

Oral History Interview

With

OSCAR L. CHAPMAN

Assistant Secretary of the Interior, 1933-46; Under Secretary of the Interior, 1946-49; Secretary of the Interior, 1949-53.

Washington, D.C

April 14, 21, 28; May 5, 19; Aug. 2, 18, 25; Sept. 1, 11, 22; Oct. 4; Nov. 3, 1972; Jan. 12, Feb. 2, 9, 1973

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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April 14, 1972

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

HESS: Mr. Secretary, what are your earliest recollections of Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Mrs. Chapman and I met Mr. and Mrs. Truman when he was in the Senate, and they were attending a reception which we were attending.

HESS: Do you recall where that was?

CHAPMAN: It was at the Carlton Hotel.

HESS: About when was that, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: His first year in the Senate.

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HESS: He was elected in '34 and he came to Washington in '35.

CHAPMAN: That is correct.

HESS: What do you recall about Mr. Truman as Senator? Of course, he came here in '35 and he served as Senator until 1944.

CHAPMAN: The Department of the Interior, the functions of that department are so widespread and it contains such a conglomerate of functions, of so many wide and divergent subjects, like the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Park Service, the Indian Affairs, and the Territorial Division, it contains the islands. Even the Philippines were under the Department of the Interior at that moment; it wasn't for very long, of course. We soon got them underway and they got their independence.

Now, we had such a divergence of things at that time, I didn't have what I would consider an airtight operation of functions that

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dealt solely within one area, whereby I would be before this particular committee so much that I would get to know them much more than I would others. Therefore, I was not before Mr. Truman's Committee very much, but I got very intrigued with his efforts of investigating and carrying on full-scale hearings on war contracts. I call them the overdrafts of payments to contractors for war materials, and for war functions that they carried on with the Government. That was where the private enterprise and the Government came together and functioned as a unit as best they could, but even with the best they could there were a lot of errors made.

I don't like to charge the industry with being dishonest about it, but there were so many errors involved that you couldn't afford to let them be passed up without checking them out to some degree of satisfaction that you had the truth about what their costs were and things of that nature.

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He conducted that hearing so openhandedly and was so thoroughly honest that he made a terrific impression, even on those whom he was really giving a rough time, because they couldn't answer a lot of those questions he was putting to them. Mr. Truman, quite contrary to what a lot of people may think, did not depend upon his staff to prepare his questions and everything like that. Sure they helped, and gave him information, but Mr. Truman really was a man that did a lot of his own homework.

When he opened the hearing that morning he had the questions pretty much in his mind and what he was going to follow through with, and he expected the industry to furnish the answers to these questions. From there he would start, and sometimes without a note, he'd start off, "The truth will be known, and come out eventually if you keep asking a man the questions that force him to answer. Eventually these questions may

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be embarrassing to the industry. But they're helpful to the Government if you get a refund or make them refund many millions of dollars for overcharges." And they got out of it in that way by making it an overcharge excuse, as I call it.

He collected and had refunds returned to the Government running into the millions of dollars. I couldn't possibly give you that figure here. I don't have it. But refunds that he got for the Government coming out of that hearing were fantastic and very little was really carried about that in the press. It was not emphasized in the press too much. I want to say the press did a very fine job in handling that Committee all the way through. I think they did an excellent job, because they got intrigued and interested in this country man out here off of the farm, practically, coming in here, and in his very simple way putting these

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so-called brilliant industrial people on the witness stand and having them tangled up in two minutes on their operations and how they conducted them; how did they come out with this figure on a certain price, and how did it later happen that it came out 20 million or more higher than they said it would.

HESS: You did testify before his committee?

CHAPMAN: No, I never did. I never had anything in our department concerning the war materials program. I never testified before him, but I did go up and listen to some of the hearings.

HESS: What is your opinion of how he handled the hearings? Was it quite effective?

CHAPMAN: One of the finest I've ever seen, one of the most effective I've ever seen. What I have said is a background for that very question. It was one of the most effective hearings I've ever seen carried on, because he made absolutely

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no effort to get publicity out of it for himself.

His principal effort, and strenuously so, was to get these men to tell him the story, the truth, about how they operated, and what caused them to make such a wide difference in their first bids and their final overpayment for a given job. His questioning of those people was simple and just down to the raw bone of how you would do something, and how you would operate it. You would have thought the man had been operating a big business all his life, and he had never run a big business at all. He went on the simple principle of just telling the truth, that you clarify any of these errors if they just tell the truth, and that it wouldn't necessarily be too hard on them if they did tell the truth, because they'd have to refund some money to the Government, and that was a foregone conclusion; as soon as the hearing got started you could see what it would lead up to if he kept up that

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pace.

He worked hard. He would go and hold a hearing out in Nevada, for instance, where we had some Government plant going on, and he had information about that plant or its overcharge, or say its form of payment to it, led it to a very heavy overcharge, as far out of line, which normally could have been an overcharge, which was perfectly legitimate, but this was far beyond that. He would go from city to city and hold these hearings. He did that for a year or more. Then of course, many of the sessions were held here at this hearing room in the Senate. He got so engrossed in it and so intrigued in how this thing was operating that he got into it with his heart and soul to really find out the truth. He was shocked, really and truly he was shocked, by how some of them were operating, that caused so many of these terrific overcharges on a given project.

Now, he held many hearings here in Washington at his office, as I said, in his conference room, and he'd take his time; he wouldn't

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rush them and he'd hear them, and he was courteous to them, never tried to browbeat them, because he was a Senator and they were industrial men. He was so fair with them. He joked with them on such a fair level, and it showed on the face of it to those men, that he wasn't trying to get them into a corner and trying to cause them trouble. He was trying to get them to tell the truth about what happened, and how it happened. They would have come out so much better with the amount they had to repay had they told the truth in the first case and stayed with it.

When you start dodging around in a Senate hearing, trying to cover something that you don't want to come out, then you're in trouble, because those men didn't get to Washington by just liking the city and wanting to come here for a visit. Most of those men were prepared far better than we give them credit for.

We generally don't give the Senators the

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credit for their ability and preparation for being in the Senate. I give them a lot of credit.

Mr. Truman was the type of a man that had a pace that would work the average man to death. He was a terrific worker, and you had to be very fast to keep up with him, with his work that he was carrying on, whatever it was. If he assigned you something, he expected you to carry it out, and that was the end of it. He didn't bother with it. He expected you to do it, and it wasn't long before you found out that he meant just what he said. When he told you to get such and such a document, or such and such information, you soon found out that he meant exactly that, nothing else. He carried on such a fair hearing and the press was very fair to him, I thought. I thought the press was unusually fair to him all during that period, all during the hearing of that case or that subject; it's more than a case. He carried that on, as you know, for I don't know how many years. He

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ran three I believe...

HESS: I think it was '41 to '44, and as you know he was still Chairman of the Truman Committee, that was the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, when the convention met in Chicago that year to choose a Presidential and a Vice Presidential nominee on the Democratic ticket. Mr. Truman went there as a Senator and came out as the Vice Presidential nominee.

CHAPMAN: He had no intention of being Vice President or trying to be.

HESS: How much importance would you place on his handling of the Truman Committee to his being given the Vice Presidential spot?

CHAPMAN: Well, let's put it this way, there wasn't any question but that gave him a background buildup to the public of the depth of the man, and it gave him a prestige in terms of, "Here's a man who knows what he's trying to do, and he's

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honest about trying to get it. He's not just trying to get some contractor in trouble." Even these contractors soon began to have that feeling, even though they were scared to death in most of it, but they soon learned he wasn't trying to get them in a hole to prosecute them; he was trying to

get the simple truth so he could settle their particular problem with the Government, or have the Government to settle it, either with refund or filing a case in court if necessary. Of course, that's your last resort that you would turn to if all others failed.

HESS: I have often heard that at the time Mr. Truman became President, that due to his handling of the Truman Committee many people, even conservative Republicans, thought Mr. Truman was going to be a very conservative President. What's your view on that?

CHAPMAN: That's exactly right. They thought that. I never did.

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HESS: You did not?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Why didn't you?

CHAPMAN: Because I had had enough visits with him, enough talks with him, and had formed an opinion about him that he was quite a liberal man. Others thought he was a conservative.

HESS: A conservative Democrat?

CHAPMAN: A conservative Democrat that would make a good safe man for the conservatives. That's what they thought.

In his conduct of those hearings he established himself, in the minds of all those same people, as a fair man. They didn't agree with all he was doing, but they thought he was fair about it. He had more general public support for what he was doing than any other committee I've ever seen on the Hill.

I've seen a lot of splashes of publicity,

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headlines, that were beautiful headlines for a particular hearing, some other case, but they passed very soon from the front pages, and passed from the minds of the people that didn't know much about it. Why? Because they didn't go into it with the idea of following it through to the end as Mr. Truman had in mind the day he opened those hearings. See, that's where they missed him again; they misjudged his intentions and misjudged what he wanted to do. He didn't want to develop a political fight or an issue for a political campaign. He was absolutely working--and this is something people must really appreciate, and I don't know whether they do or not; fully appreciate the fact that he was working to the ultimate goal of getting the facts on this terrific expenditure of money, which was the greatest we had ever known in our Government. The overcharge was quite unusual, and he went at it in a very calm, careful approach of getting nothing but the truth.

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A lot of people changed their minds after about six or eight months of hearings; they began to change their minds towards Truman, not only about what he intended to do, but what he was capable of doing. Truman was a very capable man, and they didn't give him that credit. They played him down; they rated him as a farm boy, period. They didn't rate him as a statesman, but Truman was a real statesman.

HESS: While we're discussing Mr. Truman's handling of fiscal matters, as you know, during the period of time he was in the White House, he did balance the budget, I think, a couple of times, and he tried to in other years. Do you think it would be fair to call Mr. Truman a "fiscal conservative" and if he was liberal, he was liberal in other areas?

CHAPMAN: That's partly true, not entirely, but partly. He was liberal. Let me put it this way to describe that: He was liberal on the human

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side of an issue that came before him, but he was conservative on the expenditure side. He was conservative to try to save the money. But he wasn't so conservative that he was not liberal on the issues that required consideration for human needs.

HESS: List a few of those that come to mind.

CHAPMAN: Those are the cases in which he fought for appropriations for the HEW, and he put up a good budget for them, he supported a healthy budget for them. When I say HEW...

HESS: That was back before we had an HEW.

CHAPMAN: Yes, absolutely before we had one, he was supporting those issues and those principles, very successfully so.

