INTERVIEW I

INTERVIEWEE: EARLE CLEMENTS (Tape #1)

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Senator Clements' Office in Washington, D. C.

October 24, 1974

G: Senator Clements, I think if we could begin by asking a usual question, when did you first meet Lyndon Johnson?

C: I met him first in 1945. He was younger than I was, but he was in the House earlier in his life than I was. I came to the House as a result of the 1944 election. I knew him through the three years that I was in the House in 1945, 1946, and 1947.

G: Can you recall your first impressions of him? I know it's a long time ago, but . . .

C: I don't even know what time in 1945 I met him. I was just one member of the House. I was born in 1896. It could have been in the first few months that I was in the House. It could have been the earlier days than that, but I imagine it was some time in the first few months in 1945.

G: Did you work very closely together before you both went to the Senate?

C: No, no we didn't. He was an experienced member of the House when I came there in 1945, and I wouldn't say that we were close together in those three years. I knew him. He was active and aggressive, and he had a peculiar entre to Rayburn that I never had until I later came back to the Senate. I knew him, and I knew him as one of the younger members at that time of the Texas delegation. There were some great members from Texas at that time. While active, his activity in the House didn't compare with the activity that he had in the Senate when he went there as a result of the 1948 election.

G: He came into the Senate in 1948 and you came in in 1950. Is that right?

C: That's correct.

G: Did you immediately become allies, or can you describe the process by which you became . . .

C: I would say that we became allies when I came in there in November. I was elected for the short term and for the long term, the full term rather. I replaced the appointed member of the Senate from Kentucky, Garrett Withers, whom I had appointed in 1949 to succeed Barkley when Barkley became the Vice President. I had been in the House and my colleague from Kentucky, Virgil Chapman, had served those years that Johnson was the secretary to Kleberg. Virgil and I had been students together at the University of

Kentucky many years ago, and he and Johnson had developed a very kind relationship. I guess it was my association and my longtime friendship with Virgil Chapman, who came to the Senate at the same time that Lyndon did. It made it easier, I guess, for me to become close to Johnson early in 1950.

G: Can you recall the first piece of legislation, or the first issue, that you were really working closely together on?

C: Oh, I don't know. I was not maybe an active introducer of legislation particularly when I was there with an older colleague from my state. No, I don't know that I could point to any particular legislation that he was involved in or that I was involved in either. Anything that dealt with the strengthening of the defense posture of our country, I guess maybe I was more of a supporter than I was an initiator of the legislation. He was an active initiator of legislation. He was all the time until he became the Majority Leader. After he was the Majority Leader, other members of the Senate initiated more legislation. Maybe I should say that he was less an initiator of legislation than he had been prior to that time.

G: I guess one could explain his ability in the House of Representatives as a result of having worked for Richard Kleberg and being an assistant, but how did he become such an effective senator? Who taught him? Where did he learn?

C: Well, he was an apt pupil. And in addition to being an apt pupil, by the time I came in 1950, he was very close to two of the sound, initiatory members of the Senate. One of them was Richard Russell, and the other one was Bob Kerr. As a matter of fact, in 1950, they rather moved together to organize a group in the Senate that caused him to be the Whip of the Senate and caused Ernest McFarland to be the Majority Leader of the Senate. He served in that position during the years of 1951 and 1952. They were the Majority Leader and the Majority Whip. In 1952 in an election with Eisenhower and Stevenson, we became the minority by two votes, 49 to 47, and Ernest McFarland served those two years as the Majority Leader and the Minority Whip. But, in that election, Ernest McFarland was defeated. He was defeated by Goldwater. I guess I drifted into that group of members of the Senate. Johnson succeeded Ernest McFarland as the Majority Leader and for some reason unknown to me, the caucus decided that I ought to be the Whip. I served those years with Johnson when he was Majority Leader. I was not his last Whip, but I was his first Whip.

G: Why do you think you were selected? Did Johnson ever tell you?

C: It really wasn't Johnson. I would say that Johnson and Dick Russell and Bob Kerr, Carl Hayden, Walter George, Senator Green, I think were all involved in me being named as the Whip at that time.

C: Johnson and myself were great friends. We became great friends. I guess the first time that I recall if I was picking out a single time, he and I went down to the Derby together while I was in the House. Clint Anderson, Dick Russell, maybe one or two others went

down to the Derby. After I was elected Governor in 1947, that group of folks was down there nearly every year at the Derby while I was Governor and I really got to know him. That was really the closest association I had with him. I really had a closer association with him, oh slightly in the House, but even more when I was Governor. Then the friendship just kind of grew from there.

G: As long as we are on the subject of the Derby, I might as well ask, did Senator Johnson like horses?

C: Oh, sure.

G: Racing horses?

C: Yes, the only time I couldn't get him to go to the Derby was when he was President.

G: How would you pass the time other than going to the race itself? What did he like doing there in Kentucky? He must have been impressed with the . . .

C: When you went to the Derby, most of the time you would go down on Friday morning, go to the races on Friday as pre-Derby races, and you'd have fun at night. Maybe go to the Kentucky Colonel's Dinner. Then, of course, they came to the Derby breakfast when I was Governor. Then we would generally come back on Sunday morning unless we had some kind friend that would fly us back on Saturday night.

G: I know he has been very fond of the ranch life in Texas. Kentucky must have seemed to be even richer in terms of land.

C: Well, Mr. Gillette, he had a fondness for Kentucky. There were ties to his family in Kentucky. He could trace his family relationship back to the people who lived in Maysville, Kentucky. You could also trace lines of his family that was in the area of Logan County, Russellville, Kentucky. We claimed him as, not exactly a native son, but we claimed his blood lines were native to Kentucky.

G: Getting back to the selection of Senator Johnson as the Democratic Leader and your selection as the Whip, I was wondering, did you seek the position or was it something that more or less surprised you?

C: You don't seek those things.

G: You don't?

C: No. No. There was a choice and the caucus was rather closely divided on whether Ernest McFarland would be the Majority Leader in the Senate or whether Joe O'Mahoney would be the Majority Leader in the Senate. As I recall, it was decided by maybe one or two votes. I had only been in there for a little more than a month. If my memory serves me correctly, I was sworn in on the 25th of November, and in the very early part of

January, the decision was made. I supported Ernest McFarland for many reasons. One of them, my colleague Virgil Chapman was very much for McFarland. I had not known either Joe O'Mahoney or Ernest McFarland except through the newspapers. I supported him. My colleague in April or May of 1951 was killed. He was killed in an accident on Connecticut Avenue. I think he went to sleep and coming down one of the long hills, his car picked up a good deal of speed. It veered right in front of a very large truck, and it hit it head on. And Virgil was lost. He was on the Policy Committee at the time that Ernest McFarland was named. Most of the people on the Policy Committee were people who had supported Ernest McFarland. Virgil Chapman was one. He had served in the House with Lyndon. He had served in the House with a number of people that were in the Senate at that time, and I replaced him as a very junior member of the Senate on the Policy Committee. It was then that my relationship became more intimate and warmer than it probably would have been had Virgil Chapman lived and I had not been named to the Policy Committee to succeed him. That was the biggest surprise to me was that I was named to the Policy Committee. I can tell you very frankly why I was named. There were so many people that wanted to be assigned to that vacancy on the Policy Committee, they used as a strategem that, "well, maybe we had better pick his colleague from Kentucky," because I hadn't been there long enough you know to justify my being named on the Policy Committee.

