the people who came was a man by the name of J. Barton Leach, who was a law professor at Harvard, and whose expertise was in real property. He was an advisor to the Pentagon on their property dealings. Well, Barton Leach was a big, tall fellow, and he was Mr. Rotary Club, hail-fellow-well-met, almost--what's the Sinclair Lewis character?

Ritchie: Babbitt?

Shuman: Babbitt. He was almost a Babbitt, but very intelligent otherwise. Knew it all, pushy fellow. I always thought that he probably came because the Harvard faculty wanted

page 67

him to leave for a year -- as happened to many visiting professors. About a third of the visiting professors were people that one knew their faculty was just glad to get rid of for a year. He was that kind. Anyway, we arrived at University College together. Mrs. Goodhart met us. She was English. Goodhart was on the honors list, but as an American he couldn't accept it, but she was Lady Goodhart and he was Professor Goodhart. We walked through the corridors of the whole side of

University College together with Lady Goodhart and we went back to the library, where Lippmann was. I had never met him or seen him before. He was a very tiny man. I don't suppose he was more than five feet two, and had very small hands. I was amazed, because all I had seen of him was the picture of his head and shoulders in the papers.

We walked in and Lady Goodhart introduced us to Lippmann. She first introduced J. Barton Leach, and Leach slapped him on the back and said, "How are ya, Walter," or "Nice to see ya, Walter." And Lippmann really put him down. He said, "Well, I don't think we've ever met." Then she introduced me, and here I was the undergraduate, and here was the Harvard professor. She introduced me, and Lippmann said, "Oh, Sir Pierson Dixon at the United Nations told me about you," putting down Leach. Well, what had happened was that my friend at Oxford, Peter Blaker, married Sir Pierson Dixon's daughter Jennifer and had been to New York to court her shortly after I was elected president of the Union.

page 68

He had preceded me as president, and had in fact defeated me for president. But apparently they had talked about my election, because my picture was in *Time* magazine. But Lippmann deliberately put down Leach with, "Sir Pierson Dixon told me about you."

Ritchie: You mentioned going to the House of Commons.

Shuman: The one thing I was unable to do when I was in England was to hear Churchill speak. I went to the House of Commons many times, and I did hear him answer questions, but I never heard him make a full-blown Churchillian speech. During the early part of 1952, Churchill and [Anthony] Eden came to the states. I think it was over Korea, that was after we had pushed to the Yalu, and there was some kind of an incident that brought them to the states, the question of using the atom bomb or some issue that created a great stir. They flew over to the states and talked with Truman and came back and there was to be a two-day foreign policy debate, at which Churchill originally was to lead off, and Eden was to give the final speech.

The father of Alasdair Morrison, a friend of mine at Oxford, was the Speaker of the House of Commons, "Shakes" Morrison. Alasdair got me a ticket for the two days of debate to the Distinguished Strangers gallery in the House of Commons, so I had a terrific seat. The first day I had tea in Morrison's private

page 69

lodgings. The Speaker lives in the House of Commons. But anyway, instead of Churchill leading off, Eden led off the debate, gave the opening twenty minute

speech. Dick Crossman, who was a Labor back bencher who often came to Oxford and who invited me to dinner that night at the House of Commons, interrupted Eden and almost devoured Eden on a couple of points. I had gone down to hear Churchill, but I never got to hear him, because that night the King died. There was a month of mourning, and the debate was cancelled. So I never in my entire time there got to hear him make a proper Churchillian speech, although I did hear almost every other major political figure in the country.

Ritchie: You mentioned that Churchill refused to come to Oxford. Was he invited on various occasions?

Shuman: Yes, he certainly was. You see, in 1933, the Oxford Union passed a motion that "In no circumstances will this house fight for King and Country." Now, that isn't quite as bad as it sounds, but Hitler took it to mean that the British were decadent, and the youth wouldn't fight, and it encouraged him, or at least Churchill thought it encouraged him. The phrase "King and Country" though has a jingoistic connotation, so while one might fight in defense of the country, some weren't going to fight for this jingoistic thing of "King and Country." That was part of the meaning. A man by the name of C.E.M. Joad, who was a philosopher, led it off, and the motion was passed. A week later

page 70

Churchill sent his son Randolph to Oxford to move that the minutes of the meeting be expunged from the record. The Union refused to pass Randolph's motion by a large margin and later Randolph was thrown into the Isis River, which is the upper reaches of the Thames. Well, for these reasons, Winston Churchill refused to speak in the Union and at the political clubs. He thought Oxford was decadent. A similar situation existed with Churchill in his relations with R.A.B. Butler, who probably should have been selected as prime minister when Churchill left and Eden was picked instead. But Butler had been on the wrong side of events in the '30s. Because he supported Chamberlain and Munich, Churchill was determined that no one who made that misjudgment should succeed him as leader and prime minister of his own party. The former is the reason why Churchill didn't come to Oxford.

We had a great debate when I was at Oxford, when Randolph Churchill came back to debate C.E.M. Joad. Joad was a moral philosopher who broadcast for the BBC, but he'd been caught riding in a first-class railway carriage on a third-class ticket, and the BBC thought this was a bit much for their moral philosopher, and fired him. We had a debate. The motion was "This House regrets the influence exercised by the United States of America as the dominant power among democratic nations." Robin Day, as president, staged it. He assigned me to Churchill. It was alleged we were leading Britain around by the nose. Joad spoke

page 71

first, and he was a snarling, nasty little fellow, and people were so incensed at what he said that they moved from his side of the house to our side of the house. His line was that American culture "infects, corrupts, and pollutes." Randolph had imbibed too much and he was about three sheets to the wind. At one stage when he spoke he gestured with his left arm in such a sweeping motion that he actually hit one of the students behind him on the face. Then a man by the name of William Rees-Mogg, who later became editor of the *London Times* and was the leading conservative, who was sitting next to us, kept telling Randolph: "Don't mention railway carriages." But Churchill finally said that Joad was a "third-class Socrates," which was a personal attack, and everyone was so incensed at this they got up and moved back to Joad's side. My memory is that Joad's side won the debate, largely because of Randolph, but it was a repeat of the '33 occasion.

Ritchie: You had mentioned that they sit facing each other.

Shuman: Yes, just as in the House of Commons.

Ritchie: And people actually change sides according to their sympathies with the speakers?

Shuman: Yes, that's right, they can. They don't often do it. You sit on the side that you expect to vote for, generally, although sometimes the place is so crowded you just take a seat where you can get it. The students vote by teller as they leave.

page 72

They go through the "aye" or "nay" door and are counted by the tellers.

Ritchie: There's something especially physical about that: walking over to your side and taking your position with the rest.

Shuman: Yes, that is very important, and it is one of the reasons that the two party system has survived in England. The early Parliament met in the Church of St. James, which you pass through as you walk into the present Parliament. It was then a Catholic Church, and became an Anglican Church under Henry VIII, and people sat across from each other. They were two sword lengths apart so they couldn't cut off each other's heads when they got angry. To vote with the other side, a member physically had to walk across the floor. This has had a great influence on politics, and I think the fact that in this country we have semicircular seating has helped cause the umbrella nature of our parties. The semi-circular chamber is taken from the French. Everybody says our institutions came from England. They didn't. Many of them came from the French.

I noticed when I worked in the Senate that the Democrats who were closer to the Republicans than others generally sat in the middle. I could almost see them move over to the other side when there was a debate, and then move back, so they could by osmosis join the other side, without the same kind of public criticism

page 73

that goes with walking across the floor. As Churchill himself said in his memoirs, he'd done that twice, so he knew something about it. He built the new House of Commons in the same fashion. He was determined it shouldn't be semicircular, after it was bombed in World War II, and he determined that the number of seats should be smaller than the total number of members, so that on most occasions it seemed to be fuller than it was, and on great occasions it was so full that people had to stand. This creates an atmosphere of marvelous tension and excitement, which we really don't have in the same way. It is the result of the architecture. Architecture affects politics in a very meaningful way.

Ritchie: Also in the Senate, people don't address each other.

Shuman: They address the chair. Well, they do that in Parliament as well. They say, "Mr. Speaker," and refer to "The Right Honorable Member from Such and Such." So they never say "you."

Ritchie: I thought we should talk about your working for Senator [\[Paul\] Douglas](#) in the 1950s. We ended last week talking about his offering you the position. I wondered if you could tell me about Douglas' qualities, and what it was that attracted you to him. I noticed, by the way, that he was a political economist. Did you know about him before he got into politics?



Senator Paul H. Douglas
USIA Photo
page 74

Shuman: Yes, I certainly did know about him before he got into the Senate. I didn't know him personally until the '48 election. The first time I met him, I think was in the summer or fall of '47, before he was the candidate. I went up to Chicago and the University and visited him in his office when it was thought he would be a candidate. I also heard him speak at the University of Illinois before he became the candidate. I also saw him at the American Economics Association's annual meeting in Chicago in December, 1947, just as he heard that the Democrats had slated him. He was quite famous in Illinois, because he was one of fifty members, as a Chicago alderman, of the city council, and he consistently took on the organization. I heard him say that the best training he had ever had to deal with [Lyndon Johnson](#) was the fact that he had been a minority of one with the organization people in Chicago. It was a great stroke when Colonel Arvey put up [Adlai] Stevenson and Douglas for governor and senator, and a lot of us were really excited about it. That really got me involved in party politics, to support those two people. They were two extraordinarily able people.

