INTERVIEW II

DATE: October 1, 1970

INTERVIEWEE: JAMES J. REYNOLDS

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Reynolds' office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

F: Mr. Reynolds, let's talk at the outset about the question of the Civil Service-federal unions third party mediation which came up at the beginning of 1967.

R: Right. What we're talking about here is the whole question of the relationship between federal government employees and the unions of their choice and the rights of their unions to bargain with the federal government, and what was the area of bargaining and what kind of a mechanism could be established to avoid even the possibility of a work stoppage. Under the federal structure federal employees do not have the right to strike. When an individual applies for a federal position or accepts a federal position he foregoes the right to strike against the United States government. There was never any question during the implementation of policy to administer the executive order which had been issued by President Kennedy, known as Executive Order 10988, which set up for the first time a formal government policy with respect to the rights of federal empoyees to be in unions. There was never any question, there was never any deviation, there was never any compromise

of that point, that a federal employee should not strike and should not have the right to strike.

But in the absence of that right to strike it seemed to me, and I think to others, that you had to have and should have some mechanism established whereby the federal worker, through his union, would have confidence that his frustrations and his dreams and his desires could be effectively voiced. It seemed to me that the way to do this was to assure that there would be some effective mediation of any dispute between a union representing federal employees and the various executive departments and agencies. I urged that the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service be given the authority to come in and mediate disputes on the call of one of the parties, and that the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, indeed, be directed to develop among its staff people with the expertise to do this, people who would know the different rules of the game that must prevail between unions representing government employees and the federal departments and agencies, as opposed to the private sector of steel and automobiles, et cetera. This was something that I urged be done. It did not call for final and binding arbitration. It didn't call for anything of that sort, but it did call for the involvement of trained mediators in this field, which heretofore had not been done. I might say that subsequently, in an amendment to that executive order under the present administration, this is being done.

F: Was there any problem with the Civil Service board chairman, John Macy, on this?

R: I think whatever disagreement there might have been on this, I can assure you would have been a disagreement on the highest intellectual level, because Mr. Macy and Secretary [Arthur] Goldberg, originally, and then Secretary [Willard] Wirtz and myself, developed a most cooperative attitude and relationship with respect to developing this program. It may very well have been, and I don't recall the details at this time, that Mr. Macy would have felt that this would not be an appropriate device. In other words, that the resolution of disputes between unions and representatives of federal employees and the departments and agencies should not be subject to any outside mediation, but that ultimately it must be a dispute that must be resolved finally by the responsible head of the agency. When push came to shove you couldn't have a strike, nor could you have outside mediators.

F: So far as you know did President Johnson take a personal interest in this, or did this go on below presidential level?

R: I am not aware of any personal involvement of the President in this. (Interruption)

F: In March of 1967 you were named under secretary of labor. Did this come as any surprise?

R: No, it did not.

F: How did it come about?

R: It came about because the former under secretary was named by President Johnson to be ambassador to New Zealand.

F: That was who?

R: His name was John Henning. Mr. Henning had been named under secretary when Arthur Goldberg left to become Justice Goldberg on the Supreme Court and Mr. Wirtz became secretary. At that time the labor movement was very frank in their views that since Secretary Wirtz was from the academic arena and I was from management, they would feel much happier with an under secretary who had the blessings of labor and who came either directly from the labor movement or from the periphery of it. Mr. Henning had been assistant for a number of years to Mr. Cornelius Haggerty when he was the state director of the AFL-CIO in California and then had stayed on in California as the state industrial commissioner. So Mr. Henning had been named to the post. Unfortunately, he and Secretary Wirtz found it quite impossible to develop a good working relationship. The Secretary made his views known to President Johnson, and in due course, when there was a need for an ambassador to New Zealand, the President appointed him to that position, in which he fulfilled himself with great credit, indeed, distinction.

F: That was rather a Johnsonian method, wasn't it, to find another slot for a man who wasn't working out where he was?