G: It's similar to the wife of a deceased congressman or senator . . .

C: Well, that justified an excuse, you know, that they made, I think which caused me to be named. I doubt if I would ever have had the same close relationship with him. Maybe it would be better put this way: that there is nothing that I had done in the Senate up to that time other than maybe present myself as a solid individual that prompted them to select me. But Senator Lehman, Senator Douglas, and some others in the Senate who really sought the position, and, as I say, they used the stratagem, I think partly because they didn't want them on the Policy Committee at that time. There was a little power struggle between one group in the Senate and another, and they used that. And as I recall, there was no opposition to it, but there were many in there that might have been more preferred by a certain group in the membership.

G: While you were acting as Whip and Senator Johnson was acting as Minority Leader, there were a large number of legislative successes that I supposed had never been done before, and I have always been struck by the way the two of you managed to hold the party together on key votes--the McCarthy censure as one. When you had a Democratic Party that was relatively split, I'm told, that you had liberals and conservatives, what was the formula for keeping either faction from jumping ship?

C: Well Johnson was, I would call, a great persuader, and he had a great talent to, as his old saying, to sit down and reason together. But when you knew what the other members' viewpoints were before you started trying to persuade them, it was generally a good deal easier to persuade them. That's the course that he followed, and he had members in the Senate besides me who would endeavor, through their association with other members, to find out what people's views were, to find out why they took a particular course that they

would travel. Some of us would try to keep him posted, keep him out of pitfalls that he would run into. It was more his ability. He developed ties with some of the liberals that Dick Russell couldn't develop ties with. I was more liberal than Lyndon was. I was more liberal than Dick Russell was. I came from a different part of the country than they came from, and I guess I had more ties to the liberals than either one of them had. A person with less willingness to understand the other individual's viewpoint probably couldn't have gotten them together as he did. Any number of the liberals--it took a lot of work to get them together. It took a lot of understanding, and he was always willing to see their viewpoint when he would get it for them. But he was always more effective when he knew what their position was, and he knew the things to talk to them about in their own viewpoint, even though it was different from his. But he could see the validity of it a lot better than Dick Russell could see it. If Johnson had a tutor in the Senate--and everybody has a tutor, you know but--if he had a tutor in the Senate, I would say the most influential tutor he had as a member of the Senate was Dick Russell. He had the ability to move Dick Russell over toward the center some.

G: That must have been quite an accomplishment.

C: It was; it was. But I have seen Dick Russell be very strong on one viewpoint on something, and in the end you would move over toward the center, and Dick Russell could support it. Very frankly, in trying to count votes in the Senate on a piece of legislation that was in prospect, you could start out knowing that Dick Russell had 15, 16, or 17 votes. Not that I ever saw him try to pressure anybody, but the way he voted there were 15, or 16, and sometimes 17 that would follow his position.

G: He carried a lot of prestige.

C: Oh, yes. In my judgment, he probably brought more people together. This is just my judgment, made at a time that I was a neophyte in the Senate. He and Bob Kerr had more to do with Lyndon being the Whip and then later being the Minority Leader.

G: Is that right?

C: Sure.

G: Can you recall any specific instances where Senator Johnson managed to persuade Senator Russell . . .

C: Well, it happened often. As Lyndon got more entrenched in his position, there were equally as many times that Lyndon persuaded Dick Russell to get closer to the middle line. Actually, Dick Russell came to the Senate as a great supporter of Roosevelt. He came soon after Roosevelt. If Dick Russell had been born in Texas, if Dick Russell had been born in Kentucky, if he had not been born in the deep South, Dick Russell would have been a great liberal. He had a great feel for the common man, just as Johnson had, and as I thought that I had.

G: Was he sort of a populist, would you say?

C: Who, Dick Russell?

G: Senator Russell.

C: Well, he had a little of that in him, yes. A good example of that, of course, he was considered as really the strong arm, politically, in the Senate if he would want to use it, but Dick Russell never--he didn't do that. When I said that as many as fifteen votes in the Senate at that time would vote as he voted, [it was] not because he voted that way, it was because of their sentiments. Johnson would pressure a fellow; he would use a strong arm. That Dick Russell never did. It was just the difference in their nature. I expect Dick Russell kept him out of more trouble.

G: How so?

C: By getting him back into the middle of the stream where the majority of the members of the Senate would be with him. The longer Johnson was in there as the Minority and the Majority Leader and then after I was defeated in 1956, naturally, I followed him rather closely. They talked me into the notion of taking the job of director of the Campaign Committee in 1957, 1958, and 1959. During that time, as a decision of the caucus that while I was director of the Campaign Committee, I was privileged to and he insisted on my attendance at the Policy Committee meetings. It wasn't that I was attending the meetings just because I wanted to attend them. I was attending them because the caucus decided that I would attend all the meetings.

G: Weren't you in reality still a Whip as far as they were concerned?

C: You mean those three years?

G: Yes. Unofficially?

C: I don't know that I should say that. I guess in a way that I was.

G: Didn't you perform the same functions that you had as a Whip?

C: Well, as far as counting the votes. You know, it's a very important thing to a member who occupies the position that Johnson occupied as the Majority Leader of the Senate that he not be defeated on the position that the Party had taken. I guess he depended on me as much at that time, maybe more, than he did the Whip, until I was out and until I went back to Kentucky and became highway commissioner in Kentucky in 1960.

