

INTERVIEWEE: DANIEL K. INOUE

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE McSWEENEY

April 18, 1969

M: This interview is with Daniel Ken Inouye, U.S. Senator from Hawaii, and a Democrat. Today is Friday, April 18, 1969, and it's about 11:15 in the morning. We are in the Senator's offices in the Old Senate Office Building, and this is Dorothy Pierce McSweeney.

Senator Inouye, I would like to begin this interview with a very brief chronology of your career. You were elected to the U.S. Senate, your present position, in 1962 and began serving in January of 1963. Your committee assignments were on Armed Services Committee and the Subcommittee of National Stockpile and Naval Petroleum. Your other committee assignment was on the Public Works Committee and the Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution and Public Buildings and Grounds.

You first came to the U.S. Congress as a representative in 1959 when Hawaii became the 50th state in the union and served on the Agricultural Committee. From 1958 to 1959 you served in the Hawaiian Territorial Senate, and from 1954 to 1958 you served in the Hawaiian Territorial House as Majority Leader. You practiced law previous to that in Hawaii after you received your J.D. degree in 1952 from George Washington University.

Do I have essentially the correct background information on you, sir?

I: Yes. I'd like to add that at this moment I'm no longer on the Public Works Committee. I left that Committee and I'm now on the Commerce

Committee. And I'm on a new Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, the Preparedness Subcommittee, which incidentally was the committee which was chaired by Lyndon Johnson when he was a Senator.

M: Did this all occur at the opening of this Congress?

I: Yes, I wanted the Commerce Committee because it relates to, for one thing, the Merchant Marine. That is very important to us. We're smack in the middle of the Pacific. It also has jurisdiction over the airways, flight, radio, etc., and telephonic communications to Hawaii is extremely important and airline contacts are most important, fisheries, oceanography--so the Commerce Committee's a natural for me.

M: I'd like to start the area of questioning on your personal relations with Mr. Johnson--I should amend that to say, also, your official relations.

I would like to begin by asking you to recall the very first time you met Mr. Johnson and how this came about?

I: I met President Johnson for the first time in 1956 in Chicago. It was during the Democratic National Convention. I was attending this convention as one of the delegates from Hawaii. He was then being considered, as he has been in many other conventions, for high national office. I made it a point to see Mr. Johnson out of pure curiosity as I did also of Speaker Sam Rayburn.

During the war we [442 RCT] spent much time with the 36th Division, which is a Texas division, and in one of our battles we spent about a week rescuing a Texas battalion. As a result of this action we lost a lot of men, but the State of Texas expressed its

gratitude by granting us honorary citizenship. So I felt, as a Texan, I should see my Texan leaders, and I called upon the Speaker and Mr. Johnson. I was quite impressed naturally by both of them--and never once imagining or dreaming that I would one day be serving with them in the Congress of the United States. I corresponded with the Speaker and the Majority Leader--just purely social type letters.

But then in '59 when Hawaii became a state the first call I received upon my arrival in Washington--the first official call--was from a Texan, and it was from my boss, Speaker Rayburn. I shall never forget that because he, as Speaker of the House, the third most powerful man in the United States, set aside over an hour to take me on a personal tour of the Capitol, pointing out the history and the people who made up the Congress. He pointed out where I should be sitting when I took my oath. And then the next person who called on me was another Texan, to welcome me to the nation's Capitol, and he was the Majority Leader, Lyndon Johnson.

M: Do you recall any of your early conversations with Mr. Johnson?

I: My first visit with the Majority Leader at that time was to convey to him the gratitude of Hawaii for his work in shepherding the statehood bill through the Senate. Obviously, if it wasn't for Mr. Johnson I might not be sitting here at this moment. We might have to wait another twenty years or so. But Lyndon Johnson--I don't suppose we'll have another Majority Leader like Lyndon Johnson for a long, long time--was a man who knew just how to do things the right way legislatively.

And the statehood bill, when one considers that this was a pure

and simple civil rights bill, and civil rights bills during those days just weren't passing. The argument against the statehood bill, although not said so loudly and publicly, was that if Hawaii became a state you would have representation by a strange looking people. As one Senator said, "How would you like to be sitting next to a fellow named Yamamoto?" It was this type of atmosphere in which Lyndon Johnson operated, and he was able to convince those who were opposed to this type of movement to soften their voices and weaken their resistance--and it went through.