Douglas and Stevenson had some minor fallings out over that '48 campaign. Stevenson on the whole would not mention Mr. Douglas in his speeches, except before labor groups which were partisan, or before large Democratic groups. Mr. Douglas made a point of backing the ticket no matter where he spoke, to the

Rotary Clubs or wherever. Stevenson was unwilling to do that. The second thing Stevenson did was he out-waited Mr. Douglas. At joint rallies, Stevenson would always come late and would arrive in the middle of Mr. Douglas' speech, and he'd walk down the center aisle and everybody'd get up and cheer. He put himself in the limelight. There was one occasion when Mr. Douglas absolutely refused to speak till Stevenson got there. They waited I guess an hour for him. But Mr. Douglas wasn't having that ploy any more.

A third thing which divided them, which again was a part of Stevenson's lack of partisanship, was in the campaign of 1950, when Stevenson was governor and Scott Lucas, who was then the majority leader of the Senate, was up for reelection. Mr. Douglas was campaigning for Lucas. He had a jeep and a loud speaker and he'd go street corner to street corner all over the state. Douglas started the modern street-corner handshaking, go to the shopping centers, go to where the people are form of campaigning, as opposed to having a rally where the people come to you. People didn't go to political meetings anymore. One had to go to meet them. Douglas was speaking in Bloomington, which was Stevenson's hometown, either at Illinois State Normal University, as it was called then, or Wesleyan University. He was on the street corner campaigning for Lucas, and for Stevenson's legislature, the lower house of which was Democratic, and he spotted a limousine down the street, and saw that Stevenson and Lucas were sitting there in the

page 76

governor's limousine, while Douglas was speaking from his jeep. That night Douglas was in Springfield with Stevenson and he urged him, very strongly, to get out and campaign. Douglas said that if he didn't he would lose his legislature and Lucas would go down the drain. Now, the politicians had made a big mistake. In '48, the pros had put Stevenson and Douglas up, thinking they would be defeated, and they won. Because they'd won, the pros thought they could put anybody on the ticket again and win automatically. In '50 the Chicago organization put a man up for Cook County sheriff, Tubby Gilbert, who had a very bad reputation and essentially helped bring down the whole ticket. A big mistake. But Mr. Douglas was urging Stevenson to go all out, and Stevenson said to him that he'd been elected with a lot of Republican votes and he didn't intend to do anything to alienate them. Mr. Douglas was infuriated by that.

He was also unhappy with him on one other issue. The WPA during the Depression had built all kinds of marvelous things around the country, which people are now finally recognizing. The WPA restored New Salem, Illinois, [Lincoln](#)'s home. And because people had made such terrible jokes about the WPA and had made nasty statements about people who were involved in the WPA, Mr. Douglas wanted to see that the WPA got some recognition for the good things it did, like Lincoln's hometown. So he urged Stevenson to put a sign up saying New Salem was built by the WPA,

and Stevenson refused to do so again on grounds that it might offend his North Shore Republican friends.

There was one other incident in the '52 election, when Stevenson became the Democratic candidate. Mr. Douglas had gone to him earlier to say that people had proposed that Mr. Douglas run for president, and he didn't want to do it, and in fact he turned it down for a variety of reasons, which we can go into if you want to. But he'd gone to Stevenson and said "People will try to play us off against each other, and we must be very careful about this." He said, "I'm being pressed by all kinds of people, [\[Estes\] Kefauver](#) and others, to support them." But he said, "I don't want to support somebody outside the state if you are going to be a candidate. You don't need to announce now, but if there's any possibility that you'll be a candidate, please tell me so I don't support somebody outside the state." And Stevenson told him that there was absolutely no way that he would be a candidate and that he was uninterested. He was a reluctant dragon. Later Mr. Douglas found out that at the very time that this had happened, Stevenson had his emissaries going to see the Catholic Cardinal in Chicago to ask his position about a divorced man on the ticket. So in fact he had plans at that stage.

Then there was an issue about the delegates to the convention in 1952. The Democratic party then gave extra delegates -- if the party had the governor or if it had a senator. Generally

speaking, the governor got twelve and Douglas got twelve. Well, those 24 delegates were largely selected by Stevenson without putting key Douglas people on the list, even though there had been a promise of that. Only a few got on, and Stevenson had agreed with Douglas about this. So there were a number of frictions between Stevenson and Douglas, which in a sense was too bad, although Mr. Douglas very loyally supported him in both the '52 and the '56 Presidential campaigns. In fact I don't think Douglas ever publicly said any of these things about Stevenson, but I knew about them, and I knew that Douglas was offended to some degree about them.

Ritchie: You said that Douglas had reasons why he didn't want to be president.

Shuman: Yes, several reasons. He was called up to New York by what was then the Eastern Establishment, which didn't pick the presidential candidates of both parties, but the presidential candidates of both parties had to pass muster with the City Bank, [Henry] Luce, and others. They had a veto over both party candidates. I guess you'd call it the Eastern Foreign Policy Establishment. Mr. Douglas was called to New York, where I understand Luce was there, the head of

City Bank was there, one of the Rockefellers, and so on. And they offered him a million bucks as a campaign chest, if he would be willing to be a candidate. This I think was in '51, a year before the

page 79

convention. Well, he did not want to be president, and he had several reasons. Number one: in the twenties and thirties he'd belonged to some organizations which later turned out to be pro-Communist. Now, he had gone to Russia in the twenties and had come back as a very determined opponent of Stalin and the Russian system. He couldn't have been more opposed to it. In almost all of these organizations he either fought to get rid of them and was successful in doing so, or resigned and got out if he failed. He'd been kicked in the shins by them many times over policy issues. So his record was extraordinarily good. There's no question about him being a vigorous anti-Communist who had fought in the trenches. Other people hadn't had that experience. But nonetheless he'd been a member of a lot of these groups. So that was one reason. He thought that in the atmosphere of Joe McCarthy this would be a very difficult thing to defend.

Secondly, he'd had a divorce at a time when no divorced man had been elected president. And the divorce issues plagued Stevenson in 1952 and 1956 as it did not in 1980 when Reagan ran.

Third, he didn't think that he was emotionally suited for the job, which I don't think was true. Mr. Douglas had problems sleeping. I don't think he slept very much many nights. He read late, and he'd get up early. But he felt that he would worry too

page 80

much about the issues. Now, I think he was wrong about that, because I saw both with Mr. Douglas and Senator [Proxmire](#) that they were quite capable of handling the big issues. It wasn't difficult for them to decide how to vote on NATO or any of the major issues. The Marshall Plan, the budget, public works and so on, were easy issues to decide. They would fret and be upset more by some personal event or some family difficulty than any of the great issues. I think for people who have been in public life for a long time, this is true. The big issues are relatively easy to decide. I don't think he really would have fretted that much, emotionally, about them. But he was afraid that he would, and thought that he was temperamentally unsuited for the job.

For these reasons he didn't want to be president, and he was quite content to be a senator. This was the fulfillment of his ambitions, really and truly it was. This also made it easier for him to be tough on issues that a presidential candidate couldn't be as tough on for fear of offending the west or the south or some

interest group. But for all these reasons he didn't want to be president. When the group in New York asked him the question: who was his boyhood hero?, he said his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs, Debs was the Socialist candidate for president several times! Mr. Douglas did this deliberately, as a pixyish thing, to get them off his back. But his candidacy went down the drain when

page 81

he told Henry Luce and a Rockefeller that his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs.

Ritchie: From what I've read about him, I get the feeling that if his boyhood hero was Eugene Victor Debs, he would tell them even if he wanted to be president. He didn't seem like the type who held things back for public relations reasons.

Shuman: I don't think he advertised it. The *Chicago Tribune* for years and years would start their articles, their news articles: "Senator Paul H. Douglas, Democrat of Illinois, who supported a Socialist candidate for president, said today. . . ." They would do that. What happened, in 1932 Mr. Douglas could not go for Hoover, because of his economic policies. He refused to act at the depth of the Depression. Roosevelt in the '32 campaign came out for a balanced budget also at the depth of the Depression, which Mr. Douglas with his belief in counter-cyclical fiscal policies -- and this was before [John Maynard] Keynes' book came out in 1936 -- was opposed to. That would have been a disastrous policy. He therefore voted for Norman Thomas, and I think supported him publicly. He wrote a book advocating a new party, which his enemies delighted quoting from for more than 30 years. But he never, ever joined the Socialist party, and was not a Socialist, because he did not agree with the pledge that one had to take that the state should own the means of production. He was for the diffusion of economic power into smaller and

page 82

smaller units, rather than substituting state ownership for private monopoly. He believed in breaking up monopolies, in anti-trust, and the diffusion of economic power, and the diffusion of political power. But he couldn't join the Socialist party, because he opposed putting the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the state.

Ritchie: He strikes me as a man who knew his own mind.

Shuman: Yes, he did.

Ritchie: Wasn't a follower, but set his own course.

Shuman: He did, but he was nonetheless a very good politician. People think of him as a professor, but he was an extraordinarily good politician, partly because he liked people, and he reacted to them. He enjoyed that. He enjoyed the Irish mafia. He enjoyed the Eastern European ethnic groups. He enjoyed the political types. He appreciated their role. There was a poem about the professional soldier that he quoted, in the ward meetings that I went to in Chicago. I was in virtually every ward in Chicago, and there were times on Sunday mornings in the wards on the Near North Side and along the Chicago River where I felt my life was endangered by some of the people who were there. He would quote this poem to them, praising them and raising up the journeyman political worker. It went like this:

page 83

The day and the hour the heavens were falling,
The day when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling,
Took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended,
They stood and earth's foundations stay.
What God abandoned, they defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

He felt that whereas the intellectuals could work in politics because they were involved in issues, and believed in the things they were doing, a party organization based on reward was necessary if the party were to attract a lot of ordinary people to do the foot work, and I think he was right about that. He was really more in favor of patronage, postmasters and the rest, than Stevenson was. If he'd been governor, I think he would have worked better with the organization than Stevenson did, even though he was put up for senator because the organization was afraid that if he were governor he'd act like he did in the Chicago city council and oppose the organization.