G: Let's talk about some of the important legislative issues here. The first one, that I mentioned a minute ago: the McCarthy censure. Can you recall what the threat of Joe McCarthy represented to Senator Johnson and what his strategy was in dealing with--

C: I don't think Joe ever offered any problem to Johnson as an individual. I don't think he ever represented any threat to Johnson's survival in his position. Even at the height of Joe's power--and he had power, power through fear, you know--I don't think that he ever disturbed Johnson as for the effect he'd have on Johnson, but he disturbed Johnson for the effect he'd have on this country. Joe reached a pinnacle of his political power. And it was a very disturbing power, because he had, through misrepresentation, been the sole--well, I don't think you can say anybody defeats anybody else by himself alone, but the misstatements that he made and the furor that he developed in Maryland that brought about Senator Millard Tydings' defeat, I think was one of the most concrete things that one could point out to show the power that he had, that he had developed as the anti-Communist. If he'd been down in Texas, he could have seen a Communist under every cow dropping that was out on the plain. While Johnson had the talent of nobody being angry at him much, and of course, he maintained a reasonable relationship with Joe. He also recognized that Joe's philosophy was not good for this country. But they could slap each other on the back, even on the Senate floor, or off the Senate floor. Johnson recognized, I think, about as early as anybody else that Joe could become a menace to this country. I'm of the opinion, and this is purely an opinion, that nobody from our side caused or influenced Ralph Flanders in filing the resolution. If anybody on our side of the aisle had filed it, I guess it would have not been successful. But Ralph Flanders, from that granite territory in the New England states, when he filed it, had a good many early allies on the Democratic side. Nothing could have been handled any better, in my judgement. I don't think anybody in the Senate could have handled that as well as Johnson did. I wouldn't be surprised if you could look back into Joe's mental reflexes today that he never thought that Johnson would vote for that resolution. Of course, it was really the passage of that resolution that I think was occasioned in great measure by the fact that Joe abused the committee to the extent he did on the floor. I doubt if that resolution would have passed until he made the many misstatements that he did and the brutal statements that he did about some of those six people that were on the McCarthy committee.

G: Do you think that the selection of the Democratic members of that committee, then, was also of strategic importance, getting people who were unassailable?

(Interruption)

C: When Bill Knowland and Johnson met, I was present. They agreed that the two people that ought to be on that committee were maybe the two wise lawyers on each side of the aisle: one was Walter George, and the other one was Gene Millican from Colorado. Johnson got Walter George to agree to serve provided that Gene Millican would serve. I was not present when Bill Knowland told Johnson that Gene Millican wouldn't serve, but in conversations with Knowland and in conversations with Johnson, I learned why Gene Millican wouldn't serve. It was not on account of any relationship he had with Joe McCarthy, because neither he nor Walter George had been in the squabble that many had been with Joe on one side or the other.

Gene Millican was reputed to be one of the great lawyers of the Senate as Walter George was recognized as probably the peer of all others in the Senate. Gene Millican told Knowland that he could not serve and gave as his reason his health. He said he probably wouldn't last out that year, that he had an illness. He was then slightly stooped, and no one else in that Senate, to my knowledge, knew that Gene Millican was that close to departing this life. Well when he wouldn't serve, Walter George wouldn't serve. If I may state this as a belief, Gene Millican was the only person over there that was the equal or near equal to him. Then Johnson made an effort to get Dick Russell to serve, and Dick Russell declined and said, no, he did not want to serve on that committee.

G: What were his reasons, do you know?

C: I cannot tell you. Dick Russell didn't give you all the reasons every time you asked him whether he could be for this or be for that or be for something else. He just told you that he would or he wouldn't.

There were many members on the Democratic side that had publicly stated on the floor of the Senate their opposition to things that Joe McCarthy was doing. Of course, if you were going to have a result from the committee or recommendations from the committee, you wanted it just like you did, from an impartial jury. You wanted them to be as impartial as they could be. You just didn't find the lawyer that fit that on the Democratic side. And it is difficult on the Republican side. There were many lawyers over there on that side that just wouldn't fit the same impartiality posture, like a juror that had some known feelings in the case. He finally got Ed Johnson from Colorado, who was not a lawyer. He'd been Governor of his state and was a person that was respected for honor and integrity, and he agreed to serve. And of course, that was his first accomplishment, and he sold Ed Johnson on serving on that committee. And Ed Johnson, did not want to serve. I don't think there was a member in the Senate that wanted to serve--on either side--that was unbiased in the case that their judgement would be respected. Bill Knowland came up then in a meeting that I was with them, and he got Arthur Watkins from Utah, who was a good lawyer, who was an honorable man. I can't give you any basis for why the other Republicans were named, but both of them were men of competence and men who were respected in the Senate. That was Frank Carlson, who was from Kansas, whom Johnson had served with in the House. I had served with him in the House. Carlson and I were contemporary governors of our states and came to the Senate in the same election in 1950.

The next person that Johnson picked that he thought would fit the assignment was John Stennis from Mississippi. I was in his office when he talked about John Stennis, and I said, "Well I can tell you one thing about John Stennis. John Stennis is going to take a trip in which he's going to inspect all of the bases under an assignment from Senator Russell as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and he's going to take his son with him. His son next year will graduate from Princeton University. John told me the other day that he was going to take this trip, and he thought that it probably might be the last time that he would ever have a month with his son, because when he got out of school that he never thought he'd ever have a month with him again. He was a natural

choice, because he'd been a judge of their Circuit Court in Mississippi. When Johnson had that information, what would be the deterrent to John Stennis's serving--those were things that he liked to get, you know, and the same way with his activities on legislation--he twisted his arm. He took him away from his son on that trip through Europe and prevailed upon him through telling his natural thing--typical of him--that his country needed him and the Senate needed him, and he agreed to serve.

G: Did Senator Stennis respond readily to this argument, or was there a long--

C: No! No, I can assure you that he didn't respond readily to it.

But then he was down to where he needed one more. He and I met in G-23, which was the place that had been assigned to me as a Whip, on the third floor, and he said, "'Well, we've run out." I said, "Well, I don't think so." I said, "Do you know, there's a person here with a unique background. He has served in every level of the judgeship of his state, from police judge to the Supreme Court of his state," and I said, "He just came in the first of this year." He said, "Who's that?" I said, "Sam Ervin. The reason I know that is because his brother was in the Congress when I was, in the House when I was and when you were, and he was my next-door neighbor, and he took his life. The committee met in North Carolina, and they named his brother as the nominee in the special election. He served, but he would not stand for reelection. But he served that time in there, and I got to know him." Since I had been a county judge in my home state, we would naturally drift into discussions about that, and he was surprised that I'd be a county judge in my home state and not be a lawyer. I remember telling him that in our state, you didn't have to have any more qualifications to be a county judge than you did to be a member of the Supreme Court. Johnson said, "But he' s just got here." I said, "I don't know of anybody here that has more qualifications that they could point to as being a fair person and being a person with legal knowledge than a person who had served on every level of the court in their home state." It struck him. Everybody was kind of at loose ends, you know, who the other one would be because he talked to Russell; he talked to many others, I'm sure, in the Senate. We telephoned Sam Ervin, and he came up to the office.

