INTERVIEW I

DATE: July 12, 1972

INTERVIEWEE: RALPH K. HUITT

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Dr. Huitt's office in Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

H: My name is Ralph K. Huitt. I was born in Corsicana, Texas, grew up in Beaumont, Texas, educated at Southwestern University, my undergraduate work, and after World War II, at the University of Texas for my Ph.D.

F: What did you get your Ph.D. in?

H: Political science.

F: Whom did you work with?

H: Emmette Redford, who figures in this tale, really, very much. Because at the University of Wisconsin, when I was settling into the kind of subject matter I wanted to concentrate in, I became interested in Congress. I was given a grant by the Ford Foundation, and what was then called the Fund for the Advancement of Education, which allowed a professor, whose proposal was approved, to spend a year, with his salary paid by the fund, any way that he wanted to. I decided that I would like to spend an academic year in Washington studying Congress and that I wanted some firsthand experience of it. The obvious person, in my case, was the minority leader of the Senate, who was Lyndon Johnson.

Now this was fortunate, because Lyndon Johnson and Emmette Redford had been boyhood friends. They both grew up in Johnson City. And since they were friends, it

was very easy for Professor Redford to establish the kind of confidence in me and rapport with me that was needed. In politics, as I'm sure you know, it's asking quite a lot to ask a senator or a congressman to take someone, in effect, into the bosom of the family where whatever it is he's doing can be seen and misinterpreted, sometimes very honestly misinterpreted.

F: And you don't have that control factor you do over an employee.

H: No, you don't have any control at all. And there have been cases of people who have gone in and lived with a member for six or eight months, and then come out and written something horrendous, sometimes, because the person was simply too naive to understand what it was he was watching.

So I went to the Johnson office in January of 1954.

F: This is in Washington?

H: Yes, right here in the office. I saw the Senator the first day I was there. He was very cordial, and we talked for a bit in his office. He said he was going to assign me to George Reedy, who was at that time, I don't know what the term was, but the staff director of the Democratic Policy Committee. So I was placed over in the Senate Democratic Policy Committee office with George Reedy, and with Pauline Moore, and some other people working for the policy committee. And I must say that this really was my post-graduate education in political science.

F: George himself is a bit of a political philosopher.

H: Yes, he's very good. And George was very good about opening up to me. I had the usual period of five or six weeks in the office in which these very nice and good people wanted

to help me, but they didn't know what a professor could do. They assumed that I had some kind of moralistic attitude which would have me sitting there in judgment on them. I remember that, as we got to be more friendly, sometimes they would talk about things that were going on, and then suddenly, they would become conscious of me, and they would turn, and laugh, and say, "We bet you're really getting something for your lectures now."

Well, of course, when they got over that, and when they found out that I did understand something about the legislative process and I was eager to learn and to be useful, then I found some ways to be useful in the office.

Well, the association with the Senator continued, and . . .

F: Did Johnson pay much attention to you, or did he, in a sense, just notice you were someone hanging around?

H: Somewhere in between that. Of course, he was a very busy man with a lot of staff people, so that I was not underfoot in his office very much. But one very useful thing for me was that the Senator had a Saturday morning staff meeting, and he came down to this himself. He used it primarily to put together his newsletter, which went to his constituents. And in the course of talking about the items which each of us had prepared for the newsletter, he would give us a good deal of Johnson political science. So these meetings were very good. And I got to know him in the meetings, because there were only about eight or ten of us in the meetings, not the whole staff, but the people who could contribute to this. And since I understood some of the things that he wanted and had one asset a professor has, which is knowledge of where to go to find things, I was

able to contribute, several times, things which he found useful.

So I got to know him. And when I left the office, he was out of town somewhere and not available, and I am told that he came to the staff meeting on a Saturday morning, and he said: "Where's the Doctor?" Then he wrote a nice letter, and I wrote a nice letter to him. But the point is that an acquaintance had been established.

F: Did you get around enough--you were in kind of a key spot, in a way--to get some feeling of how Johnson stood with his colleagues?

H: Yes, I think I did, and particularly, later on I did. I must say that, as I indicated, I learned a great deal about legislative politics in the office. And much later, about seven or eight years later, I wrote on an article on the Johnson leadership, which was published in *American Political Science Review*, and it has been reprinted many times.

Yes, he was in a crucial period in his career at that point, because he came in with a badly shattered Democratic party in the Senate. The liberals and the conservatives really weren't talking to each other, and the party was very badly divided. Some people were urging on him that he have caucuses or conferences frequently, so that the party could get together. And what the leader understood was that these meetings would simply divide the party worse, because people would get in the room, who didn't like each other; and then, they would find an issue, and they would find out that they really didn't like each other.

F: They could find good reason.

H: That's right. So his job, in those two years in which he was minority leader and therefore not responsible for moving the program and there was no Democratic president in the

White House, of course so that he could spend that two years putting the party back together.

Now he used a number of devices. One was to have a conference and call the party together when there was an issue on which they could, without any question, get together. There was one meeting, for instance, in which one of the issues was the contested election of Senator [Dennis] Chavez of New Mexico. Now this is the perfect issue, because it divides Democrats and Republicans. And it was very easy for the Democrats to identify as Democrats and devote all out support for Chavez. And so help me, when that came up on the floor, the Democrats were there to a man!

But to show the volatility, and therefore the riskiness, of conferences, there was a second item on which everybody was pretty much in agreement. As I recall, that was the matter of considering the Hawaii and Alaska statehood issue separately. And since everybody had the same opinion on it, the same stance on it, that seemed to be a safe one. But when some discussion of it began, it was discovered that they had the same position for different reasons. And as they began to discuss it, these antagonisms began to surface, and the Senator very quickly dismissed the meeting.

But this was just one of many devices. He sought for devices on which he could get the Democrats pulled together and get them to identify as Democrats.

F: Did you observe his relationship with Senator [William] Knowland?

H: Yes, that was, I think, not a bad relationship. It was probably a good relationship, but they were quite different kinds of men. Senator Johnson, infinitely skillful tactically, quite nimble, a person who understood how the Senate worked, and who, therefore,

always was well ahead of anybody else in deciding what should be done; Knowland, a very honest, blunt, forthright man, but a blunt tool so far as this kind of operation was concerned. And so there was a good deal of cooperation between them, but I think the difference in the personalities and capabilities clouded it somewhat. In the main, they got along very well.