HESS: Let me ask for a couple of definitions. You are known as one of the leading liberals in the Truman administration. First, would you think that was accurate?

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CHAPMAN: Yes, I guess if you're going to catalogue a man.

HESS: Give me a couple of definitions. What is your definition of liberal and what is your definition of conservative?

CHAPMAN: There again is where you have to be very careful in getting the public to understand what you mean. Now, when you're talking about a liberal, he may be very liberal on one issue, but not so liberal on another issue, and you don't know which of those issues will

finally stick and catalogue him as a liberal or as a conservative. You don't know which issues will do it, because no one issue establishes a man really as a liberal or a conservative; that isn't generally true.

If you go back and look through history and you'll see men like Senator [George] Norris, who, over the years, was a genuine liberal,

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and not on just one subject, but on practically everything that came before him. He was a liberal, and all the way through.

Now, I don't want to compare myself with Norris, because he was a man of such great stature, and a man of great vision, so much more so than the public tried to give him credit for at that time. They were trying to discredit him at that time, and naturally he was having to carry the fight, particularly on public power. I was with him so openly and right after it on public power, that I became catalogued as a Norris liberal almost because of that. But my liberalism doesn't stop at public power. You could say it may have started there. It didn't stop there. That was just only a part, and I did follow Senator Norris' lead in that because I found he was right. Look what we got out of it; look what the Government got out of it, and its people, the whole Tennessee Valley, because one man fought it for fifteen years; he never quit. My liberalism also includes concern for

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minority rights and help for the underprivileged.

Now, Truman had that same quality. He never quit. If he was for this last year he was for it this year, unless something dramatic would come about to make changes or require changes. Truman was solid, and not a fly-by-night type of a liberal. Truman was really a liberal, and so much more so than people ever thought he was going to be. They never dreamed that he would be the liberal that he turned out to be. It wasn't what they expected. I thought he was liberal, even at the convention. I was more or less committed to Henry Wallace.

HESS: Let's discuss that for just a minute. Henry Wallace, of course, was Vice President at the time; he had been through the third term, and he wanted to remain, of course, he wanted to be renominated for Vice President.

CHAPMAN: He did, badly. I committed myself to him. I shall never forget my conference with President Truman over that. I was going to the convention.

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I got an appointment to see Senator Truman on Friday afternoon before I caught the 4 o'clock train to Chicago. The convention was all the following week.

HESS: Did you meet with Mr. Roosevelt before you went out?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I met with him.

HESS: What did he say at the time you met with him?

CHAPMAN: He would never be caught in a corner trying to direct you to say he wanted you to support John Smith or anybody, but he would lead you to the corner where you could see that's where he wanted you to go.

HESS: What corner did you think he was leading you to at that time just before the Chicago convention?

CHAPMAN: To Truman.

HESS: To Truman. What did he say?

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CHAPMAN: It's impossible to quote verbatim what a man has said after more than twenty-five years. I did not have a long conference with him. I went by the White House to tell him; I said, "Mr. President, I'm going to the convention, and I'm going without any word or instructions from my leader whom I follow, and that's you." I said, "Do you have any word that you want to leave with me confidentially, or in any other way, that you want to say to me?"

He said, "No, you go to that convention and you do what you think is right. As far as a candidate is concerned, I would not try to dictate to individual delegates in any form."

HESS: Was Truman's name mentioned during the meeting?

CHAPMAN: Yes, yes.

HESS: In what context? What did he say?

CHAPMAN: It was mentioned in the context of those that are good men.

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HESS: Whom else did he mention?

CHAPMAN: [William O.] Douglas, naturally.

HESS: But Mr. Roosevelt did mention a number of men with whom he would serve.

CHAPMAN: He did; he mentioned at least three or four that would make good men, and he mentioned Truman in a very fine context in our conversation, that could have left a man who had

had no experience in political life with a pretty strong feeling that he'd like for you to go with that fellow. He could have done that.

HESS: Did you speak with Mr. Truman at the convention, before the nominees were chosen? James Byrnes also wanted the nomination.

CHAPMAN: Yes, Jimmy Byrnes double-crossed two or three people, including both Presidents. I'm being perfectly honest with you. He double-crossed

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Roosevelt; then he tried to pull a fast one on Truman, and both of them pulled the rug out from under him each time. And he should have had sense enough to have known that he wasn't going to get away with that with Truman, even though he felt Truman was his boy, he could handle him. He was down at the White House the next day telling Truman what to do and not advising him, but telling him what to do. He didn't get away with it.

HESS: In Mr. Truman's *Memoirs* he states that one of the reasons that he appointed Byrnes as Secretary of State was more or less to make up for the fact that he was not President at that time, that he realized that Byrnes thought that he should have been nominated Vice President in Chicago, and if he had been, therefore he would have been President; so Mr. Truman, as sort of a consolation prize, appointed him as Secretary of State.

CHAPMAN: I think that's exactly right; that's exactly what he did do, and I told him he'd live to regret it.

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HESS: You did?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I said, "He's going to double-cross you." I know how Byrnes worked. He was a fast worker; he was a political maneuverer, and one from the old school that was pretty rough, fast on his feet, and he would do it, too. I shouldn't say that about a man who is dead, but that really was my opinion of him then and it hasn't changed.

HESS: It hasn't changed?

CHAPMAN: It hasn't changed.

HESS: Moving back to Chicago in that summer of 1944, did you speak with Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Let me go back on that to clarify one point. I told you that I had gone up to the Hill with an appointment to see Mr. Truman the day I went to Chicago.

HESS: In his office in the Senate?

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CHAPMAN: In his office at the Senate. I went up to see him. He, of course, wouldn't remember it. He had hundreds and hundreds of people rushing in to see him every day at that time. I went up and I said, "Mr. Truman, I'm in a very tight and embarrassing position for a man that's conscientious as far as politics is concerned. I've always believed that a man that didn't keep his word in politics wouldn't keep it in anything else."

He said, "That's my credo exactly! And you are right, he won't."

I said, "Following that, I've gotten myself into a position that is embarrassing. I feel that the President wants you. I feel that President Roosevelt really wants you, and naturally, you know, I'm obligated to Roosevelt for the very courtesy of his appointing me to my position, and he has supported me so wonderfully," as he did. He supported me really against some

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tough odds sometimes. He supported me at some really hard points. And I said, "I have talked with the President, and I have come away with the feeling that he does want you, and I want to do what Roosevelt wants, and I would like to support you." I said, "But I made a mistake in committing myself too early, and I committed myself to Henry Wallace, and I just don't think a man--I made the mistake and it's made, I can't undo that. That's done. I have to do what is right, the best I know how, to get out of this the best I can."

He said, "Don't you worry about it one minute. You go to that convention; you support Henry Wallace, or anybody you want. I am not a candidate, and I'm not asking my closest friends, because I know Bob Hannegan is pushing me and is steering it and all that. He's not doing it with my support and with my good grace, because I do not want it." He said, "I am not a candidate in any sense of the word. Of course, no man will turn down the office of the President of the United States if it's given

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to him by his party; no man will do that. But I don't want those things to happen to me."

He was the most modest man and the most honest I ever saw, and he was really that way. I saw him in Chicago, met him on the floor after we had been maneuvering for a day, and I met him and I said, "Mr. Senator, how do you feel about today?"

He said, "Just like I did the last time I talked to you."

Well, I said, "I feel the way that I did then; I feel I'm caught with a commitment that I can't change without hurting my own integrity to myself, and that I can't do."

He said, "Don't you do it. Don't you change for me or anybody else. A man's word in politics is worth just as much to me as it is in a million-dollar deal, trying to buy a piece of property or anything else." He said, "If anything, they are more; they are more apt to be solid in

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their convictions about what they say to you than the average man is in talking to you about a piece of business."

He was very, very interested in that. Now with this, let me lead you into another subject that has been misinterpreted, my position of recommending to Truman to recognize Israel. This was something that had been in my mind for years, and it wouldn't have made any difference had they been Jewish, Arabs, or any other people. I had always felt that my Government could make a strong position for itself in the eyes of the public if it would take a leading role in recognizing small countries and seeing that they were given justice in the councils of the United Nations, because that was set up for the purpose of preventing all kinds of mistreatments of various people.

I for a long time had had in my mind that my Government would strengthen its position in

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the world and would become a leader in the eyes of the world as being a country that was ready to risk a little something to help a small country establish itself and support itself, not because they were Jews or Arabs who would give us good support politically. Of course, I didn't underrate the fact that it did. I knew it would; I knew enough about politics to know what it meant for us, but my real basis was the other principle that I had had in my mind for many years and had discussed it so many times with people that were interested in such courses and policy or government, following the foreign affairs field. And I had expressed it to quite a few groups of people to whom I would be talking, and I expressed to some of the young people I was talking to at that time, that I wanted to see my Government take the lead in defending and in supporting these small countries trying to establish their own independence and their right to serve

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themselves in their own way and their own system, whatever it was. I never thought of communism versus something else. I was thinking only in terms of a small country needing help from a powerful country to get established. And there was practically always some case up before the eyes of the world in which the people, the citizens of a given area, were trying and wanted to establish their own government and run their own government and be independent.

Now, there were many; Israel wasn't just one. Israel was fortunate enough to get better publicity for her case and circumstances forced in to the world's mind and attention because events were taking place at that time that forced the attention of the world on Israel as to her problem. That situation was greatly to her benefit and helped put across her great desires to become an

independent little country. They wanted a home of their own; they wanted a land they could call their own; they wanted a country and government of their

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own. I didn't know what kind of government. That was for them to decide, but I was looking for them, as I would have looked at any other small group, to give them a chance to get their independence; let them make their mistakes as we made them here establishing our Government, and let them have a chance to develop their own government. Now, that was the forefront and also the whole background of my life and training for this Jewish question. It didn't just come up to me because the campaign was on.

It would be understood in the minds of most public officials and anybody else who had worked with me that I would appreciate the fact that the endorsement of Israel at an early stage was politically valuable for Truman, it would be of great help to him, and I thought that it was. I thought that he should do it early. I wanted him to be the first one to recognize Israel, so that we would be the first country to recognize them.

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HESS: Which we were.

CHAPMAN: And we were.

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Second Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., April 21, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Secretary; to begin today, at the conclusion of our last conference we were discussing Israel. Are there any other facts that you want to set down on that subject?

CHAPMAN: I'd like to tell you of the incident coming in on the train from the western tour we made at that time. I don't have the exact date of that trip in my mind.