One of the first things after Johnson had put the push to him, you know, about what his responsibility was to his country and what it was to the Senate--the customary line that he would use in the area of persuasion. Sam Ervin as proof of his sense of fairness, of openness, when you asked him if there was any reason he couldn't serve--had he ever said anything about McCarthy--he said, "Well, I wrote a letter, I recall, in answering somebody, and," he said, "I didn't commit myself against Joe, but the letter may appear to do it." So the letter was sent for, and the letter was brought over. We read it, and it was one of those letters where the person had criticized Joe very strenuously. I don't recall the details of that letter. But the letter that Sam wrote in reply was kind of an 'iffy' letter: "<u>if</u> what he said was so--" He only agreed with him on that basis "if this was so," which to me did not disqualify him in the least. Johnson immediately told him that he didn't think that barred him at all. I recall asking him how many times, when he was sitting as a judge or when he had practiced law and when he was interviewing a juror for

his competence, that he had asked if he could give the man a fair trial. I said, "I just want to propound that to: you could you give him a fair trial?" "Oh, yes, yes. I could give him a fair trial." When he said that to Johnson, Johnson closed that door on him right quick, you know, and said, "You're the third member." And he told him it'd be Ed Johnson, and it'd be John Stennis, and it'd be him. I guess that's the end of the story.

G: That's a splendid narrative, Senator. That in itself will be a magnificent contribution.

You talked about his having to use the powers of persuasion here. Describe for us the Johnson treatment, how he would work on a person.

C: Well he would--I don't know that he ever used the same total technique on one person that he used on another. I think he developed that dependent on what circumstances were.

G: Wasn't a lot of it physical? Didn't he get real close to you and grab hold of your arm and--?

C: Oh well, yes he would do that by nature, even though he wasn't trying to outwardly persuade you. That was just kind of his nature.

G: Was this effective?

C: Well, he was effective, let's say. He was a very effective person in bringing somebody around to the viewpoint that he wanted them to assume. But often, they would have effect on him, too, while he was doing it. He never had a closed mind to the other person's position. And of course, when you do that, your persuasion goes further and deeper.

G: There are a couple of areas that I'd like to go into, and they are both rather involved and you were involved, I'm sure, in both of them. I was going to give you a choice of which one to take up first. One is the 1960 campaign, and I know you were working very closely with him on that; and the other is the civil rights legislation of 1957 and 1960. Chronologically, the latter would be more appropriate, but I suppose as far as your involvement, you were so close to that 1960 campaign that whichever one you can tell us about--.

C: Well, Mr. Gillette, when I took, nearly at their insistence--his more than anybody else--being director of the Campaign Committee, I'd gotten over my defeat, I guess in two weeks. I was over my defeat in 1956. I used to coach a high school football team as a hobby.

G: Very successfully, I've heard.

C: Well fortune, you know, sometimes smiles on you, having good youngsters. And then I wasn't bothered by the fact that I had to succeed, you know, on account of next year's job,

because I was holding a political job at home. When we lost a ball game, I never did brood and grieve over it. I was always thinking about what we were going to do to that team next year or the ball game of next week. I guess that made it a little easier. It was a part of my makeup from the experience I'd had in coaching youngsters. I never did think that you ought to dwell on yesterday. You ought to be thinking about tomorrow.

I dismissed the defeat as much as a person can dismiss one in a very short time. So when I took this job as the director, I'd had the Committee in 1952 as a member of the Senate, and I'd also had it in 1954. I expect both of them were very unfortunate, because it didn't let me get back to Kentucky as much as I would have gotten back if I hadn't had those two assignments. And that I've never grieved about, either, because it gave you another outlook on life, it gave you some experience, and we're here a very few years anyway in this life. As young as you are, you think that it's going to be a long time you're around, but those years will pass rather quickly.

When I could get away, I went out hunting for candidates in 1957 for the election in 1958. You attended many of the state conventions. You tried to get a feel of what the circumstance was, political situation, in the various and sundry states. We did very well in the 1958 election, and a number of those candidates are still in the Senate.

G: The class of 1958 was a large one.

C: The class of 1958. Thirteen new members came in in 1958, and I got to know a number of these people at the state level. I spoke to a number of state conventions, and of course, the only reason I'd speak at the state convention--because I was not a speaker--the only reason that I would go, I was hunting for a feel of what the situation was in the state. Most of them I went to were states that were going to have an election in the next year.

After the 1958 election, I talked to Johnson about that they ought to be thinking about a presidential candidate in 1960. 1 wouldn't say that he was at all receptive. It was late summer of 1959, he told me one day, he said, "I'm not going to be a candidate, and you forget about this," because we were having people, you know--been talking to other people, you know; they'd want to talk to him. He said he wasn't going to be a candidate, and I'll mention Bobby Baker. Bobby and I had worked very closely together. He and I did all the counting on how many votes we had on the bills. He was young, and he was smart. He's the finest errand man that I ever saw in the Senate. There were many of them that he could talk to about as well as Johnson could or I could. You hear about the newsman that has a nose for news. He had a way of finding out what a person's viewpoint was on a particular piece of legislation. What I would try to do was if they were objecting to a piece of legislation, to try to find out the phase of it, if there was a little item in there they objected to. In that way, there's many a little amendment that can be placed on there that's not going to disturb the bill. It's not going to disturb the usefulness of the legislation. He gave Bobby and me a dressing down one day. Oh, he never was rude to me in his life, but he'd say, "You fellows quit talking about this, because I'm not going to run; get you another candidate." He was never a candidate until

after they passed that legislation out in Texas which permitted a person to run for two offices at the same time.

G: Was that something especially designed with him in mind?

C: Yes, it was.

G: Who initiated it?

C: I don't know. I don't know.

G: Did he do it, or--?

C: No, I had nothing to do with the initiation of it. But as soon as that was passed, why, then he was a candidate. One of the sad things to me is that the state delegations that you could have gotten if he was a candidate in '59 that you couldn't get in '60. I'll tell you, he said to me at that time that he was not going to be the candidate. I continued to ask him to go to these states to speak in 1959, and he wouldn't do it. They were just states that would have been wrapped up for him, you know, by his being there, because they wanted him to come and speak. I was still the director of the Campaign Committee. He just flatly refused to do it. Sixteen different states--I don' t know that I could name them today- -but when they'd call me--

(End of Tape #1)

(Interview continued on Tape #2)

(Interview continued from Tape #1)

INTERVIEWEE: SENATOR EARLE CLEMENTS (Tape #2)

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Senator Clements' Office in Washington, D.C.

October 24, 1974

G: All right. We're back now.