I remember something though, which probably is not in the histories anywhere, unless you've talked to some of the people who participated in it. There was a little tiff on the floor one day, in which one of the leaders indicated that they could move on with the business of the Senate if the other side didn't talk so much. And so this blew into a little minor altercation on the floor in which Senator Knowland and Senator Johnson each accused the other side of talking so much that they couldn't get the business done. Whereupon, Senator Johnson called up to the Policy Committee office and said, "I want a count made in the *Congressional Record* of the amount of time that has been taken up on the floor by the Democrats and by the Republicans. And I want specifically, then, to know how much time I've taken up and how much time Knowland has taken up." Then he called back to them a little bit and said, "Oh, yes, put Senator Morse in there."

Now, this little operation is a little more difficult than it sounds, because there's a lot of stuff in the *Congressional Record* that's not talk, and besides that, simply counting lines won't do, because some of the material which is actually read is put in small type because it is printed. So we had to devise a ruler of our own with which we could count the lines of one kind of type and count other lines in another kind of type, and equate them. And we went through quite an operation there to try to make this fair. Of course,

it was maddening. Anybody who is adult and in his right mind who wants to do this kind of thing really is a mental case, but we did it because this is what he wanted, and we spent a lot of time on it.

The interesting thing was that one morning we got a call from the Library of Congress, and they had got the wrong number. They had meant to call the Republicans. So they said to us, "We want to say to Senator Knowland, on his line count, that we're having this kind of difficulty"--something to that effect, which proved to us that they were doing what we were doing for Johnson. And of course, we had the Library of Congress doing this, too. But what the Library of Congress would do was to make a count for the person himself. In other words, they would count what Senator Johnson had said. They would not count anybody else, because they're not going to get involved in checking on one senator or one party for the other. So we carried this out, until finally, one day, we had it completed. And we found out, indeed, that the Republicans had used up more time than the Democrats, and Mr. Knowland had talked a few more lines than Mr. Johnson had. And so the person responsible for the study went down to the floor triumphantly, and turned it over to the Senator, and said, "Here it is." And Johnson said, "What is that?" He said, "Well, here's the word count. It's the line count that you wanted." Johnson said, "Oh, well, let's not bother about that now. We've patched this up, and we're getting along fine."

So as the crestfallen man left the floor of the Senate, he called after him: "But keep it up. I may want it later." Needless to say, we dropped it.

But I think the relationship, as I understood it, between Knowland and Johnson

was quite good.

F: Did you get the feeling that Johnson sometimes gave little lessons to Knowland on how to maneuver?

H: I think he did. I don't think that Knowland learned them very well. I had a feeling that a Johnson-Dirksen combination was much more of a match, because their minds worked the same way, and they both knew the same kinds of things about the Senate; while there were some things about the Senate, Knowland simply never learned, because he didn't have that kind of personality.

F: Did the McCarthy issue get really intense before you left?

H: Let's see--in 1954, yes. As a matter of fact, in that spring the Army-McCarthy hearings were underway, and when I had a chance I went over to visit them; so this was becoming very much of an issue. But the actual resolution of it, in terms of what the Senate did, came later.

F: Did Johnson show much interest in it among his staff?

H: My own assessment is that he was very conscious of it, very interested in it, being very quiet about it.

F: Did he ever discuss strategy?

H: No, because I think that the strategy was what liberals would never appreciate, what they didn't understand at that time; which was that this man had to run his course, he had to destroy himself. And it was the Senate which actually finished him off, if you recall, and did it with a finality which was terrible, almost, but not until the time was right. And I think if they had jumped McCarthy in the spring of 1954, they would have been

premature, and while McCarthy may not have won in a technical sense, the opportunity to deliver this devastating blow later would have been lost.

So I think that this watchful waiting was his strategy, and this is something that you don't tell anybody. For him to talk about that with his staff would be to invite everyone of us at cocktail parties, when we are talking to some pretty woman and feeling kind of full of it, to tell this inside stuff that we know. I don't think anybody who understands the legislative process, or, indeed, politics, or interoffice problems, or anything like that, ever tells anything to anybody that he doesn't want known.

F: During this period of your internship, or whatever it is, you're, in a sense, the theoretician, and Johnson is the great pragmatist. Did he ever try to sort of pick you for what he could get out of you, or did he pretty well leave you to your own devices?

H: What I was used for usually came at sort of second remove through George Reedy, and if George were called on to do something where he thought my peculiar skills were useful, then he'd transfer this to me. I must say that I owe George a great debt of gratitude, because many people in the office, I learned, had said the perfectly obvious thing, that this man understands libraries and research, and what we ought to do is to get him a room or a desk over at the Library of Congress, and we'll call him and tell him what we want. George understood, and the Senator had made this clear to him, that I was there to learn and that I was not a paid employee of the staff. George felt that they should play fair with me, which meant that while I might be of less use to them in this office, I would get more of what I was looking for. He was quite right. And one great thing George did was to explain to me a lot of the things which were happening, and very much the Johnson

way of acting, *et cetera*.

Now it may sound ironic, but I think it's frequently true, that with a great operator like Johnson was, frequently, the person who can explain what he's doing best is not the man himself. Johnson understands this. And when Johnson talks off the cuff in a group, a lot of this comes out. So that the sessions at the White House, when he was president when he talked to us who were doing legislative work were really post-graduate courses in legislation; but they were not organized, they were not formal. If you were to sit down with him and say, "Senator, explain the Leadership, tell us what makes Lyndon Johnson the best at this," he probably couldn't do it. So it's the observer who does try to generalize who can do this best.

Now, I know people in Congress, I know senators who are good friends, who are first-rate politicians, whom I can describe to themselves: "This is the way you operate; this is what you do; this is the kind of reflex that you have; this is why your staff works for you and that senator's staff doesn't work for you." They'll sometimes say to me, "You know more about politics than I do. You ought to do something like this, and I ought to be teaching political science some place." Well, the truth is they're quite different roles, and while I can describe a lot of things to them, I can't necessarily do those things. They're different roles. And the role of the professional observer is one role, and the role of the professional actor is another.

F: Did you have the feeling that George had a real grasp on the character of Lyndon Johnson?

H: Yes, I think he did. I think he was quite good. And he was deeply loyal to the Senator;

he understood his mode of operation. And so he was very useful to me; once George was sure he could trust me, he was very useful to me in letting me know what was going on.

F: Did you see much of Walter Jenkins in that period?

H: No, not as much as George, because Walter was over in the Senate office, which is essentially the Texas operation; and the Policy office was just off the Senate floor. From my standpoint, the Policy office was much better, because the gallery of the Senate was right there, and I got a chance to see many things on the Senate floor which, at that stage of my development, were worth a great deal to me.

F: Did Johnson ever give you sort of a little tip like "you ought to go see so-and-so today" or "something's going to happen"?

H: No, but this was very easy to pick up in an office like the Policy Committee office, because the whole Johnson network was in touch all the time; so that I was privy to this sort of thing without necessarily getting it from the Senator himself.