HESS: We call that the "June trip."

CHAPMAN: The June trip, all right. I don't remember the exact dates, but it's in my files there.

HESS: I think that that trip terminated the 18th.

CHAPMAN: Mr. Clifford and I had a long conference on the train coming through Ohio and Western Pennsylvania as the train was coming into Washington from this long trip. We had about two or three

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hours there in which there were no stops. We got in here, I would imagine, around 3:30. There was a reception being given for Mr. and Mrs. Truman that evening over at the Mayflower Hotel. He was going to be there at 6 o'clock or 7.

On the train, Mr. Clifford and I discussed the Israeli situation from a basic point of view that first really had no relationship to the campaign, per se. We agreed very quickly that obviously this would be a great political asset, we felt, to the President's position, if he could endorse the State of Israel immediately. But we had a basis that was more fundamental, more basic than that, that will go down in history, in which President Truman's image grows and improves on you as it's related from time to time, because his approval of the State of Israel was not just for the political benefits that he did get out of it, and he did get some real benefits politically; but it was much deeper than that and went much farther than that. You had the United

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Nations just getting underway. There were a lot of little countries from all over the world clamoring to become a member of that body and wanting to be a member of that body, feeling that it would offer them some protection.

Now, the basis of the Israeli thing came out something in this order. Here was a small country, and their people had been persecuted all over the world, in fact, in every country to some degree, and they wanted a homeland of their own. That was very deep and fundamental in the minds and hearts of the Jewish people. I felt, and so did Mr. Clifford feel, that if the president could set an example here and now, he had the opportunity to influence the United Nations for one thing. We felt that if the President could at this time give his approval and recognition to the State of Israel immediately, without any delay, it would have a great influence in building up the confidence of other little countries that knew they were going to have trouble or anticipated

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some difficulties with their neighbors. There were a lot of little countries that felt like, "This man is interested in the little people, and not just the big power-play." It had a far-reaching influence on the peoples of the world, particularly the people from these small countries that had problems they wanted to get solved between themselves and sometimes much larger countries. They felt the United Nations was a good place to get them solved, so they wanted to be in. And yet, to have one of the principal leaders of the major power bloc, if you want to call it that, to come out and boldly endorse and give recognition to the State of Israel so quickly after it had

established its position legally in the councils of the world, would be a lasting and growing influence, we felt. We thought it would not be recognized at first in the headlines. There wouldn't be much thought of it at first, until problems would come up between other little countries and some larger nations, and they would come to the United Nations

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with a sense of hope that, "Here's one of the greater powers; they did this for Israel, and I believe we've got a friend among these powers of the world that will help us solve our problems." It would give them a great hope.

I could name you many of the little countries, which you know, many of the little countries that have been helped by the United Nations. They have been greatly helped by the President's position in recognizing Israel as quickly as he did. It's been very helpful to these people, and it's still helping the little countries. It will go down in history as one of the things, when you get far enough away from the tree so that you can see it in its proper perspective to the forest, the public will begin to appreciate what that meant, more than just some political benefits that he might have acquired through that action.

It was a basic thing to President Truman, and to Mr. Clifford, a basic philosophy of theirs, thinking of laying the groundwork for the future, of being able to say, "Well, we had a President who

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did this for a little country," and if any injustices were imposed upon some other little country they could live in hope that they would have a friend at the United Nations to help them to get justice.

I wanted to make that detailed explanation to you because that got no publicity at the time at all. Everybody was writing about the immediate political impact this was having. It did have a beneficial political impact on the campaign, very beneficial.

HESS: Did you also take that into consideration?

CHAPMAN: Absolutely. I discussed that wholly with Mr. Truman, and I found that he was thinking about that more than he was of the immediate thing. He was more concerned about what it would mean in offering encouragement of leadership to the little people of the world, small countries, who wanted to be equals with us in the United Nations.

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HESS: But it was also discussed that this might be a way of obtaining Jewish votes and contributions?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. I raised that, and I told them that there wasn't any question in my mind that it would be extremely beneficial for the immediate time being, to help us in the campaign. It would mean votes and contributions. But I felt that his philosophy and his feelings of it went so much deeper than that.

HESS: By the way, do you have a 1948 edition of the *Public Papers of the President*?

CHAPMAN: I have a copy at home,

HESS: The date of the recognition of the State of Israel has slipped my mind.

CHAPMAN: May 14.

HESS: May 14. That was what I was thinking. So that had taken place before the June trip.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So what you were discussing was after the fact?

CHAPMAN: That's why you've got to clarify that point; there was some confusion there.

HESS: There were two recognitions, the de lure and the de facto.

CHAPMAN: That's right, but I still have in my mind that we had made a trip in May, then one in June. The one in May was not a political trip. The one in June was; it was a political trip. Now, that's my recollection of that, and I don't have the papers to correct my memory here of them, and I want to check that.

HESS: That we can check on, because this was coming back from the trip to the West, on which you were the advance man?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: That was in June.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: I don't recall a trip in May, but we will check on that and see.

CHAPMAN: You can check your dates, because May 14 was the date of the recognition, and he sent that cablegram off about 5:30 in the afternoon, sixteen minutes after it was published over there.

HESS: But when you were discussing these matters with Clifford was before the recognition.

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: Before the recognition?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. This was before the recognition that we discussed it.

HESS: What should be done, not what already had been done?

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CHAPMAN: Oh., no, we were discussing what ought to be done in this.

HESS: That's what I was thinking, because the trip, I'm positive, was in June, and I thought that the recognition, the first recognition of Israel, did come in May. Now, I'll just read a short quote from Patrick Anderson's book, *The President's Men*. This is on page 118, and he says:

In May, 1948, Clifford and Chapman persuaded Truman to override State Department objections and grant immediate recognition to the new state of Israel. They hoped a dramatic gesture of support to Israel would be repaid by Jewish votes and campaign contributions that fall. Eventually, Truman agreed...

That's what Mr. Anderson has to say.

CHAPMAN: That is correct; that is, we both, Clark and I, were absolutely together in our thinking about what was the right thing we felt the President ought to do.

But I want to give you a little sort of clarification on that, because so far it's always been referred to as the immediate political thing, and when I talked to Truman, I immediately caught that

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he had in his mind, "What values does this have for the future of the little countries of the world." The man was fantastic, Truman. When I talked with him he was fantastic about his long-range thinking on this thing.

HESS: I want to discuss one word of Anderson's: He says "eventually." "Eventually, Truman agreed." What were Mr. Truman's views at first when you proposed this to him?

CHAPMAN: Well, this is the way we handled it. This is why when you're doing teamwork with another fellow you can check things pretty carefully. Clark would see him and talk to him about it, say one thing--this is just before we left for the West, now--and talked to him about it, or raised this question with him. He usually pulled me in on this, and then I would follow up by

seeing the President the next day on something else, and I would raise the same issue with him again, discussing the ramifications

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of what this meant, and also discussing the idea that the State Department was not sympathetic to this.

HESS: What were their main objections? Oil? British influence?

CHAPMAN: I think it was the British influence a great deal, and the British influence tied with the interest of the oil people who had their interests involved in this, and they naturally got their friends talking around.

HESS: In this matter, were there leaders of the Jewish community that came in to speak to you or to Mr. Clifford, or who communicated with you in some way?

CHAPMAN: That was done so consistently from coast to coast. I don't believe there was a stop that we made on that train anywhere from New York to California that some leader of that group didn't take advantage of the opportunity to

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get their story told, their needs expressed for our help. They were very persuasive in the presentation of their case, at least I thought they were, and I felt they had done a very fine briefing job in putting down the facts of history there in its proper perspective of what was going on in the world at that time.

HESS: Do you recall any names, any particular leaders in the Jewish community, who may have spoken to you on this matter?

CHAPMAN: I can't think of any that didn't.

HESS: They all had.

CHAPMAN: To tell you the truth, I can hardly think of one that hasn't. They either talked to me or Clifford and usually both of us.

HESS: What about David Niles? He was Administrative Assistant in charge of minority matters at that time.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Did you work with Mr. Niles on this same matter?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Oh, I talked to a dozen or so people that had any entree into the White House at all. I talked to them about it.

HESS: Did Mr. Eddie Jacobson, who was of course Mr. Truman's old haberdashery partner, did he have a hand in, or any influence in Mr. Truman's decision to recognize the State of Israel?

CHAPMAN: Decidedly, I'm quite sure he did.

HESS: Could you tell me about what influence he may have had?

CHAPMAN: I think he had this influence. You know, President Truman's principles of standing by a friend, and he knows you, and knows of you. He's going to listen to you with an open mind, and in Jacobson's coming to see him, or seeing him whenever he was there--now, I did not know when he saw him, or anything of the kind, but I know

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he did talk with him about it. Jacobson had been his partner and they were friends, and he tried to help without injecting himself, let's say, into the picture. He didn't want to project himself in the eyes of his own people that he was trying to take advantage of his relationship with Truman, assuming a leadership role in what they were doing. He was very sensitive about that, and he was very good about it.

HESS: If I recall correctly, there was a time when Dr. Chaim Weizmann came over from Israel. He wanted to speak to President Truman; he had spoken to him on occasion, and then Mr. Truman decided that he did not want to speak to him on this occasion, and Mr. Jacobson intervened in Dr. Weizmann's behalf, and Mr. Truman did speak to him. Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's a correct analysis of what

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took place. But Jacobson, as I say, was very careful not to leave impressions among his own people that he was trying to impose himself upon his friendship with Truman.

HESS: On this same subject, Mr. Truman did recognize Israel, the election came along, and Mr. Truman did win. How important do you believe that the Jewish vote, Jewish support, for Mr. Truman was to his victory in November?

CHAPMAN: I believe it had a very definite impact, favorable to the President, in that campaign. It was an influence that went far beyond just the Jewish vote on this, and part of that came about on the basis of what I just explained to you awhile ago, this long story I have you, these smaller countries. That began to be discussed among these people in this country, these minority people, a lot of minority people. You know, you're surprised when you find out how many minorities we have in this country, so many

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different races and issues.

HESS: We are supposed to be a melting pot, but sometimes we don't melt.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: We're just a bunch of minorities.

CHAPMAN: That's right. We look like we're lumps that don't melt. That's true.

I looked at Mike Douglas' show last night. He had this Negro man and author on there who is quite a writer, who had traced the history of his family back to his village in Africa. The book will be out in May, I think. He's been working on it for four or five years. It will be a fascinating book, because he traced the log of the ship that brought his grandfather over here as a slave on an English ship. It was a very fascinating thing.