Ritchie: What type of person was he to work for?

Shuman: One got caught up in his causes, so in many respects I worked harder in the years I worked for him than I have ever had to work before or since. He was a man who attracted great loyalty from his staff. We all loved him, deeply. We took a ride on his magic carpet. He was really a father-figure to us. He was very kind, very generous. I only can think of maybe

page 84

once in twelve years when I was in any way reprimanded by him. He just didn't do that.

He was a Quaker and he had this routine of silence for thirty minutes or so in the morning, very early, thinking about what had gone right the day before, the good things he'd done, and the bad things he'd done. One day he had a tumultuous hearing with George Humphrey. Humphrey was then Secretary of the Treasury, and was a very boorish man. He was a self-made man, self-educated, who thought he knew everything and knew very little. He knew nothing about economics to speak of. But he had testified before the Joint Economic Committee, and Mr. Douglas had really trimmed him. George Humphrey was the strong man of the Eisenhower administration, and Mr. Douglas absolutely devastated him. I'm told that Humphrey went back to his office and pouted for three hours, wouldn't see anybody after this contentious interrogation of him over the economic basis for the budget estimates. Mr. Douglas just absolutely tore him apart. But Mr. Douglas came back that day, after that hearing and said to me, very informally, "I hate George Humphrey. I hate the Republicans." I didn't pay any attention to it. It was the kind of thing one would say when very angry. The next morning he came in and he called me into his office and he said to me, very seriously, "You know, yesterday I said I hate the Republicans and I hate George Humphrey." He said, "I must apologize for that. I withdraw that. I take it back."

page 85

He said, "I've been thinking about that. I must not have hate in my heart." He genuinely got down on his knees to think about the way he lived his personal life. I thought this retraction was incredible.

Then I have another anecdote about the time that Chairman of the Federal Reserve William McChesney Martin came to see him. Mr. Douglas wouldn't tell a white lie. Before he would allow Jane Enger, his secretary, to say he wasn't in the office to someone he didn't want to talk to on the phone, he would step out into the hall. Just absolutely honest. But William McChesney Martin came up and they had had some differences over Federal Reserve Board policy. William McChesney Martin came up to say to him that he had heard that Mr. Douglas had criticized some of the things he'd done. He knew Mr. Douglas hadn't said that, but he just wanted to hear it from him. And Mr. Douglas turned to him and said, "Well, I don't remember saying those things, but since I've thought them many times, I probably said them." McChesney Martin, who was sort of a Woodrow Wilson type, with a high fixed white collar and very prissy, just turned and left. He didn't know what to do. But Mr. Douglas couldn't tell him a white lie.

I have one other anecdote on this subject. Shortly after he was elected, a candidate for a federal judgeship came to see him. The man professed to be a

champion of Mr. Douglas' run for office but the Senator knew that he had in fact contributed to his

page 86

opponent C. Wayland (Curley) Brooks. He had played both sides of the fence. Mr. Douglas confronted him with that fact. The man got ill and went into the bathroom and threw up. But he was a highly qualified man and Mr. Douglas did not use senatorial courtesy to stop him. He became one of the finest judges in the country.

One other thing, there were times on Thursday night when he would go out to the state absolutely worn out and say, "Do I have to do this again? I never have any time with my family." And he'd come back refreshed on Monday morning. I used to be amazed at this. How was it that he left so tired and came back so refreshed? I really found out why that was after I campaigned with him a lot. First of all, going out to speak to groups -- and he would speak and shake hands all around -- is really easier than life in the Senate because he got what I call "home run questions." The issues he knew about and worked on and had hearings about, were the ones people asked him about, and it was very simple to answer them. People don't realize that most questions politicians get on the stump are easy, shoulder high, home run balls. Secondly, he genuinely enjoyed people, as I've said. Thirdly, the people he talked to when he campaigned were the people who look upon politics as their hobby. Just as some people bowl, some people play bridge, some people play tennis, so there are people who are political junkies. These are the people

page 87

who come to the political meetings. They live and eat politics. That's their hobby. And they're very knowledgable. You don't need to take a poll to find out how you're standing at all; they'll tell you. This interaction between the senator and his constituents, and particularly the political junkies, refreshed him. A lot of people over the years have said to me: "Wouldn't it be better if we had a system like Britain where the member doesn't have to go back to the constituency regularly?" I've always been offended by that, because it seemed to me that Mr. Douglas got so much from that. And the same with Bill Proxmire. They came back knowing what public opinion was. They came back refreshed. They came back better able to do their job by this business of seeing a wide variety of groups and interests, at least every other week if not every week.

Ritchie: But it had to be physically straining.

Shuman: Extraordinarily so. I remember in the '66 campaign, I was in Illinois from July 4th, and along about September there was a weekend -- well, a Sunday

-- I had free, the only Sunday I didn't work for all those months. I drove down to see my parents, who lived in Champaign, 140 miles south of Chicago. I'd been working around the clock, producing at least a speech a day, and a press release a day, and other things as well, campaigning, going to the ward meetings and the suburban county rallies. I got about ten miles south of Chicago and I couldn't

page 88

keep my eyes open. I pulled over to the side of the road and slept a bit. Then I got up after ten minutes and went on, and it happened to me again. I went on, and it happened again. What I didn't realize was that I was exhausted. When I had a day when I wasn't responsible for anything, all I did was sleep. I couldn't keep awake. And that's the way a campaign is. It's exhausting. I don't know whether I could physically go through a campaign where I worked as hard as I did in those campaigns. And of course it is much more difficult for the candidate.

Ritchie: You had mentioned last week that when you first went down to interview with Douglas he was ill; and I've heard that Lyndon Johnson once described him as lying on a couch writhing in pain. Did he have a lot of physical illness then?

Shuman: I saw that reference, and it is incorrect that Mr. Douglas would writhe in pain. But Johnson was making fun of him, as he often did. I've heard from a variety of people that he did that in meetings with [Rayburn](#), where late in the afternoon they and others had drinks. Dick Bolling has told me that he was in meetings with Johnson and Rayburn where Johnson deliberately put Mr. Douglas down and tried to cut him off at the knees.

Ritchie: Douglas?

Shuman: Yes. And one of the things he would say was "There he is, writhing on his couch." His method was sarcasm and

page 89

ridicule. Mr. Douglas was ill from the unpasteurized milk he drank in southern Illinois in the 1954 campaign. I went to work for him in January of 1955 and there was something very wrong with him. He couldn't figure out what it was, and he would wake up in the morning feeling strong, but by the noon hour he was exhausted and he had to take a nap. It was finally diagnosed as undulant fever. Drugs were prescribed and over a period of months he got rid of it. But during that period one of the things I did was to go to him at times when it was necessary for him to go to the Senate floor, and say: "Mr. Douglas, you've just got to go to the floor," when he really physically was unable to do so. He would get up from his couch. He didn't cuss or use bad language, but he was extraordinarily irritated by

this, and he would go over to the floor and take part in the debate. Invariably he'd come back and thank me profusely for having gotten him up when he didn't want to. But, yes, there was a year or so there when he was ill from undulant fever, and actually one could see the undulating nature of his illness, the twitching of his legs, which sleep repaired. Even a short nap repaired it. He did make a practice of taking a short nap after lunch, for years. He often talked to people while he was lying on his couch. He did have undulant fever when I went to meet him in Danville, but he didn't know what it was. But Johnson's references weren't sympathetic. They were sarcastic and aimed at ridicule.

page 90

Ritchie: When you got to Washington in January 1955, what were your responsibilities?

Shuman: Well, I was the legislative assistant, the number two man in the office, at a time when there were really only three professional staff people. The administrative assistant in our office did not administer very much at all. Later when I was administrative assistant I didn't administer, I was a super-legislative person. A man by the name of Frank McCulloch had that job. He was an extraordinarily able fellow, went to the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] as its chairman, and taught law at the University of Virginia after he left the NLRB. He was an absolutely amazing, saintly fellow like Mr. Douglas. Frank had been deeply involved in the issues that Mr. Douglas had been involved in in the thirties. He was his long-time friend. It was an example of what I think an AA has to be.

The one thing an AA has to be is a personal confidant of the senator. The senator must trust him. There aren't many people he can trust. Everyone is after him to do this or that. Even his staff is constantly pushing for their priorities to take first place. Two things that I did as an administrative assistant were a) I did my best to rise above my personal interests and tried not to get him to do things that I wanted him to do, my priorities, or my personal agenda and b) I always felt confident enough to tell both Douglas and Proxmire when I thought they were making a

page 91

mistake. I thought that my first duty was to be able to go to them without fear that they'd fire me, and I felt secure enough in both cases that I could go to them and say, look, I think you're making a mistake on this, and say to them things that everybody else was afraid to tell them. This is one of the reasons why I'm critical of both [John] Poindexter and [Oliver] North, because I think they failed to do their duty to their president, their boss. To inform him was their first duty.

I was the legislative person, and for the first six years I worked in the Senate, until 1961, I was on the Senate floor every day. The Senate has changed very greatly since the time I was there, I think mostly for the better. When I came there in early 1955, Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states. The only two senators who were there then who are there now are [John Stennis](#) and [\[Strom\] Thurmond](#). And Thurmond left and came back. So I really had a longer time in the Senate as a staff person than all but one or two senators. [Richard Nixon](#) was vice president, and presided over the Senate. [Lyndon Johnson](#) was majority leader. [\[William\] Knowland](#) was minority leader. Georgia's [Walter George](#) was the [president pro tem](#) of the Senate, and there were people like [Estes Kefauver](#), [Harry Byrd](#), [Wayne Morse](#), [Jim Murray](#), [Joe O'Mahoney](#), Mr. Douglas, and [Gene Millikin](#) who were powers in the Senate and famous in the nation. But [John Kennedy](#), and [Everett Dirksen](#), and [Bob Kerr](#), and [Sam Ervin](#) were unknown, minor figures.

page 92

They were really junior, backbench, unknown people when I first came. That's hard to realize now, but they were.