F: Were there any places that were off limits to you, or were you pretty free to roam within the Johnson Senate?

H: I could go anywhere, except into those things which no one could go into. For instance, the Democratic Policy Committee itself was a group which I would like very much to have observed. I asked George about that. But George was the only staff person who ever sat with that group. The reason, of course, was that Johnson's use of the Policy committee was as a kind of council of elders; people he trusted; people who were in themselves leaders who had power, represented different elements and segments of the Democratic party in the Senate. And they could sit with him, and talk frankly about what

they thought the party would do, what they thought the party should do, and he could get advice from them which was worth a great deal to him. But the confidentiality of that was enormously important; so that no notes were ever taken, except the briefest reference where George was directed to do something. So I never saw the Democratic Policy Committee in action; but during that period, neither did anybody else.

F: Did you get the feeling, at that time, that you were looking at a future national leader?

H: He was a national leader then. I assumed that he was interested in the presidency, because I assume that every politician who's got ability, and many, many who have not, aspire to the presidency whether they ever say it or not. Now, with the kind of drive that he had, the political instincts, the willingness to work endlessly, and the kind of dedication which would cause him to do at eleven o'clock at night what should be done then and not the next morning--all this points to a man who should be president.

F: Well, let's move on. So you left after the spring of '64 [1954].

H: Yes. The story goes on. I kept in touch with the office and tried to do sort of chores for them at the University when I could. A couple of years later, the Senator wrote me and asked me if I could get leave--this probably would have been about 1956--and come for the spring semester and summer to join his staff. I did get leave, and I told him that I would.

Then my son got an illness, a very serious one, where after an operation, he had to be looked at every week, and I was quite upset about that. So I wrote the Senator and canceled out on that.

Then, in 1958, my next relationship with him came another way. Senator

[William] Proxmire, as you recall, won the election to the unfilled term of Senator [Joseph] McCarthy. So he had one year, but at the end of that year he had to run again.

So Proxmire went to Washington just before the session ended in 1957. He was there about two or three days. It was extremely important for Proxmire to be sworn in before the session ended, because this, then, would give him seniority over anybody who came in. Moreover, it would give him an office; it would give him a staff; give him all the perquisites of the Senate from about November to January. The Republicans, at that time, were prepared to give Proxmire a little trouble. There was a Republican governor in Wisconsin, and the Republican governor was slow about sending the credentials to Washington to get Proxmire sworn in. Now, I don't believe, myself, that the Republicans meant to prevent his being sworn in, but this is a little hair to that . . .

F: Was that Taylor?

H: No, the governor at that time was [Vernon Wallace] Thompson, who is now a senator and had been the attorney general and, I think, lieutenant governor and governor, and now is a congressman. But this is a perfectly understandable political maneuver, to let Proxmire sweat a little bit.

So when Proxmire came, Johnson met him at the plane and welcomed him in. As a matter of fact, Proxmire was worth a great deal to him, because the dividing line, the margin that the Democrats had over the Republicans, was very slight. And the loss of a Republican seat to a Democrat, you see, is the equivalent of picking up two votes. So Johnson treated Proxmire very well; saw that he got help in getting started, et cetera; and when these credentials didn't come in, Johnson said, in effect, to Proxmire, "Let me show

you how to make something of this."

So he went on the floor and deliberately kicked up a furor over the fact that the Republican governor was deliberately withholding these credentials. Whether he was or not is not the question. And so the leadership on the other side answered, and Proxmire got a first-rate play in the Wisconsin papers over this matter.

Now, Proxmire was very much impressed with Johnson and with his mode of operating, and he had just read William S. White's book *The Citadel*, which talks about the inner club and how important it is to work well in the Senate, to know how to do it. So Proxmire didn't know anybody who knew anything about the Senate except me. I was at the University of Wisconsin; was not a close friend; but we were acquainted. So he called and asked if I would take leave from the University and come here for about eight months, which would constitute his first session of Congress; and I did. And one of the reasons why he wanted me to come was because of my relationship with the Johnson office. So when I came, I was to be kind of a bridge between him and the Johnson office, which I was, for several months. It got a little sticky in the summer, when the two senators got crosswise, and the middle man, in this case, is a little suspect in both camps. I think more so, in this case, with probably Proxmire than with Johnson. But I played this very carefully, and, I think, was loyal to both sides, and came out of it with Proxmire's friendship.

F: Was this sort of an inevitable conflict because of personality differences?

H: I think so--differences in style. Senator Johnson was the Senator *par excellence*. By that, I mean he understood and played the Senate game. In his case, that meant not much

speech-making; it meant trying to find a way to bring people together and get a majority; it meant a lack of open combativeness, *et cetera*; a matter of biding one's time and doing things the right way. In Proxmire's case, in a personality sense, he simply can't operate this way. He must talk; he must be heard. And in a political sense, he was in a desperate position, because if he lost in November, he was just a fluke--three defeats for the governorship and then one little victory for a year in the Senate. You see, his whole career, his whole life hung on this, and he had the feeling that a perpetual candidate, as he was then, has that he must get attention.

And so about the middle of the summer Proxmire said to me . . . And of course, I kept saying to him the things that I got from Bobby Baker and from other people in the leadership, which is that he is talking too much, and he was making a bad impression, and that kind of thing; and I said this to Proxmire a number of times. Until finally, he said to me, "Well, I understand all of that. I've thought about this, and so far as I'm concerned, not participating, not debating, is not being a senator. And I'm going to be a senator like Wayne and Paul"--meaning Morse and Douglas--"I'm going to talk whenever I want to, on whatever subject I please, and let the chips fall where they may."

F: He and Johnson never really confronted on an issue so much? It was mainly style?

H: I think so. The closest thing to issue confrontation came the next year, when Proxmire made two formal prepared speeches in which he gave credit to Johnson for being a great leader, the best maybe the Democrats had ever had, but criticized his style of leadership. He said that the leader, should have frequent conferences with the Democratic senators so they could tell him their views on issues and he would know what the Democrats thought.

These were two carefully prepared speeches, which were an intellectual challenge to Johnson's leadership; and for quite a while Johnson ignored these speeches, but finally, one day, he did respond, not in a long prepared speech, but he said--and this is the classic congressional response--he said, in effect, that "If the Senator wants to express his legislative views, then he has come to the wrong court. Let him go to the committees. That is where the legislative work is done. And when the committees have reported, then the leadership will do its job."