That was just a little incident that I throw in, but it shows you how that feeling had

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a way of spreading among so many different people, and for different reasons, you see.

I had worked rather hard on this particular subject in my mind to try to relate it to the future relationship of the President in this country, this country's own reputation as a whole, with the rest of the world, the little countries of the world. I couldn't help but believe that it would have a lasting, beneficial effect on our relationship with these little countries. I think it has surfaced in several issues in the United Nations, where it would get no particular publicity. At that time, they were not issues that showed up as a real issue, in some of those little countries.

HESS: One further point on this; you mentioned that you and Mr. Clark Clifford brought this issue to the President. Just a question about Mr. Clifford. How valuable a man is he to have on your side in something like this?

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CHAPMAN: Well, if I'm going to get into the in-fighting, I want him on my side.

HESS: He's a valuable man.

CHAPMAN: You bet he is. I soon found that out. If you're going to get into an in-fighting, I want him on my side. You know, Clark is a very unusual man, and I don't want to belabor the question, but he's a very unusual man. First, he has a wonderful memory, remembering things; second, his word is so completely accepted as being absolutely bona fide and accurate when he

tells you something. You can depend on him. You can depend on Clark Clifford's word, whatever he told you.

HESS: How would you evaluate Mr. Clifford as a political adviser?

CHAPMAN: Well, I soon came to believe that Mr. Clifford was one of the very top advisers to the President in his value to advising him on

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political matters. It came about this way: He knew so well how to select out from the conversation he would have with me, we'll say, or somebody else that was active in the political arena; he knew how to select out from them just really what they were thinking and interpret their story, or what they wanted to tell him, to the President. He could do it so well that he became invaluable to the President on that; I felt that his judgment to the President on political matters was being proved very fast. I thought he was already at the top when we started working together on those things.

Now, we worked on many things, for the Government I mean, regular business matters. I found the same thing there in his thinking and in his mind. His mind worked so systematically. If he'd tell you something, he did it in sequence and in order. If you think back over your conversations with him, it will come back to you when you least expect it, "Clark

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Clifford told me that when I saw him," and it was quite a while before the event, maybe. He knew about it, and knew how to relate it. He could relate. For instance, let's take the State of New York. There are always, as there are in every state, other differences of opinion, different factions, and that's part of democracy and it's very healthy. The differences of opinion that will sometimes arise also sometimes will get very bitter. I hated to see them get personal and bitter, and of course I don't think it was ever necessary. I think you accomplish more if you have a quiet approach and keep talking, because you lose your case when you show your temper and your outrage in talking with another man. You've lost your case already. So, Clark had that down to perfection. When he talked to somebody, Clark would come across and just let him say what he wanted to say, and Clark would go on and do what he wanted to do about it.

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In answer to your question, a short answer, I'll say that I think he was one of the most effective advisers on political matters with the President.

HESS: His name will probably come up several times more when we get back to the '48 campaign.

CHAPMAN: It will come up on that.

HESS: It certainly will, but let's move back now to the events in 1944. You mentioned last time about your discussion with Mr. Truman before he left for the convention in Chicago, and that you had spoken to the President. One reason I want to mention that again is because, as you know, there is some disagreement among historians as to whether or not Mr. Truman knew for sure that he was under consideration by Mr. Roosevelt. His name was in the press a good deal as a prospective candidate, but there's some disagreement as to whether or not he had received definite information that

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Roosevelt was thinking of him, too.

CHAPMAN: Let me give you my interpretation of that era, that short period there. Say two or three months before the convention, along in that period, I was seeing Truman some. I'd see him quite often--not often, I didn't see him too often--but I had a feeling, and I came away with that feeling every time I talked with him, that he knew what Roosevelt wanted; but he also knew that being President of the United States, Roosevelt knew enough about politics not to handle this in a crude, smoke-filled room for picking a Vice President, that Roosevelt knew enough about politics that he wouldn't do it that way. That's what kept him from commenting to a lot of people on whom he would rather have. He saved his ace card till the last minute, and played it. That's exactly what I was expecting him to do.

I went up to see Senator Truman for this reason: I wanted to be sure that I was in the

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clear with him on my position, my not having any word from Roosevelt one way or another. Roosevelt never told me whom he wanted at all. I got a feeling from Roosevelt that he would rather have Truman, and that's why I would want to comment on that. I had a feeling that he would be more than just satisfied to have Truman. I think he felt that Truman would really add something to his campaign, and he admired Truman's loyalty. That's one thing you always remember about Truman and give him credit for, because there was a man who would stand by his friends regardless of what the situation was. He would stand by his friends and wouldn't let them down. I don't mean by that that he condoned or tolerated crookedness; he didn't at all. You'd soon find that out if you got to working with him.

Let me make another comment on Truman at this point here. You referred to my record as to how long I served in the Department and when I was appointed Assistant Secretary and Under Secretary

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and then finally Secretary. I want to correct the statement that someone made reference to, that Truman offered me Secretary of the Interior to succeed Ickes. That's not quite correct. It would leave the wrong impression. I want to correct that statement, because you'd have to go into that in long detail to get it straight, because it developed over a period of time, and also involved

some people who are still living who were quite upset about it. So, I don't want to stir up anything by a statement like that. So, I'd like to leave that statement out of my interview about Truman offering me the Secretaryship when Ickes went out.

HESS: Would you like to tell me a little bit about the resignation of Harold Ickes, and your involvement or what you recall about these matters?

CHAPMAN: They were pretty hot days for a while. The

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Secretary wrote one of his famous letters to the President, which I regretted to see written, because I didn't want to see the President and the Secretary break; I wanted them together, because as a matter of fact, they were more together on basic issues than they themselves realized. They were not as far apart as they thought they were.

The problem that brought this to a head was the appointment of Mr. [Edwin] Pauley to be Assistant or Under Secretary of the Navy, I believe. Secretary Ickes had some differences with Mr. Pauley which he had had some time before that, and he didn't think he ought to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy because oil companies have such a large purchasing program of petroleum and its byproducts. He just didn't think a man from the oil industry ought to be in that particular place. So they were differing over not necessarily an issue but over a personality. The President liked Ed Pauley; he liked Ed, and Ed had been awfully good to him, but

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Secretary Ickes did not like Mr. Pauley. He didn't like his operation generally.

Now, when his name was sent up to the Hill, I don't know how that corresponds with the date as to when the President received that letter, but Ed Pauley's name was already before the Senate. I think it was already up there for hearings. Now, the Secretary wrote such a letter to the President. The Secretary showed me a copy of the letter that he had sent on Saturday (he usually worked on Saturday as a rule; nearly all of us at that level did), and I saw it; he let me read it. I told him that I regretted his writing it, because I said, "You're leaving the President no option but one thing." I said, "You're going to get either a call or a very quick note, short, telling you he's accepting your resignation." I said, "I think he's going to do it for immediate action."

Well, as a matter of fact, that was on a Monday when he let me read this letter, and we

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talked for a little bit, and on Wednesday, because Ickes had said in the letter, "If I don't hear from you by 11 o'clock Wednesday morning, I'm going to have a press conference and give this letter out to the press." You don't tell a President of the United States something like that.

So, I regretted to see that very much. I was standing there by the Secretary's desk; I'd been talking to him for nearly an hour, and he was waiting for a call from the President. Sure enough, he had a call--the President's secretary calling Secretary Ickes, "Do you know where Secretary Ickes can get Secretary Chapman?"

He says, "Yes, he's right here."

I got on the phone and his secretary says, "The Boss wants to see you right away. Can you come over right now?"

I said, "All right, I'll be over right away."

I turned to the Secretary and I said, "Mr. Secretary, I think I know enough to know just what this is going to mean. What would you do if you

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were in my place? If I walk into that office, and if he should ask me to take the Secretaryship, what would you do if you were in my position?" I said, "Can't you see what would happen to my appointment?"

All of the liberals of that period, who were at that convention, know that I was supporting Henry Wallace in the convention, and that's what I had gone up on the Hill to tell Senator Truman about, to explain to him that I was under commitment because I hadn't gotten any word from the President. Lacking that word, I would have to keep my commitment, and he assured me he was not a candidate and for me to go right ahead with anything I wanted and he would understand. He said, "I believe every man ought to keep his commitments." He couldn't have been more decent.

I said, "Don't you see, Mr. Secretary, all the conservative people in the convention, including Bob Hannegan and a few other people, would not like

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my appointment because I wasn't supporting the President in the convention, and they know it." I said, "Now, the liberals will all think that I have done an underhanded job on you at the President's level to talk to him, to cut your throat, to discredit you with the President. It would throw me open to all kinds of criticism. If I should take it, it would be almost impossible for me to do a decent job with a reasonable chance for success on my part. That's the way I feel about it."

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He said, "Well, I'd take it, and I think he ought to appoint you."

I said, "He has no obligations to me whatsoever, Mr. Secretary, none whatever."

HESS: What did the President want to talk to you about when you got to the White House?

CHAPMAN: Now, that brings in the part of this question,

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the part I was going to suggest that we leave out.

HESS: We can close it for any length of time that you want.

CHAPMAN: Let's go ahead with this and I'll tell you what he said. I didn't even sit down, because this had to be done quickly because Secretary Ickes was calling this 11 o'clock press conference. He had called it already. We got a short, one paragraph letter from the White House saying, "Your services will be terminated at 5 o'clock. Dispose of business for today." And that's all. It didn't say anything else. I walked into the President's office; it was about a quarter of 11, I guess by that time.

As I walked into his office he was standing up, and he had a letter in his hand--I don't know what the letter was--but he had a letter in his hand. He said, "I want you to go back to that Department, take it over, and run it."

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Now, under the circumstances, you could interpret that to mean an offer of appointment, or you could take it that, as a practical matter, that's the only thing he could do for the moment.

HESS: Sort of an Acting Secretary.

CHAPMAN: It could be that.

HESS: Maybe not even with that title.

CHAPMAN: That's right. You see, he could have done several things at that point. But he said, "I want you to go back, take that department, and run it." He said, "You've been running it anyway and I want you to run it."