So I went to see him to thank him for his efforts, to tell him how much I appreciated it, and to also sit with him to receive his guidance on other legislative matters which I knew would have to be taken up. You see, once you become a state there is a lot of house cleaning to be done to convert yourself from a territory into a state. You need a bill to change all those little words that say Territory of Hawaii--to cross that out because--it becomes a massive matter. I wanted to find out how Hawaii could be involved in the interstate highway system. Obviously by definition Hawaii cannot be part of the interstate highway system with California--there's an ocean in between--but we were paying taxes, all the gasoline taxes, and I felt we should receive some of the benefits. Naturally the Majority Leader agreed and so on all of these little things he was very patient and very helpful.

I was intrigued by a project which he had worked out with the last delegate to Congress, John Burns, who is now the Governor of Hawaii and who looks upon Lyndon Johnson as one of the greatest Americans we've ever produced. Lyndon Johnson at that time

was quite aware that the United States could not forever continue as just a European country. He realized that most of us were European in temper and complexion and habit and dress. So we were naturally inclined to lean toward Europe and be comfortable with Europeans. But he felt that the future of this nation would very well hinge upon our relationship with the other side--the Pacific and Asia. So he thought that Hawaii could be making a contribution towards this end, not a major contribution, but a positive one. So with his fantastic knowledge of legislation he had within record time created in the State of Hawaii what is now called the East-West Center, the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and West. At this institute, which is located on the campus of the University of Hawaii, two-thirds of the students are from Asia and one-third from the United States. It's a full scholarship program and, incidentally, in greater demand than the Fulbright Scholarship. I hope someday they'll call it the Johnson Scholarship. If they can name one after Fulbright, I think they should name one after Johnson also.

M: Senator, this was during the Presidency, wasn't it?

I: No. This was when he was Majority Leader of the Senate. That's when he started working on this. He, as Vice President, did the groundbreaking, I'm happy that he was there to do this. It is now accepted and a fully established organization. We don't have to justify its existence before appropriations committees. We have had great results, plus results for the United States because many of the men and women who come from Pakistan, India, Thailand, even Cambodia, but Cambodia sends students only to the East-West Center. The

same thing with Indonesia--because they felt that here was one place where Americans and Asia would sit together in the same room, let their hair down, and share their problems, with the hope that they would get to know Americans better and Americans get to know Asians better. I think it's been a successful experiment. The State Department is now considering setting up an establishment of this sort for North and South--Americans and Latin Americans. This is a Johnson contribution. This is long before he became President.

M: Do you recall what your first impressions were of Mr. Johnson?

I: My first impression was that here was a very clever politician, because my introduction was a political introduction. I looked upon him as a master politician, as I've indicated, a man who knew the secrets of legislation that many of us have been searching for and still have not found. But it was later that I began to look upon him not as a politician but just as a good solid human being. It took a little while to find this out. Unfortunately most people, even to this day, look upon him as a politician because he was much more than that.

M: Do you feel it was his early working on the Institute and sort of housekeeping as you called it, in making the territory Hawaii into the state of Hawaii, that led to what some people have called a protégé type relationship of yours with the two Texans then in the House and the Senate, Rayburn and Mr. Johnson?

I: I'm flattered to hear this description "protégé". I'm really flattered by this. I'm certain you're aware that in the '60 convention, with no if or buts, I came out in support of Lyndon Johnson to the shock and dismay of some of my very liberal friends. I should point

out to you that in most of the years the ADA would rate me at the top 5 percent. At one time I ranked number 1 in the United States Senate, Hubert Humphrey was number 2. So you can imagine how liberal I would be ranked. The labor organizations have been extremely pleased with my activities here. So most people just assumed that if I were to support anyone it would be some raving liberal. And when I came out for Lyndon Johnson, even the Union Board in Hawaii just could not understand this.