Now, this is not necessarily true throughout the history of the Senate, but this is an accurate statement, as I understand it, of the way both the House and Senate leadership works now. The committees do the legislative work, and the Senator, as I saw him in operation, would prod committees, and sometimes he'd have the Democrats in for a meeting, the main message being the urgency of their moving and doing something. He would talk to them about the kinds of things which he thought the Senate would take, but he did not try to say to them what they should do in regard to substance. And so, in a very real sense, the leader's job, as he saw it, and as I think present leaders see it, is that of expediting legislation when it has come out of committee and is ready to go to the floor.

So this was the conflict, which, I think, represented a difference in personality, a difference in style, two very good men who were just not born, really, to like each other very much.

F: Did you get to observe Mr. Johnson's relationship with Mr. Sam?

H: Oh, no. Of course, they were very, very close. No, I didn't observe him. I just knew the

two were very good.

F: Yes. By this time, in '58, future President John F. Kennedy is getting geared up quite well. Of course Johnson is or isn't gearing up, and there's lots of debate. Did you get any insights on that jockeying that must have been going on at that time?

H: One of the great skills that Johnson had was the ability to use people for jobs that they could do very well. So that if you look at the legislative record through those years, you'll be struck with the fact that it's first one man, and then another, who's carrying the ball, not always the same man by any means.

Now Kennedy was making his preparations, at this point, in, I think, a very shrewd way. He was not racing around the country making speeches. He did have the friends, and I suppose the money, to get really first-grade staff assistants outside the Senate on all kinds of crucial issues. Everyone knows that on labor issues, for instance, he had the help of labor lawyers from the Harvard Law School, so that the product which they brought to him was first-rate. So that Kennedy was, in a number of matters, the author of amendments or positions on certain bills which caused him to stand out.

Now a leader who is attempting to kill off somebody would have tried to suppress this, or see to it that somebody took the play from him. This was not the case with Johnson. In a number of cases--two or three times that year; I remember once on the foreign policy amendment; another time on the labor bill--Kennedy was one of the key figures. The papers were full of the Kennedy amendment to this, the Kennedy amendment to that; and Johnson used him freely on the floor to carry the ball in regard to some of these positions which he had espoused. This was part of the preparation, part of

the buildup, for Senator Kennedy. It was a perfectly legitimate kind of buildup though. The point I'm making is that Johnson certainly must have recognized it, but it never affected his operations as floor leader in the Senate.

F: In the interest of legislation, he never cut him down.

H: No, he never cut him down, nor anybody else. He looked around for the man who could carry the ball on this, or that, or something else. Take, for instance, the Senator, who more than any other I guess I've known, was a real independent: Paul Douglas, who used to bring a series of amendments to the floor to a tax bill, or something like that; and fight them all one night in lonely fashion, and never even tell his friends he was going to do it, and never ask anybody for any votes. Sometimes he would get five or six votes when, with a little help, he might have gotten fifteen or twenty or thirty. Well, Paul Douglas had the great asset, though, of being brilliant about economic matters, being a first-rate debater, a man that had great wit and style. And a number of times, Johnson picked him to take the majority position and lead it on something where Douglas' position was the majority.

Now again, Douglas and Johnson are not the same kind of people, and they could not possibly have been, in my view, friends. But this was not the point. Johnson was the leader, and this was the job to be get done, and here was the man to do it. And so he never hesitated to use the best instrument that he could lay his hands on.

F: Was Proxmire satisfied with his committee assignments as a freshman senator?

H: Yes, I think he was. I think he certainly was. Proxmire wanted the Agricultural Committee. Like a lot of senators from agricultural states, he wanted this committee, but

in a little bit, became dissatisfied with it. What Proxmire really wanted, at that point, was to get on the Senate Finance Committee. I remember, when there was a vacancy, he called Senator Humphrey and said, "How should I go about trying to get this vacancy?" Humphrey gave him the advice. He said, "Don't wait. This is not what Johnson would do. Johnson is in Texas; call him on the telephone, and tell him of your interest."

Proxmire didn't get that seat. But later on, he got a seat on the Appropriations Committee, which may be . . .

F: At least an equivalent plum.

H: That's right. Sure. You see, one of Johnson's devices, if you will, for maintaining a harmonious party, or keeping people happy and willing to support the party, was to treat them well, treat them fairly. Now, when he came in as minority leader, there was a rump group--rump in the sense that it didn't represent the majority--but there were about twenty liberals who woke up late, found out that the job was already in Johnson's hands, and felt bad about him. They didn't like it. So they were prepared to oppose him, and did oppose him in the conference, and were disgruntled about this Texan with four years in the Senate taking over. Johnson, characteristically, set out at once to get the allegiance of every Democratic senator. In the case of these liberals, he found out what seats they wanted on committees; and to the extent possible, he moved them into the committee slots that they wanted.

Again, he put together the famous Johnson rule. Up to that point the Senate, like the House, always put freshman members on two poor committees, usually Post Office and Civil Service, and maybe the District Committee. Johnson decided that every

freshman coming in would get one good committee assignment. So the new freshmen coming in that year, finding themselves now with something they could be proud of, one committee they could work on, of course, felt good toward Johnson. So I think the animosities or whatever it was--maybe that's too strong a term--but the unhappiness that some people felt when he came in was soon dispelled because of the fairness with which he treated people.

F: Sort of disbanded them.

H: Yes, that's right, exactly.

F: Okay, you stayed eight months.

H: That's right. And then, I came back. In 1960 I was invited to come back here and to join a speech writing team for Senator Johnson, and I was on that team when he was running for vice president in 1960. I sat down here, in an office downtown.

F: You came in after the convention?

H: Yes. He was already the vice presidential nominee. And several of us, down there, tried to write speeches he could use for two months, and it gave me a little insight into the campaigning techniques. I went down and rode the train in the South for a night and a day; and this was a very good experience and very helpful to me.

F: That swing through Dixie?

H: Yes.

F: How did that thing go?

H: That went very well. I think this is one of the rare cases, and I believe it is rare, that the vice presidential candidate actually adds something to the candidate. But I had the

feeling, and I think a lot of people would agree, that the Southern trip was decisive that year, because the election, as you will recall, was very close. I remember seeing in newspapers, that came out in some of these cities before the train came through, some of the things that they were saying about him and the general unfriendliness, and then the same paper, the day after he had left, talking about uniting with the party and what a great job he had done, *et cetera*.

F: Was this a matter of what he said, the way he said it, or was this behind-the-scenes work he did with key people after he got there? What made the change?

H: I think it was a combination of both. It was a very well run train. The advance work was good. The train went through mostly rural communities. The train was right on time, which is something a lot of candidates never learn, but that train was on time and never was more than a minute or two off. The engineer and conductor had instructions to blow the whistle and move the train out. I think the whistle was a two minute warning, and this meant: finish up and get on the train, because it's going to move.