R: Yes, that is correct, providing that other slot was one for which the man was qualified. And in this case he just was magnificent, that is, the President was in his awareness of this. Mr. Henning, as I say, turned out to be a splendid ambassador to New Zealand, and hopefully I turned out to be a reasonably good under secretary. By assuming that position I could work very closely with Mr. Wirtz. I am very, very proud that I enjoyed the confidence of the President. There have been

a number of occasions when I was assistant secretary when he called me to the White House for consultation and advice without Secretary Wirtz. On occasions he expressed his confidence in me, telling me among other things that I could fill any position in his administration, which he may have told to others, but nonetheless he did tell it to me. So that when he did name me to under secretary and I was sworn in in the White House, it was very gratifying to me.

F: There was no problem with confirmation?

R: No, indeed. Not the slightest, no.

F: Okay, you're now under secretary. In the early summer, June and July of 1967, you had another maritime strike which, among other things, brings up that problem of automation on supertankers. I don't know that that is the sole issue, but I wondered how much you were involved in that.

R: I was involved very little, as a matter of fact. This was a labor difficulty involving the offshore unions as opposed to the longshore unions. The dispute was resolved quite promptly through the normal channels of the Federal Mediation Service.

F: Military cargo was not involved, which lessened the problem.

R: That is correct. That is right. In regard to that, I had some minor involvement in seeing to it and getting the assurance of the unions that they would not in any way interfere with the carriage of military cargo, which they pledged and met that pledge.

F: Now in July you had a railroad strike, particularly with the Chesapeake

and Ohio and the Santa Fe, and that did affect military shipments to Vietnam.

R: Yes. But again, we were able to minimize the impact of that fairly promptly, as I recall it. It was a so-called selective strike of a few unions, and it was declared in short order to be illegal, as I recall it.

F: Now the New York Times, for instance, and it wasn't alone, called--and this happens in other instances--for federal legislation to deal with strikes that hurt the national interest. Did the administration ever sort of push that policy? I find very little record of the members of Congress coming out for such legislation.

R: No. I'm sure you'd have to look awfully hard to find any evidence, if they would. That's one of the difficulties and peculiarities that we have always been confronted with. When I say we, I mean any administration. And that is that the Congress has to wait until there is a definite threat to the national welfare or an actual strike of fantastic dimensions before they will act, and then when they do act they act very gingerly because of the obvious political implications of it. I saw no evidence that the President was hesitant in bringing this matter or any other matter of its nature to the attention of Congress. But you just never did get any action of a permanent nature.

We had had the earlier action of the Congress in 1964 which I think we spoke of, when Congress tiptoed up to the water but wouldn't put their feet in. That is, we had the fireman's issue, which was theoretically to be resolved by arbitration, but you will recall was only resolved to the

extent of the award of the board by congressional mandate being for a maximum period of two years. We saw at the end of two years the whole issue was back with us and, indeed, is back with is today. Then in 1967 when we went and had the same problem, and knowing the limitations of Congress as resolved to such matters, we sought a measure which we called mediation to finality, which was really about as close to final and binding arbitration as you could get. It encompassed setting up a special board to resolve the issue which was upon us at that time, which was the question of a wage movement on the shop draft unions, as I recall it.

F: In that same summer of 1967 you were on a commission with Walt Rostow and with Leonard Marks, to name two, to examine certain U.S. foreign and domestic policies. Just how active a group was this?

R: Well, again, this was one of those matters whereby, because of my very close relationship with the Secretary, he could pretty much assign me and have the President appoint me. We were particularly concerned with Mexican-American relations, the Spanish-surnamed people, as we always referred to them. We did set up a series of conferences down in the Southwest, and we did hear the grievances of these people. We not only heard them, but we moved in on them. We found that there was discrimination in employment, not only in the private sector, but there seemed to be serious grounds to believe that there was something other than complete fairness in the manner in which a lot of these people

were treated within the government employment family. Those matters were moved in upon and were corrected.

F: What can you do beyond publicizing? You can't really strong arm employers?