To me it was a natural thing to do, because I looked upon Lyndon Johnson not as a Southerner--unfortunately we have involved geography in the selection of our chief national officers--but I looked upon him as a good solid American. If you were going to look at him as a geographic American, then I say there are certain things to his credit. It would be easy for a man up north to speak and vote for civil rights matters, but it would take a little bit of courage for a man from Texas, at that time in our history, to not only speak for, but to very cleverly shepherd through and guide through successfully civil rights measures.

This impressed me to no end. Why should a man from Texas be concerned about establishing an East-West Center in the middle of the Pacific from the standpoint of political points for in Dallas this would be minus--advocating statehood for Hawaii, this would be double minus. And getting through the first comprehensive civil rights bill, this would be triple minus. I admire courage in any man or any woman, and I had this special type--which I felt--this special type of relationship. I felt that I was a little Texan myself--the war and speaker Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson. And I had no special relations

with John F. Kennedy, and so it wasn't a matter of second thought or hesitation. It was rather early in the game in fact.

M: Were you ever approached by any member of the Kennedy camp?

I: Oh yes. In fact they were stunned when I told them where I stood. They couldn't believe it. The Kennedy people sent Ted Kennedy, incidentally, to our Hawaii convention, the convention where we selected our delegates. He could not understand how the liberal folks in the middle of the Pacific, the ethnic minorities could vote for Lyndon Johnson. The Hawaii delegation came out for Lyndon Johnson, as you know. We made it an open convention. We knew that our small delegation wouldn't have that much muscle so we permitted a few Kennedy delegates and others to come in. But the majority of our delegation and the Governor and the fellow who is now the Chief Justice, all of us, former Senator Oren E. Long, who has passed away, all supported Lyndon Johnson.

M: Were you instrumental in getting that support around Mr. Johnson?

I: I won't say instrumental, but I would say I did my part.

M: Did you ever speak with Mr. Johnson about supporting his candidacy in 1960?

I: I did go up to him, like many others, to urge him to come out publicly and openly as early as he could, and I personally think that he should have. But I know he was sincere about it because he said so many times privately he said, "You know, I'd like to do this." John Kennedy was then campaigning all over the countryside involved in primaries. But he felt that as Majority Leader, and since the session was not over, he had his responsibilities. He had to stay home and tend to the store, as he said. He said, "No, I will not go to Los Angeles until we adjourn

this session, nor will I make any announcement because if I do then my position as Majority Leader may be compromised." And he did not wish to have his actions in the Senate be interpreted as one geared toward the Presidency of the United States. Well some may say, "Well, he did his as a grandstand affair," but if you look back in history or that period, you will notice there was very little said about this. He didn't make a grandstand play. He was just silent.

That's another thing I admire about this man. He could have very well taken advantage of his very powerful position, and it was a powerful position. He could have really done arm-twisting if he wanted to because he had in his pocket a lot of IOU's that he had passed out and received from other Senators and other Representatives. He had done a lot of favors for these people. He didn't collect these.

M: Did you think there was any truth to the story that he possibly would reconvene the Senate on the return from the convention if the legislation wasn't through, and this was supposedly an example of arm-twisting--obtaining support from the House members?

I: There was no such arm-twisting as far as I know.

M: Did you think Mr. Johnson had a chance to win that nomination?

I: Frankly, at the best, an outside chance of great magnitude. The odds were pretty bad, I would say. He had not participated in any primary, so he went into the convention with very few committed votes, and he had no national publicity worthy of any consideration. So the odds were very bad against him. The only hope that existed was the possibility of oh, some deadlock--that John F. Kennedy who would reach a maximum which would not be sufficient to go over the top.

Then you may have a few shifts here and there, and it could go to Lyndon Johnson. So frankly we were hoping that the drive, the last minute drive by Adali Stevenson, would pick up some speed.

M: Did you ever feel that part of Mr. Johnson's reluctance in announcing, or goal toward the presidency, had anything to do with his being a Southern candidate?

I: Obviously, unfortunately. But after all he is a very sensitive person--maybe too sensitive.

M: When you arrived at the convention, did you feel that the Kennedy people pretty well controlled the delegates?

I: No question about that.

M: You say that very strongly, could you elaborate a little bit?