[Dick Russell](#), who was the most powerful senator, certainly after Walter George left anyway, was still a junior senator. Dirksen had just begun to make his name as an orator, and he served as the chief defender of [Joe McCarthy](#), during the censure debate which took place during the summer of 1954, which my wife Betty attended when we were here during that summer. She spent a lot of time in the Senate gallery. People forget that Dirksen was the defender of Joe McCarthy, and was his chief counsel. And I heard Dick Russell say on the floor, either during the '56 or '57 Civil Rights debate, or over the filibuster rule in that period, that "The Nigra" -- as he pronounced Negro -- "has his heel on the white man's neck." That was a very injudicious statement, and one which was expunged from the *[Congressional] Record*. But I heard him say that, and I've always thought that it was ironic that the two Senate office buildings -- and it tells one something about the Senate -- the two office buildings were named for the chief defender of segregation, because Russell believed in segregation in a way that some of the Southerners did not; and Dirksen, the chief defender of Joe McCarthy. They named the third building after [Phil Hart](#), who was an absolutely saintly fellow, and I knew him very well. Mr. Douglas used to comment that Phil Hart proved that a saint could actually get elected to the Senate. But there was a three

page 93

hundred percent overrun on the cost of the building, which was very unfair to him!

This business of changing the *Record* was true then, and one of my jobs was routinely correcting the transcription after the debate. I spent a lot of time on it,

because Mr. Douglas was determined that the *Record* reflect accurately what he said. As an academic and a student of history he felt it had a great importance. That was the time when the head person in the Office of Senate Official [Reporters of Debate](#) was. . . .

Ritchie: James Murphy?

Shuman: Yes, Mr. Murphy was from a family who had done that for several generations. Mr. Murphy was terrific. I mean, no senator ever made an ungrammatical statement. No senator ever misquoted Shakespeare. Mr. Murphy saw to it, and he was absolutely loyal. The public has no concept or idea of the loyalty of that kind of staff, and Mr. Murphy personified how they worked in the Senate. But I used to spend a lot of time in that office making certain that the *Record* was accurate, and occasionally changing it. Mr. Douglas always reviewed it. The rule was a senator could change the *Record* provided he did not reflect adversely on another senator, or if he'd said no in debate to a question he'd been asked, he couldn't turn around and say yes, because that would change the nature of it. But apart

page 94

from that, he could do anything he wanted to the *Record*. [Dick Neuberger](#) put it well. He was a senator from Oregon and both he and his wife were my friends. He was a newspaper man and an extraordinarily able senator who died an untimely death from cancer. Dick Neuberger used to say, "You know, the Senate is the only place in the world where you can say, 'Gee, I wish I had said that,' and then say it."

Along those lines, I also heard Bob Kerr, in a very famous debate, say that Eisenhower had no brains. [Homer Capehart](#) of Indiana objected to it, and Kerr then changed the *Record* to read that Eisenhower had no "fiscal" brains. When Capehart saw that, he got angry and took on Kerr. Now, Kerr could outmatch almost anyone in debate, except Mr. Douglas, although I once saw Dick Neuberger really stand up to him and push him down. Kerr was objecting because Neuberger was talking about some military base in Oklahoma, and Kerr used the business of saying "Have you ever been there?" When Neuberger said no, he said, "Well, then you have no right to enter into this." Neuberger responded in an extraordinarily tough manner, saying, "Well, if you had to be everywhere on every issue that he voted on, and know it personally, then you, Senator Kerr, couldn't vote on ninety percent of the issues." Neuberger stood his ground. Almost everyone else was afraid to. But Capehart did take him on on the Eisenhower remark. Capehart was not a very good debater. He was

page 95

a very short, fat fellow. Foxy bright but not intellectually bright. When Capehart took him on, Kerr called him a "tub of rancid butter," which was objected to. That came out in print as a "rancid tub of ignorance," but I heard him say a "tub of rancid butter," I swear I heard Kerr say that.

I want to make a point about Joe McCarthy. I once ran into Joe McCarthy on the Senate floor. It was about 1956, after he was censured. He was in a pitiful state. At noon I was on the Republican side. I very seldom went over there -- Mr. Douglas wouldn't sit on that side even temporarily, as some Democratic senators did. But for some reason I was standing in front of the Republican cloakroom at noon, after the Senate had come in, and there was a phone call for McCarthy, and he thought I was connected to the Republican cloakroom and asked me about it. Well, I confronted him at noon: his eyes were red and white, mostly red; he had deep stubble on his face; and he absolutely reeked of bourbon, absolutely reeked. He didn't give any appearance of being drunk, but he reeked of the stuff. And I said to myself, this guy isn't going to last very long if he does this at noon. And he died a year or so later, tied down in a hospital. Proxmire succeeded him.

I want to say something about McCarthy's technique, the way he smeared people. I take this from the London *Economist* thirty-five years ago; I think I'm repeating it precisely. It indicates

page 96

how one can use guilt by association. The *Economist* applied it to Churchill, and it went like this --

"Mr. Churchill is a member of the House of Commons, one of whose members, Mr. Kone Zilliacus, is a member of the Communist party. This Churchill is also a member of the Church of England, one of whose leading prelates, the Dean of Canterbury, is a known fellow traveler. This Churchill, during World War II, joined an organization called 'The Big Three.' Not only that, he attended all of its meetings. One of its members was a known Communist, Mr. Joseph Stalin." That was the method McCarthy used.

In the 1940s, in Illinois, there was something called the "little McCarthy bills," the Broyles bills, which demanded a loyalty oath from teachers. The University of Illinois had an attorney -- I think he was paid a fee rather than employed by the University -- who was the leading proponent of the Broyles bills, and I debated him once on the local radio station. This was before television. I mention this because I'm proud of the fact that I was active against the McCarthy people, publicly, at the time. Anyway, I set him up. I had a marvelous quote from Lincoln. It came from his speech in the House in 1848, saying when he opposed the Mexican war, that the people had a right to revolution. If their government was unfair to them, they had a right to revolt. Specifically Lincoln said that "Any people anywhere, . . . have the right to rise up and shake off the existing

United States Senate Historical Office -- Oral History Project

www.senate.gov

government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right -- a right which, we hope and believe, is to liberate the world." So I said to this fellow, who was a proponent, and who was going all over the state making speeches in favor of the Broyles bills, "Suppose a teacher said -- and I quoted Abraham Lincoln -- that she believed that it was the inherent right of the people to revolt." Could she be fired under this bill? "Oh," he said, "absolutely, no question about it." I then said, "Well, you know, that was what Abraham Lincoln said in 1848." And he said something about, "Well, this wouldn't apply to Lincoln." But I had made the point and really got him, I thought.

I met my wife going down to the state legislature to lobby against the Broyles bills in 1953. A group of us went down, and she drove the car. We had a lot in common. And I heard the present senator from Illinois, [\[Alan\] Dixon](#), who was then a member of the Illinois House. Dixon, who was from the East St. Louis area, was fiercely debating, was taking on as a civil libertarian lawyer, as a proponent of the First Amendment and a defender of the right of the teachers, the supporters of the Broyles bills. So I've always had a warm spot in my heart, going back these 35 years, for Alan Dixon. I think Alan is thought of as an honest pro, and he is, but he was a very strong civil libertarian when I first saw him, and he still is.

Ritchie: You came to the Senate after McCarthy was censured.

Shuman: After he'd been censured, but I was in Washington during the debate on censure in the summer of 1954.

Ritchie: How did the rest of the Senate treat him after he was censured? Did it affect his relations with other members?

Shuman: It did, very much. They, like the press, abandoned him. They didn't shun him directly, but they almost shunned him. There I must tell you a story which is important. Mr. Douglas was very loyal to the Marine Corps. He fought in World War II, virtually lost his left arm, and was wounded twice. He joined the Marines at age 50. He had this great loyalty to the Marine Corps. He had the American flag and the Marine Corps flag behind his desk. The Marine Corps flag is red, and one of the things that some of his opponents used against him was that he flew the red Communist flag behind his desk. It shows you the depth of the ridiculousness of the times. But there were times when he helped save the Marine Corps: one when Truman wanted to do away with it; two, he sponsored the bill to make sure that they have a minimum of four divisions, permanently; and three to make the Commandant of the Marine Corps a member of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff. Those are among the things he did. I can't remember precisely the years. I wasn't there on all of these issues, but I know about all of them because he told me about them many times.

page 99

It was at the height of McCarthy's power. I think it was just shortly after Mr. Douglas had cosponsored the [\[Ralph\] Flanders](#) resolution. I think there were nine senators who sponsored the Flanders resolution against McCarthy, which was the first major thing that was done against him. Anyway, it was a question of saving the Marine Corps. Joe McCarthy had been a Marine, "Tail-Gunner Joe." He lied about a foot wound and his combat experience. He had injured his foot in a ceremony when he crossed the equator, not in combat. But he came back and ran as "Tail-Gunner Joe." He was the key to a group of Republican votes in the Senate: his own, [\[William\] Jenner](#), a few others of his coterie including the Senator from Idaho, [Welker](#). Those votes were desperately needed if Mr. Douglas was to succeed in his efforts for the Marine Corps. McCarthy let it be known to Mr. Douglas, through indirect means, and I don't know precisely what they were but, I think members of the press were the messengers, that in order to get his votes, Mr. Douglas would have to go over to the Republican side of the floor, sit next to him, in view of the press gallery, and ask him, in front of God and everybody, for his votes for the Marine Corps. Mr. Douglas thought about that long and hard, but his beloved Marines won out, and he did it, and he got the votes, and he saved the Marine Corps, which is the reason you see a plaque on my wall. Later I was involved in some of these issues when the Marines were under political fire again. The Commandant of the Marine Corps,

page 100

General P.X. Kelley, a year ago in a ceremony at the National War College made me an honorary Marine. Although I don't deserve it, I am very proud of it, and I certainly remember the times when I was involved with the senator to help keep the Marine Corps alive.