I said, "Mr. President, I appreciate this; it's a great honor," something like that. "Naturally, it's something a young man with desire would like to have, but if I ever have the opportunity to be Secretary of the Interior, I do want it under circumstances in which I have a reasonable chance of making it a success. If this was intended

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to be an offer of appointment, I don't think it's wise at this point. I would find some new person. I'll be glad to serve as Under Secretary under whomever you want to pick; I'll be glad to serve as

Under Secretary. In thirty days we'll find somebody, but I'll go back and start running it now and we won't have any problems." I said, "Don't be concerned about the stories in the press that Ickes said there would be resignations in mass, that every bureau head was going to resign. You won't have a single resignation, except perhaps a personal stenographer or secretary." And that's what we had; that was all. That's the only one we had. Every bureau head came to me that afternoon and offered me his support and assurance of his loyalty to me, saying they hoped the President made this appointment. They were most loyal to me, and during that thirty days we didn't have a single resignation.

About the end of the thirty days Mr. John Snyder and Barney [Bernard] Baruch went into the

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White House and Cap Krug was in Snyder's office when they left to go over to the White House, and they talked about his being Secretary of the Interior--Snyder and Barney Baruch. Mr. Krug had been chairman of the War Production Board; he had a record to go on, he'd been with TVA, and so he had quite a nice record to go on there.

That was the way I left it. I said, "Mr. President, I'd be happy to do it, and I consider it an honor to be asked to take this for the time being," and I kept it on that basis. I don't like to put it on a flat statement that he offered me Secretary of Interior. He may have and he may not have. I don't know. I wish I did know. I don't know yet whether he actually intended that to mean an offer. It could have been, or it could have been the other.

HESS: He didn't clarify it.

CHAPMAN: He didn't clarify it. That's all he said,

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because he was very quick with these things, you know. He did them just like this. To him, it was just another job you had to do, so "Go ahead, let's get busy with it," and he didn't take a lot of time with anything like this, talking about it. He'd handle things quickly.

HESS: In his *Memoirs* Mr. Truman mentions an effort that he made to get Justice William O. Douglas to leave the Court and head the Interior. Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: Who said that?

HESS: Mr. Truman has in his *Memoirs* that he phoned and talked to Justice Douglas and asked him if he would leave the Court and run Interior, and of course, it was turned down.

CHAPMAN: Truman made that statement?

HESS: Yes, in his *Memoirs*.

CHAPMAN: I remember the timing of that, and Bill Douglas

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missed being President of the United States because he listened to somebody else and didn't have as good a political sense as Clark Clifford had. When you asked me about Clark's judgment on political matters, that was a case where the stakes were high. Bill Douglas could have been President.

HESS: When?

CHAPMAN: In '44.

HESS: In '44.

CHAPMAN: He could have been in '40.

HESS: In '40. Just a question about '44. There was the so-called "Truman-Douglas letter," in which Mr. Roosevelt said he would be glad to run with either Senator Truman or Justice Douglas. Neither man really put himself out to try to get the nomination. Do you think if Justice Douglas had been a more active candidate, shall we say, in 1944, that Mr. Roosevelt would have taken him rather than Mr. Truman?

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CHAPMAN: I'm not sure about that. I've thought of that several times. I was confident that Douglas would not resign from the Court to run with Truman. He was given serious thought for the Vice Presidency by Roosevelt.

HESS: In '44.

As you know, Truman also asked him in '48 to run, and he turned that down too.

CHAPMAN: Yes. I told him that he was going to turn him down.

HESS: You told Mr. Truman that Douglas would turn it down?

CHAPMAN: I did. I said he was going to turn it down. And that's exactly what he did. He took the advice of Tom Corcoran.

HESS: It seems that in '44, in speaking of the Vice Presidential spot, we have active candidates: Henry Wallace and Jim Byrnes, and we have inactive candidates, Truman and Douglas.

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CHAPMAN: That's exactly what you had. You had just that. Now, during that period I admired Truman so very much, because, to me, a man's political word is just as sacred as his own business. Your word is your word, and I admired him for that, but I got to like him and know him better during that period, that short time there. I went up as soon as he got to Chicago, and I went up and told him what I had done. And he said, "I know it. Bob Hannegan has told me all about it."

Well, I said, "It's true, I did do all I could for Henry Wallace to keep my commitment, but I can assure you that not one word was said by me to discredit you in any sense of the word," and I didn't. I never once made a statement about him that was a discredit to him.

Jim Farley wanted that pretty bad. He was very hurt.

HESS: The second spot?

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CHAPMAN: He wanted the first spot, but he would have been tickled to death if he could have been given the second spot.,

HESS: He would have liked to have had the first spot in 1940, too.

CHAPMAN: 1940 was when he wanted the first spot, and he tried to get it. I saw him work on it, and I know. In '44 he would have been pleased to have taken the Vice Presidency.

HESS: What did Roosevelt think of Farley at that time, after their falling out in '40?

CHAPMAN: I don't think it would be appropriate for me to comment on that.

HESS: One brief question about Mr. Farley. Where would you place him on the scale of chairmen of the Democratic National Committee, taking into consideration William Boyle, J. Howard McGrath and Frank McKinney and Stephen Mitchell, and all the chairmen of the Democratic National

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Committee that you have known; where on that scale would you put Jim Farley?

CHAPMAN: At the top. As a campaign manager, chairman of the Democratic Party, he was absolutely at the top. Now that means that you've got to understand the events of the day; if he had been in the same position ten years later, no, but when he served, the time was right. He served as dutifully and did as fine a job as chairman that I think I've ever seen.

HESS: One brief question about Mr. Corcoran. You mentioned that in 1948 when Mr. Truman asked Justice Douglas to take the second spot, that Mr. Corcoran advised him not to take it that year.

CHAPMAN: Right.

HESS: Do you recall; did Mr. Corcoran think that Mr. Truman would lose?

CHAPMAN: It was generally known that he and Ickes were

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very close together--Tommy Corcoran and Secretary Ickes--and it was believed that they both were advising Douglas on what to do.

HESS: In 1948?

CHAPMAN: In 1948, this was. Douglas was out in Oregon and it took them a day before they could get him on the phone and I think that frankly they didn't think that Truman could win.

HESS: Do you think that that might be one of the reasons that Justice Douglas turned him down also, that he thought he would be a member of a losing ticket?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I think that was one of his reasons.

HESS: What other reasons would he have had, the basic reason, the fact that he just wanted to remain on the Court?

CHAPMAN: No, Bill Douglas wanted to be President of the United States very much, and he thought the

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timing was an essential element. You had to time it right, and it was rumored that his two principal advisers were telling him that the time wasn't right; he had to wait. Now, they made a serious mistake for Bill Douglas when he didn't take it in '40 when Roosevelt was running for the third term.

HESS: When Wallace did.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: When John Nance Garner went out.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he went out, that's right. Garner was in there.

HESS: He was there the first two times. He was also opposed to the third term.

CHAPMAN: That's right; that's why he said he wouldn't run.

HESS: He wouldn't run, so in '40 they got Henry Wallace.

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CHAPMAN: Well, I think Garner was perfectly sincere on his views about that. I don't think he believed that a man ought to go for a third term.

HESS: No one had ever done it before. There were a lot of people opposed to that.

CHAPMAN: There were a lot of people opposed to it and I ran into that coming and going. You see, I was doing advance work all over the West then.

HESS: As a child in Kansas, I remember two main stickers: "Win With Willkie," and "No Third Term." And of course, Kansas went for Willkie that year, too, as you will recall.

CHAPMAN: Yes, it did.

HESS: Kansas usually is a Republican state.

CHAPMAN: But you know the thing that was, in politics, so amazing; Roosevelt came on the wave of a tremendous depression, and it was very serious and very deep. People were suffering, and there

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were a lot of them, too. And Roosevelt was busy wanting to help them; he was trying to work out some domestic program to help the poorer people to get jobs, and he created all these jobs like WPA and all that to create jobs. Then he got money for the Federal Works Program under Ickes. See, Ickes was named by Roosevelt as Public Works Administrator.

HESS: The Civilian Conservation Corps, the old CCC.

CHAPMAN: You remember all those things were created because they created jobs for different groups of people.

HESS: They built the lake for my hometown,

CHAPMAN: There were a lot of things done then which you couldn't have done at an earlier date or a later date. If you hadn't done them right then, you would have never done them. Timing is so important in Washington as to accomplishing anything. This you have to do. You've got to be

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on time, be there at the exact moment. If you're on the scene at the right moment, the chances are you can accomplish what you may have ambitions to do. If you're not there, you may not. You may never get it. You may never get the chance again. Look at Bill Douglas. That was his last chance, that '48 thing. In 1948 I went to the convention backing Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, of Wyoming, for Vice President. We had enough delegates to get Senator O'Mahoney nominated for Vice President. However, Howard McGrath, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, recognized Senator Alben Barkley, of Kentucky. Senator Barkley made such a stem-winding speech that he cinched the nomination for himself as Vice President with Truman. I was up at the convention in Philadelphia that week in 1948 and they kept Truman sitting up there in the moonlight on the back...

HESS: Sitting out on that balcony.

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CHAPMAN: Yes, sitting up there in the moonlight. It was nearly 2 in the morning; it was really late, before they would let him get on to make his speech. He just chatted and laughed, didn't let it bother him a bit, because he knew he had his campaign wrapped up; he knew exactly where he was going and what he was going to do. Truman really had a keen eye for timing, and for mapping out things, and for doing them in an orderly way.

HESS: Did you speak with him out on the balcony that night?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I did. I had a nice chat with him out there on the balcony that night.

HESS: What did he talk about out there on that balcony while he was waiting to go in?

CHAPMAN: I said, "Mr. President, we've got to get ready and get our campaign underway here. We can't let these boys sit around too long, because they've got to move."

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He said, "you're darned right we've got to move; we're all going to move; we are going to move, and we're going to win, too." He said, "We're going to win."

I said, "Somehow or other I believe you. I believe we're going to win."

I must be honest. I didn't believe it as strongly at that time as I did later. I'll tell you when I was convinced he was going to win: The 15th of October.

HESS: The 15th of October?

CHAPMAN: I was as certain he was going to win that day as anything in this world.

HESS: What happened on the 15th of October?

CHAPMAN: I was in the West. I was covering the west coast and making my third coverage. I had made it twice, but I was making the third trip over the west coast, and there were seven or eight states that I covered, in which I spent some time with each of the political leaders. Now when I made my first trip to the West, I

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couldn't find the national committeemen, the state chairmen or the county chairmen; they didn't want to be connected with a loser.

HESS: Was this in June?

CHAPMAN: Yes, one of them. Then there were other trips that I made by myself. But I couldn't find any of them in town and Truman will be there, we'll say, Monday night.