R: No, but you could see to it that down through the line of supervisory management in the various governments and departments that had regional offices in the area where a lot of these people lived they actually did promote people who were entitled to promotions, who were being stepped over by Americans whose ancestors were here for a longer period of time. We saw to it that they were employed when they had the qualifications to be employed.

F: There was some charge made that you tended to see the Mexican-American elite and not the sort of a bread-and-butter type of a Mexican-American worker. Was that valid?

R: No, I have no basis to think it was valid, that claim. No, no.

F: Did you have any problem at all with the bracero movement, or was this pretty quiescent at that time?

R: No, it was very much in the works at that time. There was this very serious problem of Mexican employees being brought over each morning to work and then brought back every night.

F: Does this get into a tender area of foreign relations?

R: No, it didn't as it was handled and as Secretary Wirtz handled it. Secretary Wirtz handled it with a great deal of courage, not only in terms of the Mexican workers in the industrial community along the

border, but much more importantly in terms of the agricultural workers going into California. We saw to it that there was a very careful audit made of the availability of American workers to do a lot of what is called stoop labor, which of course is the labor involving the picking of vegetables, usually, that requires the human being to stoop down low and is laborious, difficult work.

The practice had been for years and years that when the tomato crop would come in, the great tomato growers would merely order X number of braceros or Mexican farm workers. Through the Department of Labor and the Department of Immigration those braceros in effect would be delivered. Those braceros would do the work competently and get paid considerably less than their American counterparts would get. This was all happening at a time when there was, we found out, sizable unemployment among unskilled people in California. The Secretary--I take no credit for this--very carefully surveyed this, had the Labor Department people make the most careful survey of the availability of unskilled people. This became an extremely sensitive matter because it was opposed by the Governor of California; it was opposed vigorously by Senator [George] Murphy of California. Secretary Wirtz stood by his guns and prevailed and this flow of braceros into the United States was stopped. Subsequently, in retrospect, one wonders why it hadn't been done years ago. I am sure the President was thoroughly aware of this because it was a deeply sensitive issue. He backed Secretary Wirtz

on this, which was splendid.

F: Have you had a situation where your migrant labor left your border state and moved upland and inland to follow the crops, leaving a labor shortage in the area he had departed from?

R: Yes, we did. We did, indeed. Not only that, which is somewhat of a parallel problem, the bracero who had entered here under permit to work in the fields for a set period of time would frequently assimilate himself into the community and be lost and would end up picking grapes and everything else. When the immigration authorities would go to try to find them and see to it that he went back to his homeland, they couldn't find them. He would just disappear into communities, I mean literally. In the vineyards, when the immigration people would fly over them in helicopters to try to find great numbers of these people who did not return back as they should have, they would hide under the vines and would be lost.

So much for that. Now what's the next item?

F: One other question on that. Was it easier to exploit the Mexican-American in the agricultural end of the labor market than it was in the industrial?

R: I'm afraid they're exploited in both, and I'm afraid that the situation has not been entirely cleared up with respect particularly to the industrial activities. We still have the problem, as you may know, of some of the garment makers doing their cutting, possibly, up here in the United States and sending across the border the cut garments, and then

using very low cost labor in Mexico to do the laborious sewing and the buttonhole-making and the finishing of these, and then bringing them back into this country, to the detriment of American workers along the American side of the border in a lot of these areas. Although we tried diligently to stop this, we were not entirely successful by a long shot.

F: Do you ever consider this in the light of the outflow of the American dollar into Mexico?

R: I don't think I'm competent at the moment to answer that, whether that had any impact on the outgo of dollars.

F: That really didn't affect your thinking?

R: I don't think it did really. We were thinking in terms of the impact on very marginal American workers who were in the area of the American side of the border who were being bypassed.

F: Did you get caught up in that Eat No Grapes campaign?