Ritchie: Was McCarthy in any way influential after his censure?

Shuman: Absolutely not. He was like a skunk coming into the room. People fled. He didn't understand that. People have told me that before he was censured he would go to the floor of the Senate and smear people, suggest that they were disloyal, and call them traitors and all the rest, and then meet them on the elevator and slap them on the back and say how are you, thinking that they would not be offended, that it was all just part of the game. He never really quite got the message, but he was finished when I knew him.

I want to tell about one other incident, but then I'd like to talk more about the nature of the Senate. When I came to work there, [Alben Barkley](#) had just been reelected to the Senate. He had been vice president; he had been majority leader; he had been a leading figure on the Finance Committee. He had been senator from Kentucky. After he was vice president he spent two years as a private citizen and then ran again for the Senate. He sat on

page 101

the very back row, the last seat on the back row. He was the most junior senator in the place, and his office was right next door to the room I was in. My room was carved out of a hallway and there was a locked doorway to his office in my room and I could hear him from time to time in his personal office. He was a very distinguished fellow and a very revered figure in the Senate. Barkley went down to Virginia to give a speech to a college graduation after he'd come back to the Senate, and he was mentioning that he had been vice president, had sat in the presiding officer's chair, had been majority leader at the number one desk, and now he sat in the last seat, in the last row, the most junior senator of them all. To explain this, and how happy he was to be back, he said, "I would rather be a doorkeeper"--paraphrasing the Bible--"in the house of the Lord, than to sit in the seats of the mighty." At that moment he collapsed and died. It was a dramatic way to die. Hollywood could not have improved on it. I can think of only one other way to die that might be more interesting!

The reason I mention this is that certain senators -- my senator was one -- never really wanted to move up. A senator moved over closer to the middle and moved up closer to the front with seniority. Everytime there was a vacancy the floor staff would go around and offer the next senior member the desk of the person who had died or been defeated. Mr. Douglas made a point of staying in

page 102

the middle and on the next to the back row. He eschewed joining the club and preferred the back benches. Jack Kennedy sat right behind him. [Hubert Humphrey](#) on the other hand, moved to the front and to the middle. I dearly liked, loved, cherished, and thought the world of Hubert Humphrey. He probably made fewer compromises for a man who got as far as he did than anyone else. But in the period '56, '57, he moved into the club as his seating changes exemplified. When we were involved in the Civil Rights debates, which is a very major part of what I worked on in those days, Humphrey was the go-between with the Civil Rights forces and Johnson. The Civil Rights groups would meet, discuss, decide, and send Hubert as their envoy to Johnson. Invariably Hubert would come back having lost his trousers. Johnson had his number. For some reason, although no one else could pick him apart, Johnson could have his way with him.

I noticed during this period, and I pointed it out to Bob Caro, who is writing his second book on Johnson's Senate career. I got the seating arrangements from Congress to Congress to Congress, and showed Caro how Hubert kept moving up front and closer to the middle. As he moved up and got closer to the middle, I could see that his relationships to the Senate establishment changed. Originally, he was farther out of the establishment than anyone else, especially when he took on Harry Byrd at the very beginning of his career. But as time went on,

page 103

Hubert really got into the establishment, and he made every effort to. It was reflected in his voting record.

There was the book by William S. White, *The Citadel*, which in my view canonized everything that was bad about the Senate. According to him, the Dixiecrats were marvelous. He said that the Senate was the South's revenge for Gettysburg, which it was. They had all the key positions. White thought the [filibuster](#) rule was great, and he thought seniority was marvelous. We called it the "Senility Rule." Everything that people criticize about the Senate he favored. He was the one who really established that there was an "Inner Club." But what he said was that the way senators got into the Inner Club was by personality. It was the good guys, the hail-fellows-well-met, and those who got along by diplomatic language and gentlemanliness with the powers that be, who got into the club. That was absolutely false, because a senator like [Herbert Lehman](#), who was the most gentlemanly senator in the world, who never said an angry word to anyone, couldn't possibly get into the club. a) he was from New York; b) he was Jewish; and c) he had a progressive voting record. And it was the voting record that got one into the club. The "club" treated him as a pariah.

If senators didn't join the coalition that existed at that time among Southerners, Westerners, and trans-Mississippi Republicans, to protect segregation, to protect oil and gas, to

page 104

protect public works, to protect cotton, and tobacco, and wheat, and to give the water projects to the Western states, if they didn't join that coalition, they didn't get into the club. The quid-pro-quo was that the Southerners with their lock on the committees and on the money, in return for support for the filibuster, parceled out their goodies to the trans-Mississippi Republicans and to the Western senators. That's how senators got into the club. They didn't get there because they were nice fellows like Herbert Lehman. They got there because they voted and worked for segregation when the chips were down. They didn't have to vote against the final passage of a Civil Rights bill, but they had to vote with the

South on the procedural issues that prevented any Civil Rights bill from ever coming to a vote.

In those days, '57, '59, the Steering Committee, which the South dominated, [Russell](#) dominated, waited until after the vote on the filibuster rule before they assigned committee seats. And among the senators elected in '58 -- if you look at who got the good committees and who didn't -- those who voted with the south on the filibuster rule got the good assignments. [Bob Byrd](#) went to the Appropriations Committee as a freshman, as did [Gale McGee](#). [Cannon](#) went to Armed Services. [Gene McCarthy](#), who had a different angle, went to the Finance Committee as a Junior senator, and he did that because he essentially sold out on gas and oil. He gave [Bob Kerr](#) his proxy on oil and gas issues. This was the way it was done;

page 105

it had nothing to do with personality, pleasantness, or gentlemanliness. That's a bunch of hogwash! It had to do with issues.

Ritchie: You mentioned that you sat on the floor every day. When you started the job, what did Douglas say to you? Did he say I want you to look after these interests, or did he leave it to you to decide what to follow?

Shuman: He pretty much left it to me. I just figured my legislative job was a legislative job and I was there on the floor. What I did is I went through every bill. Mondays they called the calendar. An awful lot of bad legislation sneaks through on the calendar, and Mr. Douglas was the watchdog over the Treasury. So one of my jobs was to read those bills and to sniff out the pork. I did a couple of things early on. One was a small bill to renew the interstate oil compact. The interstate oil compact was run by the Texas Railway Commission. It was an umbrella for the oil producers to get together and in the name of conservation to limit production and to establish a higher price for oil than it would otherwise have been. But under the Constitution to have a compact among states for conservation Congress had to approve.

I was so naive, so unknowing about political forces that it didn't occur to me that this was a powerful group of people. I just looked at that and said, "That isn't right." I knew what

page 106

the Texas Railway Commission was: it was a monopoly. It was a government-enforced monopoly. So I went to the staff director of the Interior Committee, Stewart French, who was a public interest staff man, and told him what I thought about this, that it was a bad idea. He said, "Yes, but you don't do that around

here." But I talked to Mr. Douglas and he got up on the floor and objected to that bill on the routine call of the calendar. Everybody shuddered. Here we were taking on the most powerful economic interest in the country, oil and gas. I didn't know what I had gotten him into. But Johnson was very sensitive to it, and as a matter of fact we got it modified. Johnson did not want to make a big issue of it. Before we allowed it to go through we got an amendment that the Justice Department's Antitrust Division would make an annual report with respect to the competitiveness or lack of competitiveness as a result of the oil compact, and it passed without amendment. Johnson, rather than fight it, agreed to it, even though he was Leader and active for oil. Well, I was told afterwards that that was just a dumb thing to do, that nobody else would have had the nerve, and ten years later I probably wouldn't have dared to have done it. I did it out of ignorance of the power of the political forces which ran the Senate. And we were successful. That is what is called a fortuitous event.

page 107

A couple of other things happened then. You know, "In God We Trust" has not always been on the currency. Somewhere along in 1956 or '57, there was a proposal to put "In God We Trust" on the bills, which came to the Banking Committee, which had Jurisdiction. Well, this was at a time when Mr. Douglas was fighting the filibuster rule. He led the fight against the oil and gas bill to free natural gas from price regulation. He took on the Senate establishment on civil rights and the filibuster. He fought the public works bills, when more often than not he was the single senator who opposed the bill. One time [Dennis Chavez](#) was in charge of the Public Works bill, and Mr. Douglas opposed it. Chavez stood up and said, "I can't understand why the senator from Illinois is opposed to this bill. "Why," he said, "there's something in it for everybody!" And, of course, there was.

But on the currency bill, I said to Mr. Douglas, "You know, there's the establishment clause in the First Amendment to the Constitution, and it seems to me that it might really be against the establishment clause to put 'In God We Trust' on the bills." Even though I'd grown up in a family with a lot of Presbyterian ministers, it seemed to me that that was an offense against the Bill of Rights. Perhaps it was because I was a Presbyterian and the Scots, historically, objected to an established Church of England. And it was Christ who threw the money lenders out of the

page 108

temple, so it seemed to me not only against the separation of church and state but sacrilegious to put "In God We Trust" on the money. It involved what belonged to Caesar and what belonged to God. He looked at me, and he said, I've been doing all these things, taking on the Inner Club, taking on the filibuster, taking on oil

and gas, and now you want me to vote against God!" So there was a limit to how much he could do, and he wasn't prepared to do that.