I: Oh, the chairman of the National Committee was very sympathetic to Senator Kennedy. Even from the standpoint of passes of the convention, the Johnson people got, if anything, just what they had to be allocated--or less than that. When we got there I must say I was really impressed by the organization that the Kennedy people had set up, the communication set-up. The closest we got to that was hand signals, I think! They had walkie-talkies. We had to yell at each other. But it wasn't a truly sad affair as some would picture it.

M: How did you feel--this is after John Kennedy won the nomination --immediately?

I: Well, something before this happened which I shall never forget. I got a call--this was just before adjournment--just before I left Washington to go to Los Angeles. In fact, it was a day or two before adjournment. We knew adjournment was coming along. So Speaker Rayburn called me and said, "I'd like to see you in my office right

away," so I went in. I had no idea what he wanted. He said--this is what the Speaker said, "Lyndon wants you to second his nomination."

I said, "Mr. Speaker, you're not kidding me are you?"

He said, "No, I'm not kidding you; in fact I told Lyndon that he should get someone else."

I said, "I agree with you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the votes."

He said, "But, no, he says he wants you. I don't know. He wants you. And there'll be three others seconding his nomination. I'll be nominating him, naturally." So he said "can you prepare a five minute seconding statement?"

I said, "I'll be pleased to." Well, it turned out that my seconding statement was a minute and a half.

Here again at the convention we were the first to nominate. Alabama yielded to Texas and Speaker Rayburn did the nominating. He did so without notes. We were told to operate within the rules and the rules said you will have, I don't know how many minutes--30 minutes--for speeches of some sort. Speaker Rayburn spoke at length; he went on beyond 15 minutes; he spoke for about 20 minutes or 25 minutes. So when I got on the platform, John Bailey who was chairman looked at me and said, "You've got a minute." I've got a minute! On the teleprompter is a speech for five minutes. So right at that point you have to ad lib for a minute, and all the others did that.

Our demonstrations were kept down to the limit as set forth by the rules. And this was done because Lyndon Johnson made it specific, "We operate within the rules."

After that others got nominated--and this is just a matter of record; you can time it with a stop watch--and you will notice that

the rules didn't apply to them. I'm not suggesting that it was just for us. It turned out that way.

M: Do you recall when you first heard the rumors or the suggestions that Mr. Johnson be the running mate of Mr. Kennedy?

I: Oh, this was under discussion even before the nomination. There were those, the so-called professional people, who were quite certain that John F. Kennedy would be nominated, and the question remaining for the convention was who was going to be his running mate. At that time there were many under consideration. Scoop Jackson was one. And the name popping up quite often was that of Lyndon Johnson--the so-called practical type of balance, north and south. You have a man of great stature, a Majority Leader of the Senate who is not just a Johnny come lately, who on his own would be big enough to bring in the necessary votes from below the Mason-Dixon line. And it turned out to be correct

So when this matter became a reality it was not a big surprise although there were many within the so-called group, the Johnson group, who actually wept. Mr. Johnson had called us into his hotel suite and he and Lady Bird were there. This is before the announcement was made. And he said, "I feel I should tell you something. I was asked by Jack Kennedy to be his running mate and I have accepted." And there was a little chorus of "No, no, no!" because if you do happen to attend a national convention and if the race becomes a rather heated one, the emotions get pretty high. People throw in everything they have. I'm not talking about money, but everything they have within themselves. This 1960 convention was in its way a rather bitter one. Harsh words were being tossed back and forth.

At times scurrilous material, some aimed against the Kennedy's for example--and this did not come out of the Johnson camp--about John F. Kennedy's illnesses and stuff like that, which really got Lyndon Johnson really mad--because it didn't help him. People would say, "Oh, look at the dirty stuff coming out of the Johnson camp." This is foolish political play to bring things out. Oh, there were a lot of things said about Lyndon Johnson, and since the National Committee was a bit more sympathetic to the Kennedy side we were not given the best facilities. And some of them felt they were stepped upon too often, so when this announcement was made, "No, no, no." One person stood up and said, "If this is the case, I'm voting for Nixon." That's how mad some of them were.

M: Mr. Rayburn objected pretty strongly to his accepting the number two position, too, didn't he?