C: Mr. Gillette, if I may go back to the campaigns of 1958. I endeavored to get Johnson to speak at a good many places in 1958, and I may have made a mistake of telling him--because I had no secrets from him; I don't think he had many from me, if there was any reason for the matter to be brought up--I told him in the late summer of 1958 that we were going to get ten or twelve new members, and that if sufficient money could be raised, which was modest by present-day comparisons, that we might get eighteen or twenty, and that in the Eisenhower Administration it was difficult for Democrats to raise money, and that if he and Rayburn would help us raise money, (because the only power that we had in the Democratic Party was in the Speaker of the House and in the Majority Leader in the Senate). I think I scared him a little by saying how many we were going to get. Then from time to time we would talk about it, and I would tell him people that I thought were going to be certain winners, and some that I thought had great chances to win. Actually, if you could go back and look into the mind of Rayburn, there wasn't anybody in the Senate that at that stage in Johnson's life that I think had quite as much influence as the man whose feet he nurtured at, and that was Rayburn. Rayburn found out what I had said to Johnson, and we were sitting over in the Rayburn College one day. That's a little room that Rayburn had that wasn't his official residence in either the Capitol or the office building. Rayburn hooted at the idea when I said over there that we were going to get ten or twelve new members, get more, if they had the kind of help that they needed. I learned then that Rayburn would have preferred to have a not too big of a majority. I think I Johnson was influenced by Rayburn in that respect. Then when the campaign got into high gear, I raised my sights as to the number of members we had great chances of electing. I had built it up to where I really believed with sufficient money, that is reasonable amounts of money, not as much as the Republicans had, but enough money, that they could really make their case in their states. Television at that time did not have the impact that it had in later years, but they need money for the organization within their states. At that time you could get a lot of volunteer workers that would work for free that you don't have today. Oh, you have volunteers, and volunteers are very important, but to have enough money that the precinct and the district man and the county man needed to work with to get him stimulated, you know, I tried to get Johnson to go in and speak at some places. The first time we had an opportunity was when I told him that Bob Byrd and Jennings Randolph were going to win by a landslide in West Virginia. You know he could get a little blustery at times, but he finally agreed to speak in West Virginia under certain conditions. One, it had to be in a house that

would be packed. He'd rather have a small house that was packed than to have a big house that even though you had twice the crowd, that it wasn't filled. And it had to be inside; he wasn't going to speak outside, and he wasn't going to speak but once. We agreed to all of that. I know I didn't get him on the first request. Bobby and myself called him one night, and as much as you could pressure him . . . he wasn't a fellow that . . . At least he responded quickly to pressure. I guess sooner or later everybody has a breaking point on pressure, but he had used a little strong language, you know, that he wasn't going to do it and then after you have said that, it's a little more difficult for you to change your mind, but he finally agreed to come. When he spoke there, he spoke outside because that was where it was arranged to be, outside. We didn't tell him it was going to be outside; he spoke outside and he spoke twice.

G: He did?

C: Yes. He went to another town and spoke. He had a great crowd. He wasn't told he was going to speak a second time.

G: How did he do?

C: Oh, he had a multitude, you know, because Bob Byrd and Jennings were going to win by a landslide, and here they had the Majority Leader of the Senate come and speak to him. They didn't have that kind of celebrity often in a campaign. It was a clamor for him all over the country, and, of course, the clamor was of course to us and to me as being. director of the Campaign Committee. He got so enthused about those two speaking engagements, both the same day. He was up in McDowell County, and I forget where the other one was; I was not there. I didn't want to face him up there when he was going to speak outside. But he then agreed. Of course, he never would be as convinced as I was that Hartke was going to win in Indiana. We got him to go to Indianapolis, and at Indianapolis he fussed at me because the big amphitheater there in Indianapolis, which would hold fourteen or fifteen thousand people, because there was one little corner of it that wasn't filled. This was the last week of the campaign. He became then convinced that Hartke was going to win. I told him he was going to win by a landslide, and he wouldn't believe it. Then he agreed to go to Wyoming, and he spoke there for Gale McGee, who he didn't think was going to win and from there he went over and spoke in Utah for Frank Moss. By that time he was in the swing of the thing. The day or two before that, George (Molly) Malone had had an advertisement in which he had lifted from the Congressional Record, something that was pretty near an indication that Johnson had endorsed Malone. Well, he thought very kindly toward Malone as I did. Malone was one Republican that was kind of my assignment when I was in the Senate, and we voted Malone a good many times on matters. He got terribly cross-wise with Eisenhower over some mineral bills that Malone had. I was on the committee at that time, at one time, with Malone, and I served on the subcommittee with him. This was at the time that we were the minority, and the Republicans were the majority, and friendship developed. Unless it was just a right-out, strictly partisan piece of legislation, we got Malone as many times as they did. Just like Johnson, he took his assignment in that respect--I'm getting this a little out of context as to years, but the senior senator from that

state [was] Bill Langer, and you can look over the records and find that on very, very key votes Langer voted with us even though we were the minority party. Then they left Bill Langer with the chairmanship of a little subcommittee, even though . . .

G: Is that right?

C: Yes. As the fellow says, a lot of times there are tricks to the trade, and Johnson was right clever at it. Johnson would occasionally get Margaret Chase Smith's vote on things that would surprise the Republicans. But getting back to where we were, Malone had lifted from the Congressional Record some very, very kind things, and of course, there was reason for him to do it. Malone had been voting with as. And on one occasion, he said something typical of Johnsonian words, that a person could make it appear that he was endorsing him as a person. When he found that out, he--I guess he found it out when he was either in Wyoming or he was in Utah, I don't know. I came back from Utah, and I wasn't listening to the speeches, but I came back from Utah knowing that he was going to meet Howard Cannon on Sunday morning in Las Vegas. He had that press conference, and of course, he endorsed Howard Cannon. Of course, that just blunted everything that Malone's advertisement might have accomplished. He was a party man. He put his arm around Howard; pictures showed that, you know, in the Nevada papers. Then he went on home from there. I think then in the full belief that there was going to be a rather substantial number of new Democrats in the Senate. Frankly, Johnson got along with that big number better than he had been able to get along with the 49/47 ratio that we had. We had a 49/47 ratio in 1953, and then that reversed itself following the election of 1954. But I thought one thing you might be interested in: that really, up until that time, that small number suited him really better than that big number, until he got to be President, and then that big number that he had in 1965, of course, it was with that number that he was permitted to pass a lot of the social legislation that was passed in 1965.

G: I've heard that he worked harder when he had that one-vote margin.

C: I can't say that, but really it's like a 7 to 0 ball game or a 21 to 17 ball game Maybe you remember those games a little better. And maybe it causes you to work a little harder. You work harder in an athletic contest when the going is tough, when the competition is somewhere near equal, like he had with the Strauss vote in the Senate; I'm sure you know about the Strauss vote.

G: Now, I think this was a prelude to Johnson's participation in the '60 campaign, wasn't it?

C: Well, we could get back to the '60 campaign. After that bill was passed, there were many places that I went to. Might I go back a little further?

G: Sure.

C: I might go back to 1959 when I got so many calls by the parties. That is, I got to know the chairmen of several states where you had involvements of a successful candidate.