R: Yes, we did. I went out to the vineyards at the direction of Secretary Wirtz to look into it. I met with Mr. Cesar Chavez and his colleagues, talked to the immigration authorities, looked into the matter as carefully as I could and came back and reported to the Secretary. It was merely a fact-finding effort at that time; it was nothing more than that. I did not become involved at all in the actual dispute, the organizing efforts on the part of Mr. Chavez and his people at all. It was just to look into the matter and report back to Secretary Wirtz.

F: Do you get a fair amount of the heat from the employer in a situation like that, or is the Department of Labor sort of independent of that?

R: There was plenty of heat in connection with that matter, heat that was

directed at the Department of Labor's regional offices. There's no question about that, because the large growers were resisting very vigorously the organization of their employees. We had reason to believe that many of them were using braceros who had been assimilated into the various communities out there. The availability of American workers, which was part of this whole claim of Mr. Chavez, was something that was resisted when the Department of Labor's regional offices claimed that these people were available and they were prepared to work. So there was a good deal of heat actually put upon the Department of Labor directly and through the governor of the state. Governor [Ronald] Reagan did everything possible to assist the growers. I think, actually, that one of the better chapters in the Labor Department's activities under President Johnson was in the efforts to create employment for Americans out there and to generally raise the standard of employment of these people who did the work in the fields and in the grapevines. I never once was aware of any resistance to Secretary Wirtz' efforts by the President. I think it's a great credit to him.

F: You have the Vice President of the United States, almost an ex officio, very much interested in this through equal opportunities concerns; you have Sargent Shriver; you have Secretary of Agriculture [Orville] Freeman; you have HEW Secretary [John] Gardner; you have HUD Secretary [Robert] Weaver, and the Department of Labor. Do you have jurisdictional problems, or were you able really to keep this as a common concern?

R: I was never aware of any jurisdictional conflicts that weren't resolved in a very felicitous way to the credit of the administration.

F: The idea basically was get the job done?

R: Right.

(Interruption)

F: Let's move up to 1968 and talk about the sanitation strike down in Memphis, Tennessee.

R: Right. Right.

F: They were all blacks who were involved, if I'm right.

R: Yes, they were.

F: Which puts a different light on it.

R: Of course the sanitation strike in Memphis had been getting a good deal of national publicity because it had drawn the support and attention of Dr. Martin Luther King and his associate, Dr. [Ralph] Abernathy. It had ceased to be strictly a labor dispute, but emerged as a matter of the dignity of minority people in Memphis. Of course the bitterness involved in it culminated, I believe, on the night of the fifth of April, I think it was, when Dr. King was unfortunately assassinated.

Now the next day, about two o'clock, I had a call from the President. He asked me why we had not been in Memphis attempting to resolve that dispute. I explained to the President that neither we in the Labor Department nor the Federal Mediation Service had any authority to enter into a municipal dispute any more than we, indeed, had in a county dispute or a state dispute.

F: Up to this time you had just kept an eye on it, and it really wasn't officially your concern?

R: That is correct. That is right. We were aware of it; we were concerned about it, but it would have been quite unheard of for us to get in on it. The President said, "Well, I'm not concerned about that anymore. The death of Dr. King which arose out of this dispute, and the continued dispute and the bitterness that it's going to engender, is going to create terrible disorders and terrible problems all over this nation. I want you to plan to go down there. I want you to do everything to resolve it, never mind authority. You're going down as my representative. Handle it the best way that you feel it can be handled. I suggest that when you get there that you contact Governor Buford Ellington by telephone and tell him you're there, because it's his state. Then from there you're on your own. But you're there at my direction to resolve that and to give all assistance to resolve it that you possibly can. I'm not trying to interfere with the city government or the state government, but I'm aware of the fact that this is a national problem now and the repercussions of it can be fearful for this nation." I said, "Yes, sir." I called Secretary Wirtz on the intercom and told him of this. I told him I'd leave immediately, and I went to National Airport.

F: Wirtz approved, of course.

R: Oh, of course, yes. He said, "Well, it's fine. Go right down." I explained to him that I'd report through him to the President of whatever went on. I went out to National, got on a plane without a toothbrush or a shirt or anything, and I took off and went to [Memphis].