I: Not that I know of. That's what I've heard. I've seen it in writing but what I gathered was that he was at this meeting and he did not object at all. In fact my source told me that Sam Rayburn told Lyndon Johnson that when the party's standard bearer asks you to do this, you can't turn him down.

This is what I gather. Now I wasn't privy to this. My source is just as bad as your source.

M: What was your opinion of him running in the number two position and giving up a very powerful position as Majority Leader?

I: From the standpoint of personal power, it was obviously a sacrifice. But from the standpoint of national interest and party interest it was necessary. From that standpoint I was delighted because I felt that, with this we would win. Very few of us had spent too many

hours in the White House in the eight previous years. It gets a bit lonesome.

M: Did you do any campaigning for the Johnson-Kennedy ticket during that next few months?

I: With the two principals?

M: Yes.

I: No, not with them. On my own I did, yes.

M: Within your own state, or did you go outside--

I: Oh, outside.

M: You weren't on any of the campaign trips though?

I: Oh, to do this would be a waste of manpower. Although I felt if they were going to use me, they could have used me a little better. This is the type of thinking that certain professionals have, you know, "He belongs to an ethnic minority, an Asian minority, Japanese to be specific; send him out to the Japanese area."

M: You weren't particularly--

I: This is where they sent me primarily. I got a little tired of this because in Hawaii we don't do this. In Hawaii if you ever did that you'd be, well, committing suicide politically.

M: Did you see Mr. Johnson much after his election during the vice presidency?

I: Oh yes.

M: You have mentioned the East-West Institute.

I: I would say that I saw him about once a week in his office.

M: What were the meetings about?

I: It wasn't a meeting. In a way I felt maybe this man is a bit lonesome. "Here he is sitting in this huge office; he's no longer

Majority Leader presiding over the Senate," and for one man I wanted him to know that there were a lot of us still thinking of him.

So I used to just call him up. I got to know Mary Margaret very well because I would have to call her to make appointments. About once a week I dropped in and would just tell him what's happening at home or what was happening in the House. He was very much interested. I kept this up while I was in the Senate, also, because he was no longer able to get on the floor to do the intimate type of chit-chatting with the troops there. I think he was pleased that I was doing this.

And these were not business meetings--no conspiring or anything like that. For example, one I recall very well, I called on him and I said "I just got back from Hawaii, Mr. Leader," I always called him Mr. Leader even though he was Vice President. It was just a habit. And I said, "It may be of interest to you that they had a special election at the Leper Settlement in Molokai."

He said, "Oh,"

"You know they have their own sheriff there. The sheriff was elected."

"Oh, really, how many people," he was interested.

Not too many.

He asked, "What kind of a uniform does a sheriff wear?"

I said, "No uniform, he just has his slacks on, khaki, a sport shirt and they give him a little badge."

"Is that all? Not even a hat?"

"No sir."

He said, "Well, we've got to change that, don't we." So he picks

up the telephone and said, "Mary Margaret, get me so and so." in Dallas or what have you. The next thing you know he's on the phone and he said, "Dan, what size?"

I said, "Well, he must be about 7."

"Size 7, my special brand." So in about a week out comes a hat to Henry Kahanapu from Lyndon B. Johnson. He said, "The next time you go to Molokai, please give this hat to him." So the next time I went to Molokai I presented this to him at this gathering of all the patients there. It was a big event to him for the Vice President of the United States would give one of the patients, the sheriff, a special sheriff's hat. This patient still has it there; he's still in the settlement. He wears it only when I visit there. The rest of the time it's in a glass case! So he was always interested in what's happening here and there, not only in Hawaii but in the House and the Senate. Nothing big.

M: Did you ever see any evidence of frustration by the lack of power in the position of Vice President?

I: Not frustration--I won't say that because Lyndon Johnson was able to put up a front. This is something that all politicians eventually do. Even when they're sad they try to put up a happy front. Even if they're mad, they do otherwise. And the only people who may see him, the real Lyndon Johnson or the real Inouye or what-have-you, would be those extremely close--the wife, the children, where he would burst out in anger when they're angry or cry when he's sad. He's not goint to cry in front of people.