They wanted a speaker at the fund-raising dinners, because that's the blood of a party, in the management of a party, the money to work with in their states. This I started on and got off of it. When Johnson wouldn't go speak, I found a young fellow in the Senate that would speak. His name was John F. Kennedy. I felt a great kindness to these people when they had struggled and struggled on small amounts of money in their state, but they elected their candidates. And some of them I felt whether correctly or not, that I might have had something to do with the candidate being a candidate, like Clair Engle in California, like Frank Moss, and like Gale McGee, and like Vance Hartke. Nobody had anything to do with Bob Byrd. Bob Byrd was going to make this on his own, but I did have something to do with Jennings Randolph. When they had worked as hard as they had and they felt that the party had been rejuvenated in their state, and you know when you have that success in your state, you want to take all of those steps at the party level in those states to continue to build up your party. I asked Jack Kennedy one day if he would be interested in going out and speaking at the Wyoming fund-raising dinner and he said oh, yes. I was the cause of him going into not sixteen different states but sixteen different speaking engagements. And you know he was the candidate. He had had problems, you know, that he would like to speak in Massachusetts and stay close to his own state, but sixteen different times he went out and spoke in speaking engagements that I made for him. He didn't think he was going to make sixteen, but after he was so willing to go, and when they ask you if you would find them a speaker, and he spoke at this delegation in Wyoming. If Johnson had made the speech out there, he'd have been a natural and an easy. We could have gotten the delegation in that first vote. They didn't vote for Johnson. You see, it had reached the stage then that they were going to be with the winner, and they voted for Kennedy. They wouldn't, have voted for Kennedy under any circumstances out there if Johnson would have made that speech out there. If he would have gone into some of these other states that you tried to get him to go into, Johnson wouldn't have had any opposition in the primary in West Virginia, if he would have been the candidate, but to send Humphrey there to, you know, kind of hold things.

G: Why didn't he enter that primary?

C: We can't ask him, but I could only have a conjecture. That he thought he might lose and he would rather have Humphrey go there.

G: Did you try to talk him into entering that?

C: You mean in West Virginia? No. No, I did not. To give you a good example, if there was any conquest that stood out above any other in the 1958 contest, it was Utah. I felt so good after being in California, and we got Clair Engle to run. Actually, Pat Brown really wanted to run for the Senate, but he had agreed on Clair Engle to run for the Senate. Then Pat Brown tried to get Clair, then, to run for governor and Pat would go on and run for the Senate. Clair Engle took the position, and it was an understandable position and, I think for him, probably, a wise decision. He was well entrenched in Northern California, which was his district in the Congress and where he had been for a number of years; and at that stage in life, he was unbeatable in that district, and he ran a number of times without opposition. He just said frankly to Pat Brown and me one day,

"No, I'm not going to run." He said this first to Pat; he said, "I'm not going to run for governor; I'm not known over the state, and besides, I'm not trained to be governor. I'll make the races I said I would in the Senate. Pat has been governor, is governor, and he understands the work of the governor's office and the state." He as much as said that he'd be lost there, but he would give up his seat in the House to make the race for the Senate, and he did. Of course, they won. We did three polls that year in California, like we did in a number of states. Indiana was one of the good examples of the value of a poll, not on what percentage you are going to get of the vote, but on what the issues are. Clair Engle followed those issues in California, and of course he won, you know, not like Pat Brown won for governor, but he won in a big way, as Hartke did in his state.

Now the Moss decision was a very close one. Moss was in a three-way race, and Moss got something above forty percent of the vote, but it was a close vote for that with the former mayor of Salt Lake City. I went in there after I'd been over in Wyoming, and I asked then the national committeeman, who was a fine person--I knew the state was badly split up into factions, many different factions--I asked him if he wouldn't arrange a meeting over there the second night after that (I was going to be in Wyoming another day) and if he wouldn't get all of the dissident leaders of the state together and let me have a meeting with them. He arranged it at a country club in a private room out there. A fellow could write a book if he'd had a recording of what took place in that meeting. Everybody fussed at everybody else. Everybody accused---I wouldn't say everybody, but they were accusatory of so many different people, depending on which one was talking, of why the party was in bad shape and so forth. I remember well telling them that they'd had a lot of fights, they ought to get together. I told them, I said, "This next year is going to be a Democratic year. Now if you'd rather fight among yourselves and elect a Republican, that's your business. But if you'll get together and find a candidate out of this crowd or this crowd, pick a candidate, he's going to be elected to the United States Senate, you just mark my word."

They didn't get together, but I think, that if I made any contribution to them at all, I at least opened the door to the possibility of their believing that they could win next year. If Frank Moss, who was county attorney at the time, had been in a two-man [race], he would have won, I think, rather substantially. Of course, the Republicans always said that if it had been a two-man race, they would have won quite easily. I don't think that, but all through this life, you know, they have people with difference of opinions. But Frank Moss did win, and it's fine to look back on the race and see that he was elected in 1958, he was elected in 1964, he was elected in 1970, and he may well be elected in 1976. The same thing is true of these others who are still in the Senate.

But getting back to Johnson, in many of those states, if he had spoken there, Jack Kennedy would never have developed the ties. Actually, the only states that Kennedy carried in the West were more of Johnson's support. He couldn't have carried some of those states that he carried in the West then. He could carry the political fellows that were party men, but Johnson would have carried all of the West if he had been the nominee at that time. He might have had trouble in the New England states where Kennedy had no trouble, and of course, Johnson would have carried those states that

Kennedy lost in the South. If Johnson were sitting across this table, I'd reminisce with him, and he may disagree with me about some things that I would tell you, why I think not only we lost those states. We were convinced we were going to win in 1960, after all these problems, if we could ever get to the second ballot. We figured Symington was going to get a big vote in Indiana. He was going to get a sizable vote in three or four other states. Maybe Symington never did have those votes or maybe there was some arrangement to maybe give them away to get to the second vote. We had a good many votes that were tied to Kennedy by reason of his winning in those states.

G: A lot of them were first ballot votes only.

C: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, and we thought that even with all of these things that shouldn't have happened that I've told you about, Johnson could have been nominated, in my judgement.

G: I guess it was along about this time that there was an important meeting, I think in a coffee shop in Washington, or something, which you and Bobby Baker and one or two others attended and decided to recess the Congress before the convention and then come back after the convention, and went over and talked to Sam Rayburn about it. Is this correct?

C: I'd be a little fuzzy on that. There were a lot of meetings held, but I'd be a little fuzzy on that. That just doesn't ring a bell with me at the moment. I might get to thinking about it and it'd clear up; you know, [when you're] 78, you get a little fuzzy sometimes. Just like me skipping around on things that are on that tape now.

G: Are we ready to go to the convention now, or was there anything significant that happened in the meantime that you want to talk about? You worked some, I think, in the Johnson for President office, didn't you, with John Connally?

C: Well, John and I made a good many trips trying to get some of these delegations back that had slipped away from us in the West.

G: Were you successful?