What he was doing was picking up political leaders in one community who were leaders of the next community where they were going to stop. And so, in the thirty or forty minutes, or an hour, until they got to their hometowns, then he had a chance to meet with them, and talk to them, have his picture taken with them, and that kind of thing. And then when the train stopped in the next town, they were introduced and got off the train while those from the next stop were filing onto the train. Then the stop was ten or fifteen minutes long, very impressive to these local politicians, to step off in their hometown with a population of 2500 and see maybe seven or eight thousand people out

there to listen.

He did his job very well; he talked extemporaneously; he had about twenty or twenty-five points that he made at one time or another. He had them all on big cards, and he'd pick out two or three to talk about at this stop. There were two things he always talked about though. He always talked about John Kennedy and the religion matter, and told people why he was for Kennedy and assailed anyone who let his religion stand in the way. And then, secondly, he always made a civil rights statement, because not to have done that just by inadvertence . . . If he made that statement fifty times, and forgot to make it once, newspapers would say: "He doesn't talk in South Carolina the way he talks in North Carolina, or the way he talks in New York," or some other place.

F: Did you present points yourself, or was this sort of an amalgam that he cut down into?

H: These points were taken out of speeches he had made, positions he held, *et cetera*, and he would try to pick two or three that he thought might be interesting in this community. You see, part of the advance work was done here with Ken Birkhead and some others calling, maybe, a week ahead, or ten days ahead, to a local community, and finding out who the political leaders were, and what kinds of local references could be used, and then what are the issues here. I mean, is anybody stirred up about this, or that, or something else. So, he might pick a couple of points that were said to be of interest to this particular community.

I found out, incidentally, why, in these political campaigns, it's so seldom that a candidate can use the set speech that you write for him. Because the pressures get to be so great that they don't make this one big speech on Thursday night. They make sixteen

speeches on Wednesday, and fifteen on Thursday, and nineteen on Friday. In those circumstances, talking at airports, and talking briefly in a local park, or talking off the back end of a railroad train, a read speech is just unacceptable. So what he has got to do is to talk directly to them, look at them, make his points, and move in.

F: Did Johnson tend to get across with red clay road references, ten cent cotton, and that sort of throwback?

H: The interesting thing was that he was preaching straight New Deal all through the South; and what a lot of people, who looked on the Southerners as being conservative, tend to overlook is that, in economic matters, they were quite liberal; that is, they supported the New Deal because the New Deal did a great deal for the South. Johnson knew that. He'd come out of the biggest co-op in the world down there in the Pedernales Valley, and he knew exactly how to talk to them. He was talking about what the Democratic Party had done for them; what Franklin Roosevelt did for them. "We're the party who . . . We're the party who . . ."

I asked George Reedy, at one point, I said, "He's going over great here. Is this a Southern phenomenon?" He said, "No, it's a rural phenomenon." He said, "He talked to the people out in Iowa, in the rural areas, just like this. And they ate it up."

F: Did you get the feeling that he had a pretty free hand to do what he wanted to as a candidate, apart from the Kennedys, or that this was very carefully monitored by them?

H: I think he was very free to do as he wanted to, and I think that this is probably required by the exigencies of the presidential campaign. They just can't be organized too tightly. It's very difficult for the presidential candidate and his people to manage him, and the

best thing to do with the vice presidential candidate, I would guess, would be to let him manage himself, because this was trouble enough. His itinerary changed constantly; he was under pressure from politicians to come a hundred miles over here and "make a little speech for me," and he, of course, acceded to many of these requests because they were old friends--

F: And you've always got the anniversary crowd or something that's going on.

H: Of course, the airplane has just magnified the problem. Because they can point out correctly that "you can drop over, and spend twenty minutes at my place, and it won't take you but an hour." But of course, this is a drain on the man's strength and his time, and you could certainly see this in his campaign. Now, I was not with Kennedy, but what I read then about his campaign and what I've read since about his campaign indicates that he was having exactly the same problems. Get into a place at midnight; expect to go to bed; here's a little crowd standing out in the rain and they've been waiting an hour. It's not a scheduled speech, but are you going to turn them away? No, you don't turn them away. You say a little bit more.

F: What did this do to you in a professional sense, in that the campaign isn't conveniently over at the same time a semester is?

H: It just was my great good fortune that year that I had a ten-month grant from the Rockefeller Foundation which meant I was off for that academic year anyway. Now I could not have done this had I been teaching. By that time, classes are arranged for and so on. But all that was necessary was for me to get the thing postponed two months, which meant that instead of the grand ending on the first of June, it ended on the first of

August. And so it was just good luck.

F: Okay, so after the campaign, you go back to Madison again.

H: Yes, sir.

F: You sort of were a round-trip man, weren't you?

H: Yes. Well, this was my way to learn. I think that this was my kind of technique, which is in and out. I come and watch and experience and participate and think I see something. Then I go back and try to generalize upon this to test some of the things I think are true, and put graduate students to doing jobs and so on. This is not the only way, but it happens to be my way.

F: When did you get caught up again?

H: I came here, then, in September of 1965.

F: How did that come about?

H: It came about this way. Mr. Johnson became president under circumstances that you know, and used the Kennedy forces for quite awhile. Then he needed, as presidents always do, a lot of people for political jobs. I must say that I think the process that was used in my case, which was the process he was trying to use generally, is one of the most rational and intelligent ones I ever saw. The first feeler came through a call from George, who said, "Ralph, the President was going over some vacancies today, and he raised the question of whether you would be interested in an appointment."

I said, "George, what positions are you talking about?"

He said: "It happened, today, that we were talking about a place on the Equal Economic Opportunity Commission,"--I think that's what it's called--"and we also have a

place on the"--I believe he said the Federal Trade Commission, or some other commission. And he said, "If you're interested at all, the next time you come to town let's talk."

Well, I was going back and forth about every two or three weeks from the University of Wisconsin, so this was very simple. I had dinner with George one night and he explained to me what I needed to know, which was that the President wasn't talking about those specific vacancies. He'd just thought of me, at that point, and said, "If Ralph would like a job, ask him. Let him say so. And then we'll find the kind of thing that he might want to do."

So at that point, I certainly wanted an appointment, but not at that moment, because I was involved in some other things. I talked to George frankly about this, and said, "George, if I could have just a year, it would be much better for me a year from now than it would now. What would you say his reaction would be if I asked him to wait a year?"

He said, "Well, you know the man. The chances are very good that he would dismiss you and that would be the end. On the other hand, once in a while, when somebody turns him down, he decides that he wants this man and he must have this man. He might pursue you just unremittingly."

I thought about it, and my hunch was that George was quite right. The chances were better that this would be the end of it than anything else, because one of his characteristics is that when he asked somebody to do something, he wants them to do it.