So I can't say from external appearances whether he was frustrated or not, but obviously he wasn't too happy because there was a time

when he was Majority Leader when it was almost impossible to see him because he was so busy. He was in constant demand all over the place. But now he's vice president and I can call up Mary Margaret and say "Can I see the Leader this afternoon?"

"Sure, what time do you want to come over?" What time do you want to come in! When he was Majority Leader it would be "Dan, would Thursday at 6:30 be all right?" No, it was now, "what time do you want to come in?"

M: Did he ever discuss with you his feeling about the vice presidency --ever talk about it in front of you, with you?

I: On a couple of occasions he did.

M: Do you recall what he said about it?

I: He was saying "You know I hope that some day they make a constitutional amendment giving the Vice President something to do." There wasn't much for him to do. In the Constitution all he does is preside, and in the event of death or illness he may assume the presidency. That's all.

M: Do you think Mr. Johnson expected to exert a little more influence--

I: That's why I think he went out of his way to give Hubert Humphrey all that work as Vice President. He was Vice President once, and he knew how it was to just sit around and not do much.

M: Do you think Mr. Johnson thought he was able to exert a little more influence in the House and Senate during his vice presidency than he was able to?

I: I think he realized that he was a bit more influential as Majority Leader than as Vice President, because as Vice President he was the shadow of the President. He had to conduct himself and carry out

activities in the name of the President. As Majority Leader it wasn't that way. It made no difference who was the President of the United States. He was free to agree or disagree, criticize or commend. And as Vice President he wasn't able to do that.

M: Did you ever see any indication of there being friction between the staffs of Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson, or between the two men?

Between the two men, I did not see any friction although you read stories about it. There was never a time I felt that there was any animosity. There are stories about certain people picking on him, like the late Robert Kennedy, but I did not see this personally.

M: Did he ever talk about that with you?

I: No.

M: How would you rate Mr. Johnson as a Vice President?

I: Faithful to the President. He carried out his constitutional responsibilities correctly and without complaining as far as I know. He did his chores; he carried out his assignments. I think in every assignment he did very well. He had a special assignment on space and I think he did superbly well. It shows now--the groundwork that he laid out.

M: Senator, when John Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Mr. Johnson called in many of the leaders to get their support. Did you have occasion to speak with Mr. Johnson immediately after the assassination?

I: I was at the airport to greet him.

M: Could you tell what you recall about the scene, about the words that were spoken?

I: He was obviously shaken. You could see it in his face. I had never seen him like that before. I thought maybe Mrs. Johnson was a bit

more affected. She was almost ashen white. Now, this was after several hours from Texas now. Usually she's bouncing around. But here she was extremely solemn and in a way hanging onto the President, which you very seldom see Lady Bird do--physically hanging on. I caught this. I realized the assassination hit all of us. I saw it coming across the wire services.

We have two machines in the Senator's lobby, a private lobby, and I happened to be watching this to see what's happening and all of a sudden out it comes! I had sent the messenger to tell Ted Kennedy that he had better get off the chair because something is happening to his brother. So you can imagine, I was just shaken.

And I remember because for some reason I went to work that day, of all days, with a sports jacket. I'm usually--on a session day, I dress up like other Senators in funeral clothes--you know a dark black or blue suit. This session day, so I've got my olive green suit on. But on that day I had on a blue blazer and grey slacks and blue shirt. And I didn't go home because I couldn't think of going home that day. And I waited until the new President arrived in Washington and I greeted him. When I think about it I feel pretty bad, too, at a solemn occasion such as this to greet a new President, who became one as a result of the death of a beloved one, to greet him with a blue blazer. But there I was. He said one thing to me, and I suppose he said that to others; I don't know. He said, "I'll need your help, Dan." So I suppose he said that to the rest of them.

M: Did you see him in the days following?

I: I saw the President about two days after the assassination. I got

a call from Walter Jenkins, and he said, "Why don't you drop around? You used to come around when he was Vice President."

So I said, "Okay, when?"

He said, "Anytime you want to; just come around." So I didn't go there to see the President. What Walter wanted was to go there--so I went there to chit chat with Bill Moyers and Mary Margaret, who was my very favorite there. She was the favorite of all of us. And then I think somebody must have told the President that I was outside. So he called for me and I went in. He kind of looked uncomfortable.