The second dumb thing I recommended to him was an economic issue. As an economic person I was in favor of vigorously enforcing the antitrust laws, and baseball, explicitly, and other sports, implicitly, had an exemption from the antitrust laws. So I went to him one day and said, "You really ought to do something to take away the antitrust exemption from sports." I think there was a bill up. Well, Chicago had the Cubs and the White Sox, and I think they then had not only the Bears but what are now the St. Louis Cardinals football team. In any case St. Louis and the Cardinals baseball team was also in his political orbit, because of Southern Illinois. And there was the Black Hawk hockey team, and I think St. Louis had a good hockey team as well. Again, he said, "Well, I can do a lot of things, but I have more professional sports teams in Illinois than any state of the union, and here you want me to vote against them!" There was a limit to what even he as the most independent senator and a believer in

page 109

antitrust could do. He knew the limits of his power, and his influence, and what he could do and what he couldn't do. I learned a lot from those two incidents as to how far I could carry out my idealism, or my civil liberty and Bill of Rights views, or my pure economic views in terms of practical politics. It taught me that his agenda and not mine was important.

Ritchie: Would you spend your days sitting in those big leather couches at the back of the chamber?

Shuman: Not that much. I most often had a small chair next to Mr. Douglas, a small black chair which one of the pages would bring in. One of the rules was that I could not sit in a senator's chair, which I never did. One time Mr. Douglas was speaking. He didn't have the use of his left hand because of the wound he took at Okinawa. He would roam the floor when he spoke. He needed a memo I had with a bunch of figures on it, and I think he was holding something in his right hand. So I got up from my chair, went over to where he was standing, and stood next to him and held the paper in front of him so he could see the figures and read it. [\[George\] Smathers](#) from Florida was in the chair, and he said: "Does the gentleman standing next to the Senator from Illinois wish to be recognized?" I was mortified! I knew I couldn't sit down on a senator's chair, so I sat down on the riser until I could sneak back to my chair. But I looked, and the next day that was struck from the *Record* as well.

page 110

Ritchie: Could you give me some idea of what the atmosphere was in the chamber? I get the feeling that things were much quieter then.

Shuman: I think in some ways there was more decorum, and far fewer staff people. There were seldom more than five or six staff people on the floor at the time, usually dealing with a particular issue. I got to know people like Ted Sorenson and John F. Kennedy because we were in a couple of battles together. We fought a Constitutional Amendment to change the electoral college, not by providing that the winner of the popular vote would be elected but that each congressional district would have an electoral vote at a time when they were gerrymandered.

There were eight or ten senators who were then running for president, as we got closer to 1960, and quite a few more who were secretly hoping that the lightning would strike. Nixon was in the chair. Kennedy sat in the back row. Johnson the majority leader was running for president and later announced. [Stuart Symington](#) of Missouri had announced. Hubert Humphrey was running hard. [Scoop Jackson](#) was waiting in the wings, hoping that he might be vice president. And [Margaret Chase Smith](#) had announced as a woman candidate. Of course when a senator addressed the chair, it was "Mr. President." And the word was that when a Junior senator on the back row stood up to get recognition by

page 111

addressing the chair as "Mr. President," at least a dozen people turned around and said, "Who, me?"

One of the apocryphal stories of the time about Nixon, after Eisenhower's heart attack in September of 1955, was that the two of them were standing at the base of the Washington Monument, with its stairs to the summit. Nixon was the vice president, one heart beat away from the presidency. Nixon said to Eisenhower: "I'll beat you to the top."

I used to say in 1960, that the worst thing that could happen to the country was either for Nixon or for Johnson to become president. The reason I said that -- and I remember saying it many times -- was it was quite clear to people who knew them, who had seen them at close hand, that both of them had flawed characters. It wasn't a surprise, it was known. Personally, I think Johnson was a better president than he was a majority leader, which is a position that very few people hold. But in the Senate he was beholden to Dick Russell. He couldn't go to the bathroom without Dick Russell agreeing to it. Johnson was a powerful leader, but he was the agent of the Dixiecrats. When he became president he was essentially freed from that and acted in a much more national way. Even though he made big mistakes in Vietnam, especially about Tonkin Gulf, I always thought he was a better president than he was a majority leader. Perhaps that was because I was not so close to him when he was President. George Reedy, Johnson's press

secretary, in his book *The Twilight of the Presidency*, said in an obvious reference to Johnson, that the Presidency was like a French Impressionist painting. One had to stand a long way back from it to appreciate it.

One result of working in the Senate is that the Constitution becomes a living, breathing document. Why if the Senate goes out on Thursday night does it have to come in again on Monday? Or if the House goes out on Friday it can come in on Tuesday. Why can't the House adjourn from Thursday to Tuesday? Well, you know the provision, that no house can adjourn for more than three days without the consent of the other. But that's something you learn because you work there. I had to read the Constitution at times to find out things that affected my work. Why is it that the Senate and the House can authorize five year money for planes, tanks, guns, and ammunnition when the Constitution says that the Congress can only appropriate money for two years to raise and support the army? When is the electoral vote counted? Is it counted by the old Congress or the new one? Is it a Constitutional provision or not? Think what a difference it could have made in 1960, or again when [John] Anderson was running against [Ronald] Reagan and [Jimmy] Carter, or in 1968, if the elections had been thrown into the House, whether the old House or the new one would elect, because each state then has one vote. It would make a very important difference as to who voted. Well, the answer is that

the time of the vote is established by statute. And quite properly the new House and the new Senate act on that issue, reflecting the will of the most recent election. These are things that come up in the course of life working in the Senate.

Who presides over the Supreme Court when the Chief Justice is presiding over the Senate in an impeachment trial? That was a question when we thought Nixon would be impeached. Senator Proxmire came to me and asked me, "Do I have to be on the Senate floor during all this impeachment business, every minute?" I said, "Well, there's nothing in the rules about it," but I told him, "I think you'd better be, because people will say that you're a Juror, and if you aren't there you won't hear the evidence." So for practical purposes he would have to be there.

Who defends a senator when he's sued for libel for an act connected with his official life? That was an issue I got into when Proxmire was sued by Hutchinson. And what's the meaning of the combined provisions in the immunity clause, the speech or debate clause, and the provision that each house shall punish its own members? There's a connection between the two that one learns because one has to live with them. I spent about twenty percent of my time over a five year period dealing with those constitutional questions.

But I think the most important thing about the Senate, which one must work there to understand, is the provision in Article I that the Senate shall be composed of two senators from each state. It's the only provision which cannot be changed, because Article V, the amending article, says that no state without its consent shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate. Now, there are those who say it can be changed by two amendments. One could amend Article V first, and then base the Senate on population. But for all practical purposes it's riveted into the Constitution and it can't be struck out. To understand the Senate one has to understand this. The smallest seventeen states, with thirty-four senators, or one-third plus one, have only seven percent of the population. The largest seventeen states with thirty-four senators, which again is one-third plus one, have seventy percent of the population. It's a ratio of ten to one. This dominates Senate affairs and Senate procedures in a way that unless one works there one really doesn't know about.

Theoretically, the senators from those seventeen small states, thirty-four of them, one-third plus one, could keep the Senate from overriding a veto, from ratifying a treaty, from impeaching the president, from expelling a member, and could defeat a Constitutional amendment. I mean, members representing only seven percent of the population could do those things because of the two-thirds vote with respect to them. It's very important,

especially if you work with a senator from a big state. I remember a time when we had thirty-eight votes to change the filibuster rule. Those thirty-eight votes represented about sixty-five percent of the population. Yet we didn't win. The opponents would say, "You don't know how to count!" Well, it was a rigged vote. The Senate is the only remaining legally, Constitutionally gerrymandered legislative body in the country. But Bobby Baker used to go around saying, "You guys don't know how to count." Well, we knew how to count, but we were working with a stacked deck.

I remember there were times when Mr. Douglas would look over at [\[George Molly Malone\]](#), who was a senator from Nevada, who would speak for hours, and hours, and hours on tariff matters, who was the biggest bore in the Senate and probably the dumbest senator. Mr. Douglas would look at him after a vote on some issue such as Civil Rights, or the filibuster, or oil and gas, and say, "My God, when I was alderman for the fifth ward in Chicago I represented more people than he has in the whole state of Nevada." That wasn't quite true, but it made the point.

Anyway, if one wants to understand the Senate, and the coalition in the Senate in that period, one has to understand this. And I think that Johnson failed in his campaign for nomination in 1960 because he did not understand this point about national politics. He thought that national politics were the

page 116

same as Senate politics. He tried to get the nomination by calling himself a Westerner and combining the southern and mountain states to give him the nomination. That is the way he dominated the Senate. But in the presidential election that coalition wouldn't work. Johnson was unsuccessful in 1960 for three reasons: number one is that he didn't really realize that senators didn't have much influence politically in their states, that in most states a politician has to live in the state and be on the spot, in order to dominate its politics. It may not have been true in Texas, but it certainly was true in most of the mountain states, and was certainly true in the big states. Second, that coalition just didn't have the votes to nominate. And third, [Stuart Udall](#) actually took the mountain states away from him in any case, which was why he became Secretary of the Interior under Kennedy. But Johnson really didn't understand. He knew Senate politics instinctively, but he didn't understand national politics, and he wasn't really attuned to national issues because of his focus on the Senate.