F: Can't quite understand how he's turned down.

H: That's right. He remembers what you've done for him, and he also remembers what you declined to do for him. So I wanted very much to be in his Administration; so I cleared the decks and said to George, "I do want an appointment."

The next word then was, "The next time you're in town, go to see John Macy. He's head of the Civil Service Commission and the President has asked him to conduct a talent search and try to match people with jobs." At that point, I knew about John, but I didn't know him.

I went to see him, and we had a very good conversation, and what he did was to explore my background and my interests. And then he said, "It sounds to me like the job for you is the assistant secretaryship for legislation at HEW." Instantly this caught fire with me, because he was quite right. Legislation was my primary professional interest, and I had had some experience on the Hill. And of course, the subject matter of health, education, and welfare, for somebody in my position, somebody of my experience, was perfect.

So I very quickly decided that I would get that appointment. The President did want me to come and meet John Gardner, who had been appointed secretary of HEW, but who had not yet taken office. The President said, "Obviously, I won't appoint anybody that he doesn't want." So I came to Washington and had lunch with the then-Secretary [Anthony J.] Celebrezze and Gardner and [Wilbur J.] Cohen, and a couple of other people, and apparently Mr. Gardner was satisfied. And so I was duly appointed.

F: What, organizationally is the relationship between the commissioner of education and the assistant secretary?

H: Let me talk about the way it was then, because it has been changed some since. The pattern at HEW was for the assistant secretaries and the under secretary, particularly the assistant secretaries, to occupy staff positions. In a word, we were the secretary's men, and it was our job to carry the ball for the Administration and for the secretary in quite a lot of functions. But we did not run anything,

Now the commissioner of education ran the Office of Education; a so-called assistant secretary of education was the secretary's adviser in regard to education. Now there's some conflict in that kind of thing itself.

F: I was going to say, you get in each other's way a little, don't you?

H: That's right, but not in the legislation job, because this is essentially a staff function anyway. You're not running an organization; you're not running a program. What you're doing is carrying a legislative program to the Hill and trying to get it passed. So that while each of the agencies had their own legislative people, they were all generally in my charge. This is a good arrangement, because the agency's legislative people were civil servants, and civil servants have to be careful what they do. Now a political person, a political appointee, does not. Well, he had to be careful in normal ways, but I mean he is frankly political.

F: Can talk to whomever he wants to.

H: That's right. And if he messes it up, then he can be fired out of hand, or he can quit any day. And so he is the risk-taker, and this is what he's supposed to do. So this worked out very well.

Now as time went on, this was muddled a bit by Mr. Gardner's efforts to reorganize the health services and put them under an under secretary. Then he wanted to transform the under secretary into a deputy secretary, very much as the Pentagon has it. And if he had carried out his whole scheme, he would, in time, have had education under an under secretary, and he would have had all of the welfare programs under another undersecretary. As it turned out, he left before his health program even got through, and Congress did not give him the title of under secretary; and so the head of the health services now is an assistant secretary; and so this anomaly of having staff assistant secretaries and one line assistant secretary.

Now, you may have noticed in the recent Higher Education Act, they created an assistant secretary for education, who is to be the top man, and he will be an operating head. Presumably there will still be a commissioner, but if there is, the commissioner clearly will be an underling of the assistant secretary.

F: Did you in a sense get your charge from the President, or did you get it from John Gardner?

H: I think this is pretty much the same thing, because the secretary is the president's man, and he is supposed to carry the Administration program, and he is supposed to be loyal to the Administration I think, in regard to legislation, the direction of the legislative effort came from the White House, because this is what the President knew about, and he had some very able men in the White House. We had, for a while, a meeting, about every second or third Friday afternoon, of the people in charge of legislative programs, like myself, with the White House staff. They changed that to have the meeting every

Monday morning at 8:30, which proved to be a much better time. We all gathered down there with, first, Henry Hall Wilson and, then, Barefoot Sanders, who were in charge of the legislative staff for the President. And about every five or six weeks the President himself would come in; he'd spend sometimes an hour and a half talking to us about the Congress, and about how to get things done up there, and so on.

F: Was Doug Cater sort of removed from this group?

H: Doug Cater's function was a little different. Doug Cater was a substantive person in health and education, and so all kinds of problems having to do with the substance of the legislation would be referred to Cater. Now this is not to say that Cater didn't participate in the legislative process.

F: But really, you come into the act after we have the substance; then you try to get something done with it.

H: No. This, again, is a crucial point, because in some of the departments and some of the agencies this was true, that the legislative man was someone who simply took the program which had been worked out, and that it was his job then to go up on the Hill and sell this to Congress. And usually, they had titles such as assistant secretary for legislation, or something of that kind.

Now in the case of HEW, the assistant secretary for legislation participated in the substantive planning as well as in the carrying out of it. So that when I went there, part of my job was--it was about this time in the summer--to call on the various agency heads to prepare their proposals for the next year's legislative program. They would bring in these proposals, usually around the first to the middle of August. They frequently weren't

very good at that point, because all kinds of stuff would be included that bureau chiefs wanted and had been asking for for years, and the agency head would simply put it in because he'd rather we'd cut it out than have to cut it out himself.

Then there would be a second meeting, and we'd go over it and come up with something pretty good, something fairly tight. After that, there was review by the other assistant secretaries and by the under secretary, and in time, we would develop a package for the secretary. This was presented to the secretary in a series of hearings of the thing, informal, sitting in his office. But my job was to present to him these legislative proposals for education, and then the next day these legislative proposals for health, and the secretary would decide which of them he liked and which he didn't. Then he would cut and change, so we would revise it until he was satisfied; after which, we would present the secretary's legislative package to the White House.

After that, there would be two or three months of negotiations between the secretary, and his people--the secretary, under secretary, assistant secretary, commissioner of education, whoever is relevant to the discussion--and people at the White House, and the people at the Bureau of the Budget. Finally, about the middle of January or the first of February, the President would send up his education message, and then his health message, and then his welfare message, and each time, would send along the bill to accompany it.

This, then, involved the assistant secretary for legislation in the preparation of legislation. The drift has been away from that; so that, legislation now, as I understand it, at HEW, is more likely to be planned in the Office of Planning Evaluation, or whatever it

is they call it. And even while I was there, very much more of legislative planning devolved on the White House staff under the direction of Joe Califano.

I happened to talk to Secretary Richardson one day, who has himself been an assistant secretary for legislation--and a very good one, I must say--and he remarked that when he was assistant secretary, he'd prepare the legislative package as I did for the first couple of years I was there; that it had not been done that way in his tenure so far, but that he intended to have the assistant secretary for legislation involved in this without being in charge.