F: You took a regular commercial plane?

R: Yes, took a regular commercial plane. The first available plane while I waited out there was probably around four-thirty, and as the plane took off I was astonished to see smoke rising from the city of Washington. I inquired of the stewardess what it was. She spoke to the pilot, and the pilot was informed through the intercom that there were terrible riots in the city and there were buildings afire, and that this apparently was a reaction to the assassination of Dr. King.

Well, I went to Memphis, and I arrived there. It was a Friday night. I immediately called Governor Ellington to tell him I was there and what I was there for.

F: He was in Nashville?

R: He was in Nashville, yes. He told me that he had a representative in Chattanooga and would I contact him and just keep him informed of what I was doing, which I did. The name of this gentleman at the moment escapes me, but he did not have any personal involvement in the matters that ensued. But I did keep him informed. I then called the mayor, Mayor [Henry] Loeb, told him I wanted to see him immediately. He said, "Look, I appreciate your concern, and you're here for the President, but because of the unfortunate death of Dr. King last night I was up all night. I've been on the go all day here in our city. I think that if you'll understand, it would be better if I got some kind of a night's sleep. You come down to my office first thing in the morning. I'll see that you have a pass to get through the streets and into city hall."

F: Memphis was cordoned off?

R: There were soldiers and tanks all over the place. There was curfew. The next morning I started out and went to the Mayor's office. I had that night, in addition to talking to the Mayor, got hold of the president of the international union of the state and county municipal workers, told him I wanted to see him, which I did. I said, "I want to know all about this. I'm down here to try to help resolve it as soon as possible. Let me have your side of it. I want to meet the president of the local union and his associates," which I did, that night.

The next morning I walked through the empty streets and went to city hall. There at city hall about eight o'clock on Saturday morning I found two armed guards at the door of city hall, no one else around. I was escorted through the armed guards and was given a third guard to take me upstairs to the Mayor's office. At the office door was another man with sidearms. I was taken into the Mayor's office, and in the Mayor's office at no time was I with him except that there was an armed guard in the office, too. The city was tense. There were rumors--

F: But Memphis had escaped the sort of situation you had here?

R: Yes. Yes. There had been very direct police action, and it was evident with the National Guard all about, et cetera, that there wasn't going to be any difficulty of that sort. At any event, I found that the Mayor, Mr. Loeb, gave me his view of the situation, after an initial coolness and tenseness about my being there at all and my convincing him that I wasn't there to try to tell him how to run his city. I wasn't there to dictate the terms of settlement; I wasn't there to impose anything from the President or anyone else. But I was there to help, because the

ripples of a little pebble in the city of Memphis had gone far beyond the city, and they were troubled all over the country. We were getting reports of riots in other cities. The Mayor told me that he never was going to recognize a union; he was never going to give them a wage increase. He said, "In my political campaign I ran on this policy. I'm not going to change it." I soon found from him that in recent days the negotiations, indeed, had been carried on on television. It was an incredible situation. The bitterness and depth of feeling on both sides became apparent on the basis of my discussions the night before with the union people and now with the Mayor.

F: They'd come to an impasse as far as talking to each other was concerned?

R: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The first thing to do was to get them to resume at least talking, which I did. There's no point of going into that in too much detail except to say that we were able to resolve it.

F: The question of state's rights didn't enter?

R: No. There was never any question about that. I think it was just a question of handling it as tactfully and as diplomatically [as possible] and winning the confidence of the Mayor and his advisers that they didn't have on their hands some smart aleck from Washington who was going to start shoving his weight around down there.

F: Knew all the answers.

R: That's right. Yet we had a very serious problem. It took a lot of doing to get it resolved, but let me tell you that there are different ways to skin a cat in the business of labor relations, and we did get recognition for the union through the city council, which the Mayor recognized in

terms of their authority to do so. With respect to a wage increase, the Mayor showed me his budget, showed me the state of finances of the city, opened the books to the president of the international, and he had a problem. He had a real problem. There's one aspect of this, the ultimate resolution of this, however, which is not known, and is a fantastic chapter in the field of labor relations of this nation.