One of the most frustrating things in the Senate, for people like Mr. Douglas and Senator Proxmire, was that as national Democrats they campaigned on certain issues. Oil and gas was one. Wisconsin was the place where the Supreme Court case on regulating natural gas, the Phillips case, came from. Senators would campaign on this issue, and then go to the Senate and find

page 117

that the party was dominated, in its leadership and its committee chairmen, by people who were fundamentally opposed to the things the party stood for nationally. And on the gas bill fight in '56, in which I was deeply involved, Kerr and other oil state senators, the second senator from Texas, [Price Daniel](#), actually stood at the Democratic majority leader's desk managing the bill, against what was the overwhelming interests of the party.

One of the things that Mr. Douglas objected to and a major reason for his estrangement from Johnson in the Senate was that while he did not object to Johnson as a senator from Texas voting for gas and oil, he didn't think Johnson should make that position the national party position. It was political suicide for Johnson to vote against gas and oil and as a politician Mr. Douglas understood that, didn't have any question about it. In fact, on some of the Civil Rights issues Mr. Douglas went to people like [\[Frank\] Graham](#) of North Carolina and said, "Look, you don't have to vote with us. You're committing suicide if you do. Don't

vote with us." So he understood senators' ties to their states. But what he objected to was that Johnson used his position as majority leader to impose a local Texas position as the national position of the Democratic party.

One of the things I always admired [Bill Knowland](#) for, when he was Republican leader, was his view on this issue. Later there was a Douglas-Knowland axis in the '57 Civil Rights bill.

page 118

Knowland was a very conservative but absolutely straight-arrow type. But when Knowland spoke against Eisenhower's policies, when Knowland was minority leader, I noticed that he would always leave the minority leader's desk and go to the back row aisle seat to make his speech. I always admired him for not pretending to be the spokesman for his party, when he took a position that was counter to his president and his party. But that was never done by Johnson, Kerr, or the Southerners. They were so powerful, they ran the place. You can see that I feel strongly about this, but one had to work under it, had to feel the bruising things that came from the way the Dixiecrats wielded power in the Senate. Indeed it was revenge for Gettysburg.

Johnson never understood about six people, of whom Mr. Douglas was one. Herbert Lehman was another. [Bill Langer](#) was another. And there were three or four others. Johnson had almost everybody's number. He knew their weaknesses, whether it was women or drink, or whether they wanted a certain bill, a committee assignment or whether they wanted more office space. He knew what almost everybody wanted. He never understood what Mr. Douglas wanted. He was at a loss. There was no way Johnson could get to him. The reason was very simple: what Mr. Douglas wanted was for Johnson to carry out the policies of the National Democratic party. Not in exact detail because he was quite willing to compromise, but he thought it was important that the

page 119

leader do that. That's all he wanted, and Johnson couldn't understand this. He could understand people who wanted more room, or who liked to drink too much, or do other things, but he never really understood what Mr. Douglas wanted.

Harry McPherson, who was one of Johnson's floor men when he was in the Senate and a speech-writer at the White House and who, along with Bill Moyers, was a most constructive influence in the White House, was asked what Johnson was looking for in Vietnam. Harry's answer was "A deal." But I don't think Johnson was on Ho Chi Minh's wave length or that he understood that he could never get the kind of political deal he was famous for in the Senate.

I think the reason Johnson never understood Mr. Douglas was it never occurred to him that a senator would stand up for his principles. I think Johnson did have some. I think Johnson was genuinely moved by the Depression. He never was against poor people, he was for poor people. But of course he never let that stand in his way to help the well-to-do and the powerful, either. But at least he had a certain visceral reaction in favor of the poor. I don't think he was in any way anti-Semitic or viscerally anti-black, in the way that Dick Russell was. In fact, Dick Russell and some of the Southerners used to make references to Herbert Lehman's Jewishness. There was an anti-Semitic overtone to it.

page 120

One of the things that used to gall me was to hear some of the conservative Western state senators, especially alleged rugged individualist Utah senators -- Mr. Douglas called them the "tin-cup states," because they couldn't last a day without massive federal support for water projects especially, for wool subsidies, for wheat subsidies, lead and zinc, all the minerals, for the national lands and forests, for a variety of issues -- stand up and complain about the power and influence of the federal government. Mr. Douglas used to quote what the English journalist Labouchere, who had a French name but was an English Journalist and a member of Parliament, used to say about Prime Minister Gladstone, who was a self-righteous fellow. He said, "I don't mind Mr. Gladstone having all the aces up his sleeve. What I object to is his insistence that the good Lord put them there."

The fact was that the small states a) were over represented, and b) as a result they got massive federal subsidies, which were paid for through taxation of people in the larger states. Yet at the same time their senators were self-righteous, not even understanding that they were the major recipients of the federal largess.

I want to talk at some time in detail about the Civil Rights fights of '56 and '57.

Ritchie: I thought we would do that the next time.

page 121

Shuman: Fine. But I do want to say one thing, because it fits in here. There was a senator by the name of [\[Thomas\] Hennings](#) from Missouri, an extraordinarily able, brilliant constitutional scholar, who was chairman of the subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee which handled civil rights. Hennings was in charge of the Civil Rights bills, and Hennings had a very, very serious drinking problem. This was known to the leadership. What happened routinely was that just as the bills would come up, Hennings would disappear, and we would wait on him, and nothing would happen. The reason that Mr. Douglas took the leadership for the '56 and '57 Civil Rights bills was that Hennings wasn't there. It was an unreported scandal, and it was a tragedy, because Hennings was so able and deserved better

from life. But every time there was pressure on Hennings he succumbed and would go on one of his binges. So Mr. Douglas inherited these bills. This led to a difficult situation. The Southerners would pick on anyone's alleged weaknesses, to ridicule, make fun of him, so the "professor" angle came in. They referred to him as "the professor," as opposed to the practical politician. It was a lawyer's ploy. But also they made quite a point that he wasn't the subcommittee chairman and wasn't even on the Judiciary Committee, and here he was leading the fight. Well, the reason he did it was because nobody else would do it, and because Hennings wasn't there to carry it out.

page 122

Time after time, Mr. Douglas stepped back -- even pushed him -- especially on the filibuster rule, to allow [Clint Anderson](#) of New Mexico, to take on the fight, which Clint Anderson did. It was always the Anderson amendment on the filibuster rule. Anderson had ties to the CIO and the United Auto Workers, I'm not quite certain why. He had been a journalist who for health reasons had moved to New Mexico and exposed the Teapot Dome scandal. But he also was Secretary of Agriculture under Truman. The reason he was opposed to the filibuster didn't have anything to do with Civil Rights. What happened was that when he was Secretary of Agriculture Senator [Elmer] Thomas of Oklahoma -- there were two Thomases, of Utah and Oklahoma, it was the Oklahoma senator -- tried to force upon Clint Anderson as under secretary, or assistant secretary, or legal counsel, I don't know in particular who it was, a man who had a bad reputation. Anderson refused to take him, and as a result, Thomas used the filibuster either against the agriculture appropriations or against the Department's legislation. So Clint Anderson came to the anti-filibuster position not from Civil Rights but from what had happened to him as Secretary. So he was always pushed to the front, because he was part of the Inner Club, and a man Mr. Douglas used to say he never quite understood where he was coming from. But we did know why he was there on the filibuster and why he was so involved in it, although almost no one else knew, and it enhanced our position to have him lead on the issue.

page 123

I want to say one more thing about Johnson. I think that a great deal of the opposition to Johnson over Vietnam was a personal one, and I will be very specific. When Johnson was majority leader he was all powerful, except with people like Douglas, Proxmire, and Lehman. Most people gave in to him. [Frank Church](#)'s man, Tom Dine, told me that for a matter of about six months after Church had voted against something that Johnson was in favor of or had refused to go along with him, that Johnson shunned him, very much in the way that shunning takes place in Pennsylvania among the Amish sects. Johnson wouldn't speak to him. Church couldn't get anything done, couldn't get his bills, couldn't

get his projects, couldn't get his postmasters. Finally, Church went to him and said, "Okay, you win, that's it." He capitulated. It was unconditional surrender.

[Vance Hartke](#), was another opponent of Johnson on Vietnam. Johnson called Hartke, who'd been mayor of an Indiana town, a two-bit mayor from a two-bit town. Hartke never forgave him.

[Gene McCarthy](#), and this is a more elaborate tale, in 1960 was Johnson's favorite for vice president on a Johnson ticket. I doubt that Johnson ever promised it to him, but he certainly waived it or dangled it in front of him, because if Johnson defeated Kennedy, defeated this Irish Catholic Northern liberal, certainly he had to put a Catholic on the ticket, and a Northern liberal Catholic, and McCarthy was the obvious one. So Johnson

page 124

dangled the vice presidency in front of McCarthy. McCarthy used to go around the Senate saying, "I'm more Catholic than Kennedy, and more liberal than Humphrey." He said it a lot. When the convention came in 1960, the best speech of the Democratic convention was made by Gene McCarthy, but it was made not for Johnson, who he was for, but for Adlai Stevenson. And it was done in an effort to split the Northern forces which would support Kennedy. Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt was for Stevenson against Kennedy, partly because of Kennedy's position on Joe McCarthy and his father's connections. Her famous line was Kennedy needed more courage and less profile. She was a great advocate of Stevenson, who could have split the Northern vote and possibly let Johnson in.

So Gene McCarthy made without question the best speech of the convention, for a candidate he did not really favor. Then when Johnson had a chance in 1964, to select a vice president, whom did he pick? [Hubert Humphrey](#), from Minnesota, McCarthy's own state. There is always friction between two senators from the same party from the same state. Hubert leaned over backwards not to antagonize McCarthy, but McCarthy was in some ways quite bitter about Hubert.