My own belief is that that is the best arrangement, because we would find that the necessity for preparing the legislative package for the next year would become urgent at precisely the time that the opportunity to pass legislation in the last couple of months of the session would happen on the Hill. So you see, the question of where you should be.

F: You'd have split vision.

H: That's right. So frequently, the planning of the legislative program would get behind because of the urgency of going to the Hill and trying to pass things up there.

Now I do believe that the secretary's quite right in saying the legislative man should be cut in on this, because he has some insights as to what committees are likely to do. Moreover, if he is in the planning process, then he knows what was taken into account, and when he goes to the Hill to talk to a committee chairman or somebody else, and this person says, "Why didn't you do so-and-so," the congressman is talking to a man who was there and can answer that question. And so it gives the legislative man a good deal more clout and a good deal more credibility with the members of Congress.

F: Going back there to where you're putting together the package at your level, and you decide this will go in and this will out before you take it on to the other assistant secretaries and up to the secretary himself, did you have pretty much freedom of decisions?

H: My staff and I talked with the agency head and his people about their proposals, and if it looked like there were too many, if it looked like some things were in there that simply didn't have a chance, we might talk him out of presenting it. We might say, "Let's drop that, and let's drop that." But I did not overrule them, because it was my belief that it was better to include and cut them out as more and more people got a chance to see them, than to let an agency head feel that there'd been an arbitrary decision made by a person who was a political man and not a subject-matter man. So that, we erred on the side of including as long as we could. I never cut out anything, except as the commissioner was willing to do it, until other people had a chance to consider it.

F: How much was budget a consideration of yours or were you just trying to get the most practical package you could put together and let somebody else worry about the budget?

H: The budget was the problem of Jim Kelly, who was the comptroller and became the assistant secretary-comptroller, who was an excellent budget man. He was very good at cutting in the rest of us on the budget process, so that we knew what was going along and knew what kinds of decisions that were having to be made. And this was very helpful, because as money got tight, we in the legislative field had the problem of explaining to our friends on the Hill who had passed this big legislation, why there was no more money for it. And if we could say to them this was taken into account, and that was taken into

account, and this is why it was done this way, that was very helpful.

But no, I did not have control of the budget. I worked with the Appropriations Committee in close concert with Kelly, because this was his responsibility, and to have two people going up independently could be fatal. Now, I did have good contacts with some of the people on the Appropriations Committee. So Kelly and I worked on this together. I went to see a number of them, because this was helpful, and this was useful. There never was any conflict between him and me as to how this should be done. I never tried to grab the appropriations process from him, and he never worried about my being in it, and I think we worked together on that very well.

F: At these Monday morning-Friday afternoon White House sessions, just what did you take up?

H: We took up, first, the status of the legislation. Let's take the Monday morning meetings, because these occurred over a longer period of time, and these were a real effort to coordinate. We sent to the White House--I say "we," I mean each of us who was in charge of legislation for a department or agency sent to the White House a report, on Friday afternoon, of the status of every piece of legislation for which we were responsible; and with comments as to what the prospects were, what the problems were, what we thought ought to be done about it. In a word, this was a way of bringing the White House up-to-date on where we stood.

The White House legislative staff worked over these items on the weekend. And sometimes the White House legislative person would call up, maybe over the weekend, and say, "Will you discuss the Elementary and Secondary Education Bill for about ten

minutes on Monday morning to let the others know what you're up against and what you plan to do about it," and that kind of thing. So that there was a general review by the White House staff of what the legislative week looked like. And various people who had special responsibilities that week would explain his situation to the other members. Once in a while then there would be something on which somebody else could help. Once in a while these bills would be closely enough connected that there needed to be a little clearance and a little understanding. Well, this is an excellent meeting.

Frequently, Hubert Humphrey would sit in, and he was very helpful because of his long legislative experience. Like Johnson, he remembers, I think, everything that ever happened to him, and he can tell you the reasons why certain things were put into a bill in 1958, and the reason why things were left out, in a way which is really remarkable. So these meetings were very helpful to us.

Sometimes we would state a problem. For instance, one of the difficulties we had, at a late point, was in justifying the Vietnam war to some of the members. They would say, "Why are you spending money in Vietnam, and not doing this, and not doing that." So the White House staff, then, would arrange for somebody to come over from State Department and brief us on it, or somebody to come in from Defense, if that were necessary, and tell us what was going on. When we had something crucial in regard to a tax measure, it might not be the responsibility of any one of us to carry that, except the Treasury people, and then the Treasury people would be carrying it, but then the rest of us would be asked questions about it. So somebody would come in and talk fifteen or twenty minutes, and lay out the problem, perhaps with blackboard or charts or something

like that, then answer questions. So that we went away from there with the feeling that we belonged to an Administration; we were not just independent operators, not just the education guys, but we were somebody who was trying to carry the Administration's program. And frequently, we were able to put in a lick for somebody else because we knew something about it.

So the meetings were flexible, they didn't follow an actual schedule. The White House staff attempted to do in about an hour or an hour and fifteen minutes what they thought would be most useful in inspiring us, and informing us, and learning from us what our problems were, and that kind of thing.

They were very useful to me too, in this regard: that while technically I was the only person who was supposed to go to these meetings, I got permission to take Sam Halperin, who was my principal deputy, and then a little later, permission to take John Grupenhoff, who was also a deputy--one man in education and one man in health. These were first-rate people, and their being there helped inform them and gave the other people at the White House a chance to see them. And one time or another, when someone besides Grupenhoff or Halperin was shepherding a bill, I would get permission to take him to the White House and, perhaps, let him explain, in five or six minutes, what he was trying to do.

This is a great thing for morale and for education, because the man feels like he has grabbed a live wire when he goes down to the White House. What surges through him then is the kind of thing that motivates him to stay down there until ten or eleven o'clock at night, if that's what's necessary.

F: You can't beat that casual, even though you don't tell anything, that little casual remark: "Well, when I was over at the White House Monday . . ."

H: It lets the people and Congress know that they can talk to the legislative man who has come to see them and have that reported to the White House. You see, I think this is fundamental. One of the great things about the Johnson Administration in regard to legislation was that you could always plug in and get somebody. So that we could call the legislative people and say, "Here's a legislative problem. We think that maybe the President ought to know about it." Now, the President can't talk to thirty people who are handling legislative programs, but the one time a day that Sanders sends in a memorandum to him, if he thinks that this is an item that ought to be mentioned, then it's in his memorandum. Likewise, if you have problems with the health bill, or an education bill, or something, you'd call Cater, and say, "This is something in which there's a contradiction." Cater could almost surely get to the President if that were necessary, or if it were something that he thought he could handle, he could be sure that the President would back him up. Now this is a great resource for somebody in legislation; and what it means in working with members of Congress can't be overstated because they know that they're not just talking to a guy; they're talking to somebody through whom they can reach the president.