M: How do you mean?

I: Well, when I went into the Oval Room to see him he greeted me at the door, and he led me to the couch and the chair. The two of us chatted for awhile then. Somehow I felt he was avoiding his desk. Now, in the last two or three years of the presidency, whenever I saw him, he'd be sitting there, and I'd be sitting at the side. This was so for the first three or four months, I couldn't help thinking --unless he was trying to be very informal with me.

M: What did you discuss in this meeting? Did you talk about legislation going through Congress?

I: I don't recall what we talked about; I don't think anything heavy was discussed. What can you talk about--he's been President for three days?

M: I was more or less asking if you saw the direction of his thinking in terms of what he was going to--

I: he had this in mind but he never brought it out. He asked "How's

your wife and everyone?"

M: I'd like to skip ahead for just a moment and touch on some future things, and go back and pick up some areas later. But going on to the March 31st, 1968, speech when Mr. Johnson announced his withdrawal from the presidential campaign. Had you any forewarning of this, Senator?

I: About a month before that I believe I was at dinner with him. I used to get invited by him quite often for these small family dinners in his private quarters upstairs. We were chatting and all of a sudden he said, "You know, I've been thinking of maybe just retiring." He said this to several people, and we all thought he was kidding or seeking sympathy. I'm a politician and even if he is the President I looked upon him as another fellow politician. I'm proud to work with politicians, I think. they're good people. Ever so often you know, when politicians are feeling blue, they like to receive a little pat on the back and get some sympathy, and he was having a rough time at that time. So my response was, "Oh, cut it out, Mr. President; it's unthinkable." And he stopped that conversation right then. And if you checked, several people reported the President saying, "I've been thinking of quitting."

So, on March 31, I happened to be home. Something told me that he was going to make an announcement that I should be watching. So I sat there, watched him on television and I happened to tell my wife--and my wife is interested in my work, but she doesn't meddle around, so she carried on her chores as any housewife would. But I said, "Come down and sit and watch this one here." As it built up I said, "Oh, no, oh no, surely not that!" At that moment I was going to call

up the President and tell him I hoped that he would reconsider and change his mind and I said, "No, I'm in no condition to talk to him." So my wife was really shaken. She likes Lyndon Johnson.

M: Did you try to press him at a later date to reconsider?

I: No. Obviously, when you give a speech of that sort over television for the world to see, it has to be final. He could not even be drafted--because then, and as I said earlier, I felt that Lyndon Johnson was a very sensitive person and if anything he wanted to have historians in the future recall that Lyndon Johnson was a good man.

M: To what to do you attribute this decision of his?

I: I could sense this in him.

M: Do you think it was the growing dissent and diversity?

I: About wanting historians, to recall him?

M: No, I meant--was he, in other words, more or less forced into making this decision by the growing criticism.

I: I don't know what led him to make this decision, but he must have felt that the best thing he could do as President was to get himself out of the sphere and hope by this action to restore some sort of tranquility.

M: Do you think he was concerned whether he could get the nomination and win the election?

I: I know he was quite hurt when several of his colleagues took this opportunity to say "We forced him out."--because if he wanted to get the nomination in Chicago, he would have had it. No question about it. That was his. And he would have gotten just as many, if not more votes, than Hubert Humphrey got. Because when you come down to it, most of the votes that Hubert Humphrey received were those which were

destined for Lyndon Johnson.

M: Of course, Mr. Humphrey didn't win.

I: He didn't win the election; he got nominated. So I'm trying to say that if he wanted to get nominated he could have. To win, I don't know.

M: Had you already begun to do any political campaigning before this announcement on his behalf?

I: Not directly. You're always campaigning for him naturally, but not to specifically go out there and urge his reelection.

M: I'd like to ask you some questions about the 1968 convention. I wonder if we might start it--

I: Can we do it at some other day? I don't think I can do this in two minutes.

M: Thank you and we'll make another appointment with you.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Daniel K. Inouye

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Daniel K. Inouye, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

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Date

46 Sept 1974

Accepted



Director, Lyndon Baines
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December 16, 1974