C: Only minuscule-ly. I guess we were maybe a little more successful than in Wyoming. We'd have gotten the Wyoming vote if we had been to where they weren't going to lose out. If they'd have voted for Johnson in that time, Kennedy would have got the nomination anyway, Wyoming was way down on the list.

G: Was this Johnson for President Committee or organization working with his blessing, and was he in any way, heading it up, or was it something that he more or less--

C: At what stage in life of the campaign?

G: Before he announced that he was--

C: Oh, no. He didn't have much operation until it was known that he was going to be a candidate. There's a lot of difference between announcing and knowing you're going to be a candidate.

G: When did you first get the idea that he would accept the vice presidential nomination?

C: Oh, you mean at the hotel? Well, I was then in Kentucky, and he called me--well, after Kennedy had been nominated, and of course Johnson was a little on the crestfallen side. Not many times in your life you make a prophetic statement. He wasn't in much humor to talk about anything, and I said, "Well, you may have a very difficult decision to make. He said, "What do you mean?" "Well," I said, "this fellow may want you to run with him." And I want to tell you now, and I wouldn't want to quote him in words, but I'll tell you, the reply was unenthusiastic. I would say that if Jack Kennedy would have asked him at that moment, there wouldn't have been much opportunity for him to get an affirmative reply.

In the early hours of the following morning, he called me. Before that, you know, he had gotten this call from Kennedy, which I knew nothing about. But he called me and he asked me if I would get Buford Ellington--hell, I didn't know where Buford Ellington was staying--named one or other people and [said to] get them over to the hotel as quickly as I could. One of them was Jim Eastland, one of them was Buford. I got over there before any of them got over. Bobby was over there, and I think Bobby had stayed in that same hotel. I would believe that; I do not know that he was staying at that hotel. But he told me about Kennedy calling him, and he said that he was fidgety as a dog sliding around on the ice. He said, "What do you think about it?" I said, "Well, I don't think you have any choice." There was some other conversation went on, and he said, "Well, why don't you go down and tell Rayburn that?" So he told me that he was in Room So-and-So on the same floor. It would be pure guess on my part now but it could have been six or seven rooms down one of the halls there from where he was. He had a big suite up there; I don't know how many rooms were in it. I'm satisfied there were as many as four. There were very few people in there; Walter was there, and Bird was there.

G: Was Senator Kerr there?

C: He came in after I did; yes, he was there. He came, and Jim Eastland came. I didn't call Kerr. He called Kerr, I'm satisfied, or somebody else called him for him. He had Walter; anytime you had Walter, why, you had Johnson. So I went down to Rayburn's room, and one of the people who had been with Rayburn a long time.

G: Who was this?

C: Well, if you'd tell me--

G: D. B. Hardeman?

C: Yes. Yes, he was there. Rayburn was not completely dressed. So I told him about talking to Lyndon, and of course, Rayburn knew about Kennedy's call before I got over there, you know, and Rayburn was adamant about it. I told him, I said, "Mr. Speaker, what if Kennedy would win this election without him. Do you reckon he would be as interested in Johnson being Majority Leader?" I said, "With this new law in Texas, he's going to be elected to the Senate, anyway. But he'll be the Majority Leader if Kennedy's not there. I don't know whether he'd be the Majority Leader if you had a different situation, if he won. But if Kennedy lost, why, Johnson would not only be Majority Leader, but he'd be the party leader." This was my argument. I wouldn't say I made any headway with him, but at least I gave him something to think about.

G: What was his response?

C: I'm satisfied he was worse than beforehand. Whatever conversations that he and Johnson had had, I imagine, relieved his strain a little. I knew when I went down there that he was going to have breakfast with Bird up in the Johnson suite. Food wasn't of much interest to me. I sat with them at the table and did not eat. I can well remember--I might not be able to quote the language--but in substance, Bird said this: she said, "Do you really think they want him?" She may have a different remembrance of that than me, but as I remember it, I said, "Well, I don't think that if they didn't want him, they would have asked him. There is a big South; there's not a state in the South that he [Kennedy] could possibly carry on his own." And of course the rumor was out live that night that it was going to be Symington. I said, "There isn't a state in the South that he could carry with Symington except Missouri. He could carry Missouri, but he wouldn't carry another one." So when I came out from the breakfast room, it was when Bobby Kennedy came in. He and Rayburn, then, and John Connally went into the other room. There's nothing I could tell you that took place in the room except what Rayburn told me and what John Connally told me.

G: Were the versions the same?

C: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. They were the same, and in substance, it was that--as I recall, what they s aid to me was that Bobby said there was great opposition from Labor and wouldn't Johnson become chairman of the National Committee? Rayburn said that they'd asked him, you know, and asked Johnson at one time, under the leadership of the National Committee if they wouldn't join the Advisory Committee, which they would not join. They would not be a party to it. They weren't going to diminish their posture you know, as the leader of the House and the leader of the Senate to go down there and be a part of something where they would develop a program for the Democratic Party and then expect them to carry it out in the Senate. Wisely, neither one of them would accept it. I don't think anybody accepted. Maybe Kefauver became a member of that committee, but he wasn't in any position o leadership when he was in the House, either. As I recall what they said, when Bobby told them this story, you know, and asked them if he wouldn't be chairman of the National Committee, they let him know that under no condition would he be. As I recall, Rayburn said to him, "He will not be chairman of the National

Committee, no. Under no condition." Bobby had exhausted his fire power, and he said, "Then he'll be the nominee for the Vice President." This is as I remember it, you know.

G: You know, I think a standard Kennedy version is that Bobby Kennedy's intention was not really to get him off the ticket butrather to warn him that there was a movement among the Labor people against him so that he would be prepared. You've heard this version, too?

C: I've heard that version, but nobody will ever convince me that that was the version. Have you had anybody that knew anything about it accept that version?

G: No, no.

C: There is one living person that can tell you everything that took place in that meeting in there, and that's John Connally.

G: Why did Speaker Rayburn oppose Johnson's accepting the nomination at first? Was it more trading the vote for a gavel, or was it possibly a little bit of the hostility for the enemy that they had fought during the campaigning?

C: It'd be pure assumption on my part. You know, Rayburn's views were held pretty close to his chest. But I don't think Rayburn ever thought that Kennedy could win.

G: Did he feel that the Majority Leadership was a better place for Johnson, too, as far as--

C: Well, I don't know---

G: He didn't discuss it--?

C: --only Rayburn could say that.

G: That breakfast conversation, I think, is very significant. Did he--

C: I would hope that Bird could remember it as I remember it.

G: I'll ask her about that. Didn't John Kennedy call Speaker Rayburn too before you appeared there for breakfast?

C: It could have been.

G: You don't remember him saying anything about that?

C: No, no. John Connally could have been--and I wouldn't be surprised if John Connally wasn't one of the first persons that Johnson called. John was in that hotel. John Connally, I imagine, knew every step long before I knew it.