F: Now your Appropriations Committee, Education Committee, *et cetera*, in Congress have their own staff. How much of a role does the staff play in shaping legislation that you and the White House have worked out? Are they really important? Do you need to work

with them, too?

H: Oh, yes, we work with them very closely, and anyone who underestimates the importance of the committee staff is somebody who simply doesn't understand the business at all. A first-rate committee staff man, and there are very many of them in Congress, comes to know what his principals think and what they will do. A lot of times interns, and other people not very experienced, spend some time on the Hill, and they see how important staff people are and how much work they do, and they go back and carry the word that the staff man really tells the senator what to do, and the staff really writes the bills, and that kind of thing. And of course, this is nonsense. The reason why the staff man has got to be influential is that he knows how his Principal thinks, and he knows when he has got to go and check on something and when he can go ahead, because he knows that's what the man would do. And so of course, you work very closely with the staff people, particularly as to the details of legislation.

You know, when you take something up . . . And one of the great attributes of President Johnson is pushing legislative programs was that he had been a member of Congress so long and understood Congress. He said to us, again and again, "You must remember that the White House does not have a monopoly, the executive branch does not have a monopoly on wisdom, patriotism, good sense. They are equal partners. And they're going to make some changes which, in many cases, will make our bills better." And he was quite right. One of the reasons why Johnson had so many legislative victories--this is only one--but one of the reasons was that he understood when he had won something, which did not mean that he had to have it precisely the way he had

recommended it. If he wanted something which would help students go to college, or something which would help to remodel hospitals, or something of that kind, something which could help control air pollution, if he sent a scheme up, and Congress came out with a good bill which was perhaps half its features not his, but theirs, he never quibbled. This was what he was trying to do, and they had come out with a bill that's a victory for him; it's a victory for Congress; it's a victory for everybody.

So this makes working on a legislative program a very happy thing. Because you take up the president's legislation; you do the very best you can to get it passed in the form that he has recommended it. But when you see that the committee is not going to do it exactly that way, it's going to do it, but it's going to do some different things, then you go along with it and the president supports you.

F: How did you keep from getting tangled with Barefoot [Sanders] in what you did, or did you go on the thesis that you could saturate the situation on the Hill?

H: On, no, no conflict at all! Because I was in charge of the HEW legislation, that was clear-cut; everybody understood it. Barefoot never tried to assume that responsibility himself, nor to relieve me of it. On the other hand, Barefoot was a resource; he was an asset. And if I needed some help on something, or if I just wanted advice from somebody who knew Congress, sometimes he would know a committee member a lot better than I did, or something of that kind. I could call the White House and talk to him about it, get his advice. Sometimes I'd ask for his help, and know that in talking to him, the White House had been made aware of the problems I had. This is worth a great deal. If you see that you're running into trouble, and you can let people know it well ahead of time so that

they're not taken by surprise and all of a sudden it comes out differently from the way they expected, then this is a real help. So I can say honestly that I never had any conflict with the White House staff over the operation of legislative programs at all.

F: Did you personally do a good bit of legwork?

H: I did some, but I had people in charge of various kind of programs. I think one of the real skills in an operation of this kind is to know whom to send for what purpose. So that there are people on the Hill . . . In my case, each person had definite subject-matter area he was responsible for, and then he backed up somebody else in that second person's area of principal responsibility. So the person might be, let's say, in charge of education, but supportive in welfare. So that if the welfare person were out of town or something of that kind, he could fill in.

Now there were occasions when it was necessary for me to go. There were occasions when it was necessary not only for me to go, but to take somebody. So that in a certain situation, I might ask Cater to go with me, or I might ask some association people who had good friends on the Hill to go with me. On occasion, I might ask the under secretary, who knew a lot of people up there, if he would make a telephone call or go along. Frequently, Wilbur Cohen and I went up together on something which was pretty important. On occasion, you want the secretary to go or the commissioner of education; you want them to go with you, but you don't waste that asset. You don't send a secretary up there for something that a deputy can handle; you send him up there for a secretary's job; and then, when he comes, people on the Hill know that it's pretty damned important because here's the secretary. And even, you see, as a last resort, you might be

able to get the president himself to make a telephone call.

But in all of this, the crucial skill is understanding the situation and trying to match the resources with the situation, so that you put enough of them up there, but you don't waste them. So, yes, I spent a lot of time on the Hill. I've seen a lot of people on the Hill. I walked miles between those two buildings up there. But this doesn't mean that I tried to hawk all those programs myself. I had first-rate people. One of the things that I did, which I really am proud of and which was a surprise to me, because I'd never had a staff before, was that I built a first-rate staff. And I kept my door open to them all the time, and my telephone open, so that a person on the Hill who wanted to check could call me three or four times a day if he pleased. This way, I could know what was happening; I could take responsibility for what I needed to take responsibility for; I could warn them at the White House what was happening, if that was necessary. But this required, of course, that I make myself available, that I give my staff freedom to make some judgments, take some risks, and not hold them up to the winds that blow when they made a mistake--just as Secretary Gardner gave me that kind of freedom. I was supposed to know when to call him, and what to tell him, and that kind of thing. If I made a mistake in judgment, then, certainly he would point that out. But if, in taking the initiative, I made a mistake, he would not then hold me up to the White House or to somebody else as the person who blew it. This is, I think, the proper exercise in responsibility.

F: During Gardner's regime, did he deal mainly with policy and leave the operation to Cohen?

H: Secretary Gardner had such a mammoth job that he would--I want to say veer, this is not

correct--that he would pay attention for a few days to something very, very closely because he was aware that this was something he should be on top of, and then something else would come along, and he would get involved in that. Now he was very much concerned with the subject matter of what the department did. He was very much concerned with effective administration. He knew, when he came in, that Secretary [Abraham] Ribicoff had said, when he resigned that, "This place can't be administered." The first public speech on HEW that Gardner made was the day that I was sworn in, and he used that as an occasion for making a speech to about 8900 employees that were there--plus the people on radio and so on. And he said then, "It can be administered, and I will do it." And so he was very much interested in how to run it.

And yet, at the same time, he would become aware sometimes that the legislative program was very important. He'd become interested in it; he'd want to hear about it two or three times a day. Then he would get involved in something else, and maybe he would pay that kind of attention to it.

But I would say that, overall, the general goals of the department and Administration and, secondly, the efficient operation of the department were his concern. Now the day-by-day operations, Under Secretary Cohen was magnificent at this, because he'd had thirty years in the department, and he knew every nut and bolt in the place, so that he did a great deal of that.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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RALPH K. HUITT

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