I was very, very materially assisted in what efforts I was making by a local chap who was the labor relations director for a hardwood flooring company in Memphis, but who had been brought in as a public service to try to help resolve this and despite his efforts had unfortunately not managed to do it. But he worked with me, and he was very good and knowledgeable. When I was up against this problem, these fellows just had to have some sort of a wage increase. Unfortunately, many of them were being paid less than a dollar an hour, many with long, long service. If there was going to be a resolution to this, particularly after the death of Dr. King, and the whipping up of widespread church and civic civil rights support, and the memorial service which was held over the weekend at city hall, the funeral of Dr. King--all of these things just engendered a terrible situation where it was obvious that these men had to get some sort of token wage increase at least, to which they were economically entitled in my opinion. I compared their wages with what they got in New Orleans, with what they got in Chattanooga, what they got in Birmingham. I got all those figures, and I was convinced that these fellows had a genuine grievance.

F: Did the Mayor see this inequity?

R: Yes, he did, the Mayor saw this. But the Mayor said, "Well, I haven't got the money, and I'm not going to throw this city into debt. I inherited here mayoralty responsibilities. I inherited a city government which is bankrupt. I sit here in this magnificent office, this magnificent building, which was built by the previous administration, but I'm in debt." He had a case. There's no question about that. Whatever the political and the racial undertones might have been, he had a case, that he was not about to throw the city into debt.

What to do? In talking to this chap who was assisting me, who I mentioned a little while ago, he told me of a magnificent old man in the city of Memphis of great wealth, who had the previous week made an offer in the press, an offer born frankly of ignorance of just what he was talking about. He offered to pay the checkoff for these people, as he called it, the checkoff. The checkoff is nothing more than a means of paying your monthly dues, or paying your Red Cross or your Blue Cross or your Community Chest obligations. So he didn't know what he was talking about, but it was evident that he had a great sense of concern for Memphis and the problem of racial relations, which were deteriorating badly. The city had made great steps in integrating the schools and in other areas in the past. So he told me about this chap. I said, "All right, I want you to talk to him and see if he'll help us out." "What do you mean, help us out?" "Well, help us out. If he was willing to get up some money to help these fellows pay their original dues, maybe he'd be willing to provide the money to give these men a wage increase, fantastic as it sounds."

He came back to me the next day, he said, "The answer is yes. He wants to know what it would cost." I talked to the Mayor, didn't tell him where this was coming from. We computed how much a wage increase would cost, effective immediately, of an X amount--I think it was ten cents an hour--which the city could pick up on the first of January when its new fiscal year came in, plus another nickel. The amount was, let's say, sixty thousand dollars, something of this sort, for the wage increase. This chap said okay, wrote out a check, which I gave to the city treasurer to put in the city treasury. That's where that wage increase came from, from a wonderful man who was so deeply concerned over his city and the state of relations in that city that he put the money up. As far as anyone knows that was the wage increase that came from the city of Memphis that the city found somewhere or other. The city didn't find it. A very fine and wonderful man who didn't ask anything about politics, didn't ask anything, [donated it].

F: Can you give his name?

R: No. One thing that he asked me, never give his name. I don't intend to. But all I can say is that I've never seen anything like it. I will say furthermore that after he paid this and we got a settlement, there were many more details. But we got the settlement. We were able to provide for the checkoff of the dues of these fellows through a national credit union, the means of which I developed by talking to Washington and the credit union people that this could be done. [There's] no reason why a man couldn't put money in a credit union and then direct the credit union to assign so much a month to the union for his dues. So

that was handled. All these things were done. I kept reporting to Secretary Wirtz and he in turn to the President. The thing was finally settled.