I liked McCarthy personally, and he was always very kind to me. I hesitate to say anything unkind about him because he has been so personally generous to me. He spoke to me. He called me by name. A lot of senators didn't know a staff person, but he

page 125

did, so I always liked him. In the 1968 campaign, when McCarthy ran for president and didn't defeat Johnson in New Hampshire but did so well that Johnson pulled out before the Wisconsin primary, McCarthy pointed out how Johnson had proposed him as the vice presidential candidate, and that Johnson

couldn't be trusted on Vietnam any more than he could be trusted on these personal things. So it was a very personal as well as a policy matter.

These senators got out from under Johnson's thumb when he moved from the Senate, to become vice president and president. They weren't free from him when he was majority leader. I think that a certain amount of the opposition to Johnson and the war came from their personal association with him in the Senate. I used to think that the same was true of [\[J. William\] Fulbright](#), but I checked this out with Carl Marcy, and Fulbright really didn't have a falling out with Johnson until after Tonkin Gulf and until after Fulbright had in fact turned against the war. So that was a different story. But Johnson gave him the treatment then. But in many, many cases, opposition to Vietnam while sincerely held, also had a personal element to it that very few people realized, which stemmed from Johnson's use of raw power in the Senate.

Johnson in the Senate was a benevolent dictator. Under [\[Mike\] Mansfield](#) it was anarchy. Under Johnson it was like a Greek tragedy Nothing went on in the Senate that hadn't happened

page 126

off the floor before hand. All the votes were there, nothing new. There is one point that I should make about how Mansfield became whip. It was a result of the gas bill in 256. There are two points about the gas bill that I want to make, because I was very much involved in it. Frank McCulloch did much of the staff work for it, wrote most of the speeches and organized the groups who opposed the gas bill, but I was on the floor and was involved in the parliamentary part of it and the speeches as well. The key to getting the gas bill passed was to get the liberal mountain state senators to vote for it. The key to the liberal mountain state senators was [Jim Murray](#) of Montana. He was from the great tradition of the Montana senators. There were several.

Ritchie: There was Tom Walsh.

Shuman: Yes, especially Walsh; Murray was in that tradition. And there was [Burt Wheeler](#) on domestic issues. Of course they had been strong for trade unions, and been against the mining companies. Well, Jim Murray was in his dotage. He was not quite senile but close to it. He had his good days and his bad days, and he had lost his grip on things. But the key to the mountain states was Murray, and the key to Murray was Mansfield. Mansfield went with Johnson on the gas bill. It was the [Monroney-Fulbright](#) bill then. It was no longer the [Kerr](#) bill. The oil and gas forces got stung with Kerr out in front, so they picked two of the nicest people in the Senate, particularly [\[Mike\] Monroney](#), to

page 127

lead this fight. But Mansfield persuaded Murray, and with Murray the oil and gas forces got most of the mountain state votes, and they won on the final vote -- although they lost ultimately. When the senator from Kentucky, who'd been the whip, was defeated in '56--

Ritchie: [Earle Clements](#)--

Shuman: Clements, a new Whip was needed. Johnson did not have a caucus or vote. He called and said, "I'm proposing Mansfield, do you object to him?" Well, neither Mr. Douglas nor anyone else could object to Mansfield, because he was a liberal and he was liberal on most issues even though he had voted against us on gas and oil. But he was picked in part as a reward for his gas vote, and in part because Johnson did not want a Whip who would in any way compete with him as a strong personality for the loyalty of the party. So there was this odd couple arrangement. I always thought the Senate atmosphere was better under Mansfield, even though it was anarchy, because it was so much more pleasant under him, much, much more pleasant than under Johnson.

Now, on the second part of the gas bill of '56, it was one of the issues I had a role in. We were working to get the votes, and the mountain state senators were important, and the New England state senators were important, because they didn't have any gas wells so they were free to vote for the consumer. [Leverett]

page 128

[Saltonstall](#) was pretty much the key to the Republicans. He was a very nice fellow. Mr. Douglas talked to him, and I was sitting next to him on the floor at the time, and urged him to vote with us, solicited his vote, and the New England group, against the gas bill. Sa ltonstall came back a few days later and said, "Well, I've been back to the state, I've been talking about this, I've been wrestling with my conscience, but, Paul, I'm going to vote for the gas bill." He walked away, and Mr. Douglas said, "That man always wrestles with his conscience and his conscience always loses." That line may have originated with Oscar Wilde or George Bernard Shaw. But those two groups, New England and the mountain states were critical.

We met every day in Mr. Douglas' office, during the gas bill fight, with the organizations who were with us. Then the local public utilities, the consumer gas interests were with us, because they would have had to pay an enormous increase in price from the producers. The UAW and the AFL-CIO, and other consumer groups who were not all that powerful but who were important were with us. One of the people representing the UAW was a fellow from Texas, who was also extraordinarily close to Johnson. We knew he was a spy -- figuratively -- in our midst, but there was very little we could do about it, because he had been sent by [Walter] Reuther to represent the UAW. But we knew that everything we said got back to Johnson, almost directly.

One morning, I found out that the senator from South Dakota, [\[Francis\] Case](#), whom we'd always put in the other group, counted him as a pro-gas bill vote, had been overheard at breakfast at the Carroll Arms Hotel telling whoever he was eating with that he was still undecided on the gas bill. I couldn't believe it. I've forgotten now who told me, but it was somebody who was with our group who had eaten next to him, and he came and told me. So I told Mr. Douglas, and that morning at our meeting with our colleagues and with our public interest groups, that point was made, and we tried to decide who could reach Case and see if we couldn't convince him, reaching back into his state and all the rest to vote with us. Well, our spy was there, and within twenty-four hours Case was visited by a California oil man and offered two thousand dollars as a campaign contribution. Then Case in a very short time came to the Senate floor. Mr. Douglas was there. I was there. Fulbright was there. Monroney was there. Not too many other people were there. But I remember the scene. Case came to the floor and made a speech about how a bribe of two thousand dollars had been offered to him to vote for the gas bill.

Well, I cannot prove it to you, but I swear that there was a direct link between what happened at our conference and our spy going to Johnson and the Johnson forces going to Keck -- the oil and gas man from California -- and Keck going to Case. Fulbright

was furious at Case. They all got up and denounced Case, who was the mildest, most conservative man. He was an honest fellow, but he was a very minor figure in the Senate. They just absolutely denounced him. Then the Senate leadership set up a committee under [\[Walter\] George](#) to investigate the two thousand dollar contribution. They put Case in the dock. He was the villain, not the oil and gas companies, but Case. Mr. Douglas went up to the hearing and sat with Case when he testified about it, and Mr. Douglas would go over and stand by him when he spoke on the Senate floor, just to show that somebody had enough guts to stand up with him. But the Senate hierarchy turned it into an investigation of Case rather than an investigation of the attempted bribe. Eisenhower vetoed that bill because of the Case bribe. I've always felt that I had a role in what happened.

Later, the Texas UAW fellow, whose name I will give you, but not for the record, was a lobbyist on the Hill for the combined AFL-CIO. I know this first hand. Andy Biemiller, who was the legislative head of the AFL-CIO, and President George Meany, had asked him to get an appointment with Lyndon Johnson for them. Our lobbyist friend was very close to Johnson. He wanted to be the intervenor. He didn't want Biemiller and Meany to go to Johnson directly. He wanted to be

the man to intervene with Johnson and then, to get back to Meany and Biemiller. He viewed himself as

page 131

the power broker. So he told Meany and Biemiller that Johnson was not available at the time they wanted to see him. They were up on the Hill for some other reason, and they were free and decided to go over to Johnson's office. When they got there, they cooled their heels outside Johnson's office for about fifteen minutes. Finally, at the moment they had asked for the appointment, their lobbyist walked out of Johnson's office. He was canned on the spot. Anyway, he was our double agent, and we knew this, but there was nothing we could do about it. We could not keep him out of our conferences. But while his salary was paid for by the contributions of the working men and women, the consumers of the country, his loyalties were to Johnson and the Texas gas and oil interests in the country.

Perhaps along these same lines, one of the problems we had in the Civil Rights fights was we ended up not being able to meet because of [Wayne Morse](#). Morse insisted on coming to the inner sanctum meetings and being in on the decisions, fair enough, but Morse leaked regularly and routinely to Drew Pearson. Pearson would praise Morse and Morse would give Pearson all kinds of information. So we'd have Civil Rights meetings and if anyone would suggest "Well, maybe we could modify part 3," or "Here's a way we could get a change in the voting rights provisions so that we might pick up another ten votes," the next morning that would appear in Drew Pearson's column, with Morse as the hero who stood

page 132

up and said, "I'll never ever compromise on this great issue for the country," and a fellow like the Michigan senator, the former trade union fellow, an Irishman--

b>*Ritchie*: [Pat McNamara](#).

Shuman: McNamara was a marvelous senator, much brighter and abler than people gave him credit for -- McNamara ended up being unwilling to come to our meetings because he would appear as a person who was throwing in the towel and selling out, which he wasn't. He was a fine senator. So the group couldn't meet. We had to work it by phone from then on, because of Morse. And then Morse of course turned on us, in order to get the Hells Canyon Dam, and denounced our group publicly. Morse, who was born in Wisconsin in the same county where old [Bob LaFollette](#) came from, saw himself as the reincarnation of LaFollette. He was selfrighteous. He was a loner. He made a significant contribution to the Senate. He had guts. He had an amazing and ordered, and sequential mind. He was right about Tonkin Gulf. But there was a flaw in his

character which led him to denounce [Dick Neuberger](#) and the noble group of civil rights senators, and to be incapable of working with almost any group for a common cause.

Ritchie: Well, the whole Civil Rights issue is so big, I think we ought to save it for the next time.

End Interview #2

page 133