HESS: They had appointments elsewhere?

CHAPMAN: Yes, they had appointments somewhere else. But by the 15th of October I could have gotten anybody to come; "Truman will be here so-and-so," and so they'd come down to the meeting. By that time they were looking me up; I didn't have to call any of them. They were calling me. Now, that was the difference which I recognized.

On the 15th of October I was leaving the hotel in San Francisco, seeing a group of people, and they were from down in the central valley.

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I said, "You folks, some of you don't think we're going to carry California. You want to know something, we're going to carry California."

This newspaper fellow on the *Times* there--he's a columnist, he's a political writer, very good fellow, and very deep type of man. He said, "I want an interview with you, and I want one that I can publish after the election, and I want to say, 'This is the interview I had with Oscar Chapman before election.'"

I said, "All right, I've never done this before, but I'm going to do it. You've got to promise me that you're going to run it on the front page, and you promise me that you're going to quote exactly what I say."

He said, "I'll give you my word. I'm going to write it down right now." He did. He wrote it down on his long pad.

And I said, "Truman is going to win. I'll answer the \$64 question first; he's going to win. Now, you start in and ask me whatever you want."

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"Well, you say he's going to win: Is he going to carry New York?"

I said, "No, he's not going to carry New York."

He said, "Is he going to carry California?"

"Yes, he'll carry California."

He said, "By how much?"

I said, "Now, that's stretching it awfully thin. Remember, you've got two or three million votes in this state, and you're asking me by how many is he going to carry it by when there is a three-cornered race going on. But I'll tell you how much he's going to win by. He's going to win by the number of votes that Henry Wallace lacks in getting 200,000 votes. And Henry Wallace isn't going to get 200,000 votes; therefore, Truman is going to carry California."

You know what, I've got this all written down, what we carried California by. Henry Wallace got about 190,000 votes and we carried it by nearly 18,000.

HESS: That's pretty close, isn't it?

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CHAPMAN: You can't get much closer than that.

HESS: You can't get much closer than that.

CHAPMAN: I don't know whether you ever knew Pete [Milburn Peter] Akers or not? I asked you about that once before. He was out running the *Sun-Times* in Chicago. He had been our public relations man in the Department of the Interior. He was out running the *Sun-Times* when this came along, and I stopped off there on my way back to New York; I was going to New York to really close the show up there. I walked into Paul Fitzpatrick's office about 5 o'clock in the afternoon; there wasn't a soul in there but him and his press man, sitting back there with their feet on the desk reading the paper. Not a stenographer, nobody. This was Friday before election on the following Tuesday.

Now, just a few nights before that is when I spent the night in Chicago and saw Pete Akers. I gave Pete Akers, state by state, not only what

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states we were going to carry but by how much, and which ones we would lose, and by how much. I only missed one state.

HESS: Which one was that?

CHAPMAN: It was the craziest thing. I missed the judgment on one state that I thought we were going to carry, and we didn't. I had it marked down on our side, but it goes to show you, you've got to do your homework, and I had done my work in that state to give a real sound opinion about it, and I hadn't done enough work in there. So, you asked me what state it was and it's slipped my mind. I was just trying to think what state that was. We lost it, and I said we would carry it. That's the only one I missed. I can't remember what state that was. But in 1940 I've got that--my wife has it all written down, my telegram that I sent back to President Roosevelt in 1940. I sent a telegram back there to the White House on Sunday before the election on

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Tuesday. I had a report on my western states. I had to handle them, and he wanted an accurate estimate of what .I thought we were going to carry each state by, or lose it. I started in with the Midwestern States and we sent this telegram from Portland. We were getting on the train in Portland and going back to San Francisco, because we were leaving San Francisco by plane the next day to go to Denver to vote. I told my wife that I forgot to send this telegram off to Harry Hopkins and the President, and they wanted a telegram from me giving the states we were going to carry and by how much. "Oh," she said, "don't stick your neck out like that because you'll look foolish."

I said, "I would if I didn't know, but I happen to know."

She said, "I have confidence in you, anything that you do politically, I have confidence in you, but this is too big a gamble for you to take."

I said, "No, it's going to be a gamble but

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it's one worth taking, and I'm going to have it on record."

I sent Ed Flynn a telegram regarding the eleven Western States, and--I'll tell you that state in 1948; it was Colorado. They had figures that Harry had given me during the day, how much we were going to carry or lose each of the Western States, and he wanted me to have that before I sent my telegram off to him that night. They were wrong on half of them. See, I took this Wallace thing; I analyzed this Wallace thing very carefully, and having gotten my neck stuck with him in that convention because of the commitment that I had to carry, I soon learned where Wallace's weaknesses were.

HESS: What were his weaknesses?

CHAPMAN: His weakness was in communication with people. He just couldn't communicate. He couldn't communicate with organization people at all.

Now, Truman could. Truman could always have

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communications with these people, and that was one of the best things about Mr. Truman--that very thing, and it was Wallace's weakest point.

You know, Adlai Stevenson had some of the same weakness. You couldn't get him to communicate with the organization people. They were trying to disassociate themselves. I want to save that story; this is a very good story, and Truman told me to go to that convention in Chicago and go and make Adlai Stevenson announce that he was going to run. "Don't let them have to draft him," he said. "I want him to say he'll take it if he's nominated. That's all I want him to say."

But I think that is enough for this morning.

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Third Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., April 28, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, let's make a correction on how Colorado went in 1948. All right?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I made a mistake when I said that Colorado did not go for Truman in '48; I was in error. It did go for Mr. Truman, if my memory serves me correctly, somewhere around 25,000 votes or more.

HESS: You had thought that there was one state that you had missed.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Looking at this list, do you recall now which state went for Dewey that you thought was going to go for Truman?

CHAPMAN: Just offhand here, I don't see it.

HESS: Perhaps we can come back to it.

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Iowa went for Truman, and you thought Dewey was going to take the farm states.

CHAPMAN: At that time (before the plowing contest) I thought Dewey was going to take Iowa, yes.

HESS: That was quite a surprise.

CHAPMAN: I would like to connect that particular thought up with another phase of that campaign. I would like for the people to know those who contributed so much to the different phases of this campaign. The Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Charles Brannan of Denver, made a most significant contribution in guiding and helping to direct the campaign program through those farm states. I thought he had done a magnificent job in informing the people, as well as the President, on what the situation was regarding their legislative program that was in the Congress at the time, and the lack of support that the farmers were getting from Congress. I thought

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Secretary Brannan made a most significant contribution to that whole campaign, in the planning stages, and in the intimate contact and work with the President on this.

HESS: There was an interesting thing that came up about both Iowa and agriculture at that time. Do you recall the rewriting of the charter of the Commodity Credit Corporation at that time, and the Republicans had stricken out the provision for purchasing and providing Government storage for grain, of which Iowa was one of the big growers. There was a bumper crop that year and so when the Iowa corn growers got ready to store their corn, there was no provision for it; they couldn't get Government price support. Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: You have hit the very key, the thing I had in mind, when I was referring to Secretary Brannan. He had done a magnificent research job in having that piece of legislation researched carefully as to how much money was cut out of

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that bill so that the farmers were not given any help in building some storage tanks to help store their grain, instead of pouring it out on the ground where you could see it, and where it was being ruined every week it stayed out there. Mr. Brannan did a splendid job in briefing that case through for the benefit of the President and for the benefit of the people of the State of Iowa.

Now, he did the same thing for other farm states, but that particular one always stands out clearly to me, because I didn't realize at the moment how far-reaching that issue was. I discovered before the election, of course, that it was really cutting very deeply, and therefore we pressed that issue hard in that section of the country, and in other parts of the country we explained why the farmer wasn't getting his share of help that he should have been getting from his Government.

HESS: As Mr. Truman said at the National Plowing Match

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at Dexter, Iowa that year, "The Republicans are sticking a pitchfork in the back of the farmer."

CHAPMAN: That's the very words he used, and I was standing right behind him when he said that. I was at that meeting.

HESS: What was the impression that you came away with there? How was he received by the farmers? Now, as I understand, the airplanes were lined up and the Cadillacs were lined up, a lot of wealthy farmers came to that meeting.

CHAPMAN: Very much so. A lot of people had driven in there for miles and miles to be at that luncheon. We had a big luncheon under a great big canvas tent out there in the field, and had this plowing contest carried on, and the feeling and atmosphere among those people was, to me, perfect. It was a great day, good, jovial and friendly. They were most friendly to the President; they gave him a very warm reception.

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HESS: Did you speak with some of the farmers there? Did you circulate through the crowd and speak with them to see what the tenor of the crowd was like?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that was one of the things I did quite a bit of, to get their reaction to what should be done to help them, and to ask them to tell me what they really felt we should do to help them. I found invariably that they would come back to this, "Why didn't Congress let us have a little money to build storage tanks to save our crops when they were giving money to every industrial plan in the United States to increase their industrial capacity and efficiency and everything else?" They felt that they had been left out.

HESS: After you circulated through the crowds, talking with people, how were your findings relayed to the President? Would you speak directly to the President to tell him what your impressions were?

CHAPMAN: Usually each one of us would be doing this

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kind of a thing, such as Charlie Brannan, Secretary of Agriculture, Oscar Ewing of the FSA, and Clark Clifford, and, oh, there were many, many others doing this very same thing, and somewhere along the way, we'd get a chance for them to come aboard the train to talk with the President for a few minutes. Sometimes they might only have a few minutes, but they'd give him their story and relate their problems to him, and these fellows would relate the problems they had picked up from the farmers to the President. They would give him a thorough briefing on what

they had picked up from this particular plowing contest, I did a good deal on that, and I'm sure Mr. Brannan did, too, in that case.

HESS: But even after speaking with the farmers in Iowa, you still thought Iowa was going to go for Dewey, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Not for long. About a week after that, I was sure we had it.

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HESS: You were sure that they had it?

CHAPMAN: I was sure we had it.

HESS: Before we get along too far in the campaign, let's go back to the very beginning of events during 1948 to that trip in June that Mr. Truman took to the west coast, and I understand that you were the only advance man used on that trip. Irwin Ross, in his book, *The Loneliest Campaign*, states that you brought to the President's attention that Robert Gordon Sproul, the president of the University of California, wanted the President to deliver a commencement address at Berkeley on June 19 that year. Is that correct? Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: That is correct.

HESS: How did that come about?