But when I went back to Washington, very gratified at least that we had it settled, the amount of money that it was going to cost this man was greater than we had estimated. He didn't hesitate a minute. He wrote another check. That check went into the city treasury of Memphis. Those employees were able to get their wage increase, feel they had a sense of dignity and a sense that they had a union. They could stand straight in the terms that they were recognized for the first time as minority group people in that community, that they had made their point. That's the story of that. It all resulted directly because the President called me and told me to get down there and do it. We did it, and we did it in a manner which retained the respect of the city administration and of the union, and that's the end of that.

F: Did the Mayor learn where the money was coming from?

R: I'm sure that he must have ultimately, because the check was there. It was a cashier's check through a bank, which didn't show the man's name on it.

F: There was no provision for repayment down the line?

R: No, no. None whatsoever. That man gave it, and he gave it as a contribution to his city.

F: I would say that was unique.

R: It sure was, and I don't think even the President knows it to this day.

All right, what else have we got?

F: All right, we had the problem in the summer of whether you were going to be able to have a Democratic National Convention in Chicago because of the threatened IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] strike.

(Interruption)

R: It wasn't the IBEW, it was the communications workers and the IBEW; I correct it to that extent. The communications workers had concluded a contract with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company in the East. It was a satisfactory settlement. Mr. Joe Byrne, the president of the union, had blessed it, the employees had ratified it, et cetera. That was that. However, in Chicago the Illinois Bell Telephone employees were not represented by the same union. They were represented by a local of the IBEW out there, and the IBEW was determined to get a better settlement for that little group out there than Mr. Byrne had gotten for the big group here. That IBEW local was limited to Chicago, just to the city of Chicago. They were insisting that they were going to get more money. The Illinois telephone company knew perfectly well that if they succumbed to these demands that the entire contract of the rest of the country would have to be unraveled and reopened and sweetened up and it would be the end of any stability of labor relations, so they weren't about to grant it.

This was all taking place with the knowledge that six weeks or two months later there was going to be the Democratic National Convention. Additionally, there was a very serious strike going on with the Chicago Belt Railroad, which is a small railroad but which is a circular railroad

that goes around Chicago and services all the main lines coming in and services all of the industrial plants. So you had two very serious strikes. But the telephone strike was particularly sensitive because as it progressed and as supervisors were doing the work, telephone service continued because of the technological changes in the system, but the installers were not available to install phones. I had the president of the Illinois Bell into Washington and chatted with him. I was in touch with the union people, and the unions just weren't going to change. They were led by an extremely militant fellow who was not responsive to any encouragement I gave the international president, Mr. [Gordon M.] Freeman, to bring some sense out of this. He said, "I just can't control them. He's beyond my control. We pride ourselves by respecting the autonomy of local groups, so I can't do anything about it."

The convention was coming upon us. I asked the President of the Illinois Bell Tel to tell me at what point there would be a point of no return. What I mean by that is, what was the last date before the convention that they could install all the phones necessary for the leading aspirants for the nomination, for the Secret Service, for the television, for the press, for the radio, for all the rest. He gave me that date. I at that point contacted Mayor [Richard] Daley and told him of this problem, contacted the Democratic chairman, Mr. [John] Bailey, and informed them that this strike was not within the realms of resolution and that I had been told by the President of Illinois Bell that these phones could not be installed and that they had better know this.

Quite frankly, at the same time we all had information through the Department of Justice that there was a planned, coordinated objective of destroying the convention, of disrupting the convention. Here was a perfectly logical, straight, defensible reason, regardless of that, to move the convention to Florida, where the Republicans had theirs and where all the lines were still available. The Mayor was adamant in his attitude, saying that, "Chicago can handle this problem. The convention was planned here a long time, and it's going to stay here. We'll be proud to have it. There won't be any trouble. That's that!" As far as the Democratic Committee was concerned, they were aware of this problem, and they, too, rejected this. So we know what happened.

F: Yes.

R: That's about all I can say about that.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of James J. Reynolds

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, James J. Reynolds of Washington, D.C. do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on June 18 and October 1, 1970, and February 1, 1971 in Washington, D.C. and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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

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

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

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

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

James J. Reynolds
Donor

July 15, 1979.
Date

James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States

August 2, 1979
Date