G: John Connally was, I suppose by this time, an important advisor to Senator Johnson?

C: Oh, of course he was. Of course he was.

G: He relied on his judgment?

C: Oh, of course. No question about that in my mind. If Johnson had lived, John Connally wouldn't have been for Nixon, either. Oh, well. Of course, they had chances to break, you know, previously, but they didn't break. They had an opportunity to break over the Yarborough matter, but they didn't break.

G: I suppose it must have been something like Johnson and Russell, one being younger than the other and a protege of sorts and then ort of coming into his own and developing his own sense of power.

How did the various people in the Johnson circle feel about the nomination? I understand that Bobby Baker was in favor, and argued in favor, of LBJ's accepting this nomination and that Senator Kerr was very adamantly against it.

C: Whoo-e. You're correct. You're correct. Bobby and I took the same position with Johnson. Yes. No, Kerr was quite opposed.

G: Was his position the same as Rayburn's? I mean, were his reasons--

C: I don't know what all the reasons were, but I would always believe that he thought Johnson was--and Rayburn, too--belittling himself, you know.

G: I know he was temporarily---

C: This is an assumption of mine. I don't recall all the reasons, the arguments that Bob Kerr presented in opposition to his doing it. But it would have been a mistake for him not to have done it, in my judgement.

G: How did the two get along together, Senator Johnson and Senator Kennedy, during the---

C: I don't know. I would have to go by what the newspapers said, you know. I think Johnson had been in the Majority Leader's position where he was an activist. This is just a judgment of mine; it's not based on anything Johnson ever told me. But the Vice President's job is not a very activist position.

G: I understand LBJ had supported Kennedy for Vice President in '56 over Kefauver. Mattie Matthews told me that they had originally hoped Humphrey would be the vice presidential nominee.

C: Well, many people at that convention that you might say had a similar philosophy to Johnson, were for anybody over Kefauver.

G: Why was that?

C: They were even for Gore.

G: Because he was . . .

C: As I recall, Gore got some votes out of Texas at one time. You see, there were several votes taken, you know. At least if they weren't official votes, they were preliminary in finding what somebody could do. Gore had some support, and I would just offer the conjecture that Texas, like our state, would have voted for Gore before they would have voted for Kefauver. They would have voted for Kennedy before they voted for Kefauver. Kefauver was a maverick. He was a maverick. There was never much strength in the political alliance that Kefauver wanted to have with the party. He wanted the party to have a relationship with him.

G: Is it correct that as an alternative to Kefauver then, Humphrey was first considered and then . . .

C: I don't know that Humphrey was ever really considered. Now he may have been.

G: That's a long time ago.

C: Yes. He may have been. Everybody that had eight votes, why, you know he thought he was being considered.

G: I don't want to tire you out this session, but before we go to the vice presidency, perhaps we can go back and pick up some of those issues in the Senate years. I particularly want to get to the campaign because of the fact that you were there and consulted on that nomination.

C: Somebody must have told you.

G: Oh, I'd read it a number of places in the files. There were several, I guess, key legislative issues; the Bricker Amendment is one. I've heard that Johnson more than anyone else was responsible for this Bricker Amendment being defeated.

C: Well, if you would ask me who had the most input into it, I would say it was Tom Hennings.

G: I see. How did that come about?

C: Tom Hennings was a good student. Tom Hennings might have had many shortcomings, but I think he is primarily the cause of the defeat of the Bricker Amendment. He did his

homework, and Walter George depended on his stature. Tom Hennings, in the end . . . what was it, one vote?

G: Yes.

C: One vote. Frankly, there weren't many times that Johnson and myself voted differently, but I voted for the Bricker Amendment.

G: Whose idea was the George substitute? Do you know? Was it Hennings' or was it Johnson's or Senator George's?

C: Oh, it could have been Johnson's, but my judgement is that Walter George was always . . . he was very strong on that side, and Tom Hennings was always very strong on the other side. Tom Hennings did the finest job, in my judgement, of his career on anything . . . on the Bricker Amendment.

G: Can you go into detail?

C: Oh, I couldn't go into much detail, hell, if somebody would ask me now what the Bricker Amendment meant, I would probably stumble around in discussing it, but the Bricker Amendment was going to be an easy passage until Tom Hennings took hold of it. It was the only time I ever saw Walter George whipped on the floor of the Senate.

G: Really?

C: Yes. He didn't take up losing causes, but Torn Hennings--if somebody would read the record, I believe they would say that Tom Hennings had the greatest input on the defeat of the Bricker Amendment and that includes Johnson and anybody else.

G: That's really important. I know when there were a lot of other close calls . . . the Smith bill--do you remember the Smith Amendment, HR3, that . . .

C: You mean the Smith of New Jersey?

G: Howard Smith. The bill is more or less . . . well, I guess it can be construed as a slap at the Supreme Court that more or less meant that where there were state laws in existence, the Supreme Court decisions did not apply.

C: Yes, went back to being a Southerner.

G: Yes. Well, do you remember what happened here? How Johnson sidetracked that?

C: No. No, I do not. He was a master at sidetracking anything. But as warm as my affection for Johnson in life as well as in death, he had no such input into the defeat of the Bricker Amendment in my judgment as Tom Hennings did.

G: I've heard that there was no point in the legislative process where he couldn't alter a bill or change it or sidetrack it. What were some of the tricks of the trade?

C: Well, he was not only a good student of the rules and procedures, but he was never hesitant about going to the parliamentarian. While other people were roaming around the Senate and other people were speaking, why, he was visiting with the parliamentarian on an idea. The best parliamentarian in the Senate was not Johnson. The best parliamentarian in the Senate was Richard Brevard Russell.

G: Really?

C: Yes. He was a trainee. See, Dick Russell sat right behind him, too. They were both on the aisle, you know, and he was right behind him. Never did I ever see Dick Russell try to influence him much, but he was always ready when Johnson sought his advice on parliamentary matters and then any question with him, he would just go to the parliamentarian.

G: What about the Tidelands issues? This was very close to Johnson.

C: Personally, the Tidelands bill would not have been passed without the leadership of two people. One of them was Johnson, and the other one was Bill Knowland. It affected those states, along with Louisiana, more than it affected any other states--up to this stage, anyway. Johnson provided the leadership. But you know, I think some of the most persuasive arguments that were made on Tidelands was not made by Knowland, not made by Johnson. They were made by a young man who was a colleague who hadn't been close to Johnson.

(End of Tape #2 and interview)

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of Earle C. Clements

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Earle C. Clements of Morganfield, Kentucky do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on October 24, 1974 and December 6, 1977 in Washington, D.C. and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to t1he transcripts.

(3) 1 hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed by Earle C. Clements on March 21, 1980

Accepted by James E. O'Neill, Acting Archivist of the United States, on April 11, 1980

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