CHAPMAN: I knew the president of the university, and I spoke to him by telephone and asked if what I was told by a friend was correct; did they really

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want the President to speak there at that commencement. He said, "Why, by all means, we would love to have him. I haven't yet cleared it with the board of regents, but I'll call a meeting and get them together right away."

I said, "Well, I wouldn't want to create a situation here where there would be any embarrassment, either to the school or to the President. I wanted to be sure that you wanted him and that there isn't a political trick involved in this thing; it's got to be a genuine desire to hear the President of the United States discuss the problems."

He said, "Well, I'll assure you that's what we want. We want the President of the United States to talk to this class. We feel that he can contribute a great deal to these young people who are graduating from the school this year, if he'll just give one of his plain, back platform train speeches." He had heard him on two occasions, I think. At least he had heard him.

By telephone we arranged the whole thing.

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He called the regents together in a matter of days (I don't remember), and they agreed to invite the President. They didn't want to be out on a limb, extending an invitation and then be turned down either, and I didn't want the President to be caught in a trap like that in his case.

So I then discussed the matter with the President, and he raised some of the same doubts that I had as to whether they really wanted him, whether there might be some political reaction or attempting to create a political situation. Well, I assured him that I was convinced at that time that they were sincere about it, that they really wanted him, and I was sure they were sincere in wanting him to speak and there would be no problem involved at all, no problem.

HESS: What did President Truman seem to think about the general wisdom of taking a trip of this nature at this time? In other words, you know, it's been called a shakedown trip to get ready for

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the campaign. Was it?

CHAPMAN: That's probably as near as you could identify it by any particular reason for the campaign; it was to get more exposure to the public, and more explanation of some of the immediate bills that were pending in Congress at the time. It was time for the President to speak to the people, anyway.

HESS: There was a memo that Clark Clifford gave to him in November, 1947, about six months before, and in that memo it was suggested that he make a trip of this nature; and also I have found references where Mr. Truman had stated that he himself was thinking of a trip of this nature quite some time in advance of June.

CHAPMAN: I had had a good visit with Clark Clifford, and between us, I think, we both were in agreement that it was very timely for him to make a trip, but to do so we ought to have some good reason for him to go out there to the west

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coast and back, rather than just going out and making a lot of these speeches. So I tied the two things: The invitation to speak at the University of California to the graduating class, and to dedicate one more generator at the Grand Coulee Dam that we were putting in. It was another generator that had been completed and put in which was increasing the capacity of the kilowatt load for that dam for power purposes. We decided those two things were sound, solid and adequate; it was not to have some phony reason for doing it, but something genuine. Well, here was something that was absolutely genuine. We had spent much of our time in public life, both the President, Clark Clifford and I, as well as the others working with the President, pushing the program of the good development of the Northwest, the Bonneville Dam development program, and the Grand Coulee Dam.

HESS: And the CVA, which didn't get off the ground...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...which we want to talk about one of these days.

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CHAPMAN: That needs a thorough discussion.

HESS: That's a subject in itself.

HESS: That we can put off till another time. Let me ask you one question about the meeting in Berkeley, if that's all right:

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Were you present at the time the President spoke?

CHAPMAN: No, not at Berkeley. I didn't go over to the university.

HESS: I have heard, that when President Sproul introduced President Truman, that he was not very polite? Have you ever heard that?

CHAPMAN: Well, I heard it, but really and truly there was really nothing to that.

HESS: Some reference to the Republican National Convention, I think.

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CHAPMAN: Well, weren't they having their convention out there in San Francisco that year?

HESS: No, they had it in Philadelphia, too.

CHAPMAN: They had it in Philadelphia?

HESS: They had all three; the Republican, Democratic, and Henry Wallace's convention all met in Philadelphia.

CHAPMAN: I think you're right.

HESS: What had you heard about that introduction?

CHAPMAN: I checked up on that story after I heard it but I was convinced. I had some very good friends that were in that session, attended, and they sat close to the front rows; they could

see everything very carefully, and they purposely were--I asked them to get for me a careful reaction as to how it went off. I wanted to be certain that there was no question of discourtesy involved in this thing. See, that was my very

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caution in the very beginning, that something like this could happen. I didn't want it to happen if I could avoid it. I didn't go to the university; purposely stayed away, because it was known generally that I was working pretty hard on this campaign. And so I didn't want to mix the school picture up with his campaign to that extent; his speech had to speak for itself.

So, as I started to tell you, after I had a good long visit with Clark Clifford, we both came to the same conclusion--it was a time to have a good trip to the West. I told Clark of my two reasons that I thought we could accept: One was to let us announce that he was going to dedicate the other generator that was being installed at the Grand Coulee Dam; and second, accept the invitation to speak at the university at Berkeley.

Well, now, this Berkeley thing wasn't done without some very careful checking, because my suspicions were not borne out, and I was very glad

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for that, because I was following it very closely.

Going back to your question about the introduction of the President, my friends (I had three of them) gave me a careful report on that, and they were there for that purpose.

HESS: What did they think?

CHAPMAN: They said you couldn't interpret that to be in any sense a slight or lack of courtesy. They said they didn't take it that way.

HESS: Who were the three men?

CHAPMAN: One of them is in a hospital right now in western Oregon.

HESS: Were they Interior Department men?

CHAPMAN: No, no. They were not Interior Department men. I didn't want the Government people in there.

HESS: That would have been a little too much of a

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Government flavor for a non-political trip, wouldn't it?

CHAPMAN: Well, as much as you can emphasize that side about it, that was the time to do it. Here you're going to speak to these students that are not interested, per se, in an individual as a candidate; however, a man who graduates from a university ought to be interested. In these days, students are getting interested, too. I didn't want to emphasize Government people, so I didn't try to get Government employees for meetings or anything of the kind. I didn't have to, as a matter of fact. The lack of enthusiasm for Truman on that western trip was among the party officials more than anybody else. They had such reservations and doubts about his being able to be reelected.

After that June trip, shall we say, I kept emphasizing, with all the vigor I could command, that Truman was going to be reelected, and I didn't have a shadow of a doubt about it. By that

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time, I didn't. I was getting better reports from the places that I was checking up on, and you know, checking up on a given area about a man's popularity, there's a very interesting technique involved in how you do that.

We found that the people, when they once heard Truman, when he stepped out on the back of the train with his wife and his daughter, he would introduce them, and it was the most perfect picture of, "Here's one of our neighbors with his wife and daughter," with no fanfare, no Hollywood stars backed up around him for pictures. I stayed away from that; I didn't try to get that, although we had some, but we didn't try to make any effort to press that. Now, that's a showmanship emphasis that I didn't think was necessary in this case, because I wanted the real Truman as I knew him to come through to these people, and he did just that. And those little chats on the back of the train, they were no Lincoln day address of Gettysburg, but I'll

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tell you now, they were the Truman day speeches for 1948 which the country needed worse than they had ever needed before during my experience in the Government.

HESS: Many people have pointed out that this was the period of time when Mr. Truman developed a good speaking style. Up until this time he had read many of his speeches. Was this a conscious decision made by a group of advisers that he would speak from an outline, speak more from memo form and less from a regular written text?

CHAPMAN: To be perfectly frank with you, I am not a speechwriter myself, but from my own memory of the relationships of the people who worked close to the President in this campaign, I would say that I believe Clark Clifford probably got that idea across to him in his own way and in his own time, because he saw him rather regularly. I think he got that idea across to the President, because he did shift his style just a little,

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not much, but just a little; and I think Clark had caught this in listening to President Truman's speeches, and I think that he probably was responsible for doing that.

HESS: As you were the advance man, let's talk about that for a few moments. What did you do as an advance man? Just what does an advance man do?

CHAPMAN: You know, that's the most intriguing question that I've ever attempted to analyze for anybody. It's something I get so wrapped up in and I get to talking too much about any one thing, because, to me, it was one of the most interesting experiences that I'd ever had.

Now, I had done a good deal of advance work before. There's all the difference in the world in doing advance work for a President of the United States and somebody else, who is just a prominent speaker. You had to handle the President from the point of view that he's the President of the United States and not just

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candidate for some party. You've got to get your mind away from that a little bit, that he's not just a Democratic candidate; he is the President of the United States now, and he's relating and reporting on his record to the people, what he's done, what he hopes to accomplish for another four years.

I have never known a man that had run for public office that had made fewer promises and yet carried out more things that were suggested to him and he in turn to the people, than he did. He carried out a program for the farmers. He really helped them. He really worked hard on that one, and that's why I like to give due credit to Secretary Brannan for his very modest, quiet way of talking to people and to the farmers. They liked him. They knew he was sincere and was trying to help them. And Oscar Ewing, for instance, was extremely helpful in this campaign, not on this particular trip. He was helpful. I'm thinking of him for the whole campaign, helpful

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all across the board.

HESS: I've heard that Mr. Ewing used to have meetings at his apartment at the Wardman Park every Monday night; have a little steak fry, and have several people come in, the "liberals," to advise on methods of presenting the liberal policy. Have you heard that?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Did you attend any of Oscar Ewing's meetings?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: They're called the "Oscar Ewing meetings," but I guess only because they were at his apartment.

CHAPMAN: He had an idea there that was very good, and one that was very much needed to be discussed and bring together some consensus of the thinking of those of us who thought of ourselves as liberals. When you try to analyze what is a liberal and what is a conservative, you start

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getting into deep water.

For instance, I always think of Senator Norris, who fought for eighteen years to keep the Muscle Shoals from being turned over to the private power companies for their benefit. They were turned over as it is to the benefit of the people through Government management. He fought that thing year after year. First, he'd have to fight it, kill a bill that they were trying to put through to take it for the private power companies, and then he would put in an amendment to some other kind of a bill to get it for the people. Well, he had Roosevelt's absolute assurance and support for that, and Roosevelt supported it 100 percent, and I don't mean way after election, but the very day of election he was helping Norris' bill right then. Roosevelt was really a charmer of the first degree.

One of my best mentors of my life was Judge Ben [Benjamin Barr] Lindsey of Denver, juvenile

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judge, one of the most prominent juvenile judges in the world. He was written up as that quite a few times. A professor at Berkeley has just come up with a biography on Lindsey, and he tells a lot about him. One of the things that he always tried to impress on me as a young man (I worked with him for eight years as his assistant), and he would lecture me, and he would say, "Now, just remember, the artistry of approach, the greatest weapon a man has in trying to put across ideas to another person." He developed that thing in my mind, "the artistry of approach," and the more I thought of it, I began to try to use it, and there's so much to that. If you really work at it, you will find a tremendous help from it, the "artistry of approach."

HESS: That comes in handy for anybody in politics, doesn't it?

CHAPMAN: Oh, it's the greatest thing in the world. And that's what some of these people had. Truman had

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a technique of his own, entirely his own, the technique of the artistry of approach, very frank and thoroughly honest with what he told you, and he would not tell me to do anything I knew he couldn't do. And he didn't. He told something he was going to try to do, and he darned near did them all, too. If he told these people something he wanted to do for them, he made an honest effort to help them, and he really tried to help them. They soon caught that with Truman, the people did, so his approach to those people became identified with that kind of thinking, with the

artistry of approach. With these people, in the farm cases, he had a natural there. First, we had an issue that was hot and already made for this purpose.

HESS: And Mr. Truman had been a farmer.

CHAPMAN: He had been a farmer, and when he plowed in that contest that day, he was as good a plower as you ever saw. It was one of those things that was so interesting as an advance man--you asked

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me about that, and I told you that if I got off on that I'd start to ramble and get to talking. But as an advance man, you first try to find out from your friends or whomever you've got the closest contacts with, the leaders from a different state or community, just what the situation is, what's the President's standing around there, what they feel about him, and what are the issues which they disagree with him on, and what are the issues they agree with him on. You try to get a little of that, and within a short time, you've pretty much got them catalogued into two or three groups of their likes or dislikes and their reasons. You can kind of identify them into categories.

HESS: Also their support or non-support of Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: That's right. I came down there always with them--well, now in a lot of these cases, I was not asking this particular fellow, for instance, that I'd be talking to, for him to support Truman. I was assuming that he was going to

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support him, you see, and I approached him on the theory that I was so glad we had helpers like him, and I brought it around that way, and I got more of them to helping me actually that way.

HESS: Rather than saying, "Are you going to help?" You don't put it that way.

CHAPMAN: No, you've got a question in there, so I never did that. I always used the other approach, thanking them for something. I'd find out something a person had done, and then somewhere (you couldn't talk to a man that hadn't in some way done something for Truman) in some way had spoken kindly of him or done something. I would run as many of those things down as I could, and I'd get as many as time would permit. Then I'd get that party and I'd congratulate him and thank him for his help, his expression of his loyalty to Truman, how much we appreciated it, and so on, and if I could I'd try to identify

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something he'd said and then quote it in the press. You don't always get that, because usually I wasn't calling press people or publicity-minded people. They were people that were just at home every night for dinner--a man with his family, and he would talk about Truman in that atmosphere, and you catch him talking with his wife and maybe some others of his family, and

he would be talking about Truman and before you know it, he'd be speaking for him before he got through dinner. He would probably be for him.

I had a case just on the point of what I'm saying, where a man was not for Truman at first; and he went home for dinner that night with his wife and son--his son was twenty-four or twenty-five years old, graduate of the University of Iowa in this case--and he started in talking about Truman, and his wife and his son were good listeners, and they were willing to get more information. And by their sincere questioning of the father who goes downtown, he sees more

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people; he'd know more about what's going on in the neighborhood, and so they would be listening to him with a great deal even of interest. The first thing you know, the wife and the son would be asking him a perfectly innocent question on points that were just focused right up Truman's alley, you see, and they were perfectly innocent in what they were doing; they were sincere people who did want to understand this particular episode. And they would ask the father about it, her husband, and before he got through held be defending Truman's position on whatever it was, or whatever the subject matter was.

I got that from the wife in one case, in Iowa, that was very intriguing to me, the most intriguing case I ever saw. It was a perfect case of ideal campaigning if you have time enough to do a lot of that, but you only have a certain amount of time and you've got to divide it up as best you can and hope to cover and see as many people as you possibly can. So, therefore, you can't spend enough time with any of these people that you want to.

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You're always saying, "I wish I could spend more time with Mr. Smith because he's been so helpful to me."

I would always try to talk to the party leaders when I would go into a state. I would make an effort, at least, to talk to them. But they were the hardest ones, I found, to talk to, because most of those were not good prognosticators and most of them didn't believe Truman could win, until all of a sudden you hit a springboard someplace, and some fellow would start defending Truman and he'd say, "Well, that man's going to be elected President. I don't care what you say. He's an honest man and he's going to be elected." And you'd hear some fellow, a perfect stranger to me, get up and say at some meeting that I had the privilege of attending or something, and they were very generous in their courtesy to me. I was invited to a lot of little things by not the party people necessarily, but somebody else. It might have been the American Legion group, or the PTAs,

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or something else. I'd attend those little meetings; they were not very large sometimes, but I'd attend them and I got as good a support out of that as all the rest of them, and those people would begin to report to me. They began to write me and call me and tell me what was taking place, and

they would want to do things for him, and they did. There were different groups representing certain organizations, and they wanted to help him.

In Los Angeles, an interesting thing happened there. Truman was speaking in Los Angeles to the Press Club's luncheon and there was a group of Navy women connected with the Navy through their husbands; their husbands were officers or in some relation, something with the Navy that they were doing. Those women had formed an organization out there; I was trying to think the other day what they called themselves, but they formed a little organization, just a local thing. They had a couple of hundred members there in Los

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Angeles. And the first thing I knew when I hit town--in this case, a week ahead of time, because I had a lot of work to do--and when I hit town, I let it be known in the press and had a press conference, why I was there and where I was staying and let it be known that people could get in touch with me there, and, believe me, they did.

When I opened it up like that I didn't realize what I was doing to myself, but I sure did have to take it on the chin from there, because I was amazed at how many people that had nothing to do, as far as the party was concerned; you'd think they never heard of the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, they were just interested. They were interested; "Truman did so-and-so and so-and-so, and I'm for him, for a man who's stood up and fought these birds, I'm for him." These women, the officers of that club, got in touch with me and came down to see me. They said, "We want to bring our members down and shake hands with Mrs. Truman, either before the

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lunch or after, whatever time you work it out. Can we do that?"

I said, "How many members would you bring?"

They said, "Oh, probably a couple of hundred."

I said, "Let's look at it. We have three organizations that want to do the same thing"--and they did. I said, "If I made any arrangements for any one of them, I'd have to make it for all of them, and it would be a physical impossibility to have a hand-shaking reception; but I'll tell you what I'll do, you bring them down here, and at this particular appointed hour," that I gave them, "and have them stand in the courtyard of the Ambassador Hotel, have them come and gather in a group right there, and I'll have Mrs. Truman and Margaret both to be there and meet you and talk with you." Oh, they thought that was wonderful.

Mrs. Truman in that wonderful motherly way of hers, she was so much at home with the mothers, or the woman that keeps house at home and looks

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after her business, and wasn't trying to run the world. She was just trying to help Harry. And I'm telling you, that went through that crowd, and you'll never understand the feeling that a man has when you catch that so clearly, that this whole group was, "We're going to help this man, too, because she's out here trying to help him, and we're going to help him, too." You'd be amazed at the sincerity and the depth with which that particular group felt towards Mrs. Truman.

"What does an advance man do?" You try to see that, first, the President and Mrs. Truman meet as many of the leaders as possible.

HESS: Just a couple of thoughts about that June trip. Now some of the negative things that are usually brought up when that trip is brought up, are the sparseness of the crowd in Omaha; the dedication of the Wilma Coates Airport in Carey, Idaho; and the President's statement, "I like old Joe," in

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Eugene, Oregon. Do you recall those three incidents that took place on the June trip?

CHAPMAN: All three of them.

HESS: What happened in Omaha anyway?

CHAPMAN: There was a perfect explanation for it, and there's where our enemies overplayed their hand. In the first place, the local man, who was a friend of Truman's--but to go back to what I said in the beginning, that handling a President's presentation to an audience or to a group, is something that you have to do...

HESS: Was Ed McKim in charge of that meeting?

CHAPMAN: Well, yes, he was. A person has to have some experience to know how to handle those things. If you don't, you get them mixed up." There was some confusion about whether Truman's military...

HESS: The 35th Division Association.

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CHAPMAN The 35th Division Association. Whether they were to go to the armory that night to hear him, or were they to just march down the main streets or something; that was never made quite clear to those people.

HESS: Whether the meeting was open to the public or not.

CHAPMAN: That's right. They thought it was a closed meeting.

HESS: Just for the Association members.

CHAPMAN: That's what they thought. The Association had not been so instructed that it was even for them,

HESS: And I understand, Mr. Truman did march in a parade that day and thousands of people had had a chance to see him.

CHAPMAN: They had.

HESS: Were you at Omaha?

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CHAPMAN: No, I had left before he got there.

HESS: *Life* magazine made a big thing out of it. They had a photographer take some pictures from the back of the balcony.

CHAPMAN: I had 50,000 copies of that article ordered from *Life* magazine and mailed out to certain people

HESS: Why did you do that?

CHAPMAN: Because the next day he was speaking, Sunday afternoon at 5 o'clock, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and over there at the Governor's mansion, which is about five or six blocks from the railroad station was the Governor's house, and I got the local people, a man that ran that newspaper there--he was very friendly with us and was helping us--I got him to arrange to have the National Guard, to have a man stationed every ten feet, all the way from the train up to the mansion. The National Guard didn't have anything else to

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do and they needed some practice; so he couldn't figure this out, he was laughing, he said, "All right, I'll get them, but what the hell you want them for I don't know." He said, "You'll have more people than you'll know what to do with."

I said, "I want this for a special reason." I got it and I had a picture taken of that crowd when just these men were stationed, nobody else, and the crowd hadn't come. Then I had a picture so marked, and I had it taken again.

Truman was up on the little balcony of the mansion from where he spoke; said a few words from the little balcony there on the Governor's mansion that overlooked the yard and the outside there, the street, and it was very pretty. He was speaking from up there when I had a picture taken of him there and of the audience there, the crowd.

We had I don't know how many hundred cars of people from Denver up there. I had worked with the heads of different organizations in Denver

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to organize a crowd to go to Cheyenne. It was a Sunday afternoon, a pretty day, and they didn't have anything else to do, and it was June, so everybody decided to come from Denver up there. So the crowd came up there from Denver, and there was a terrific crowd. We had such a crowd of them to see this man, the biggest crowd ever gathered in Wyoming, and my friend who ran the daily newspaper saw that the proper pictures were printed and saw that the headings were given to this story. Then they explained the Omaha setup.

They explained that, in the first place, the picture was taken purposely to show the empty seats before the audience had gathered. Then, the paper ran another picture from Omaha where Truman was going down to get on his train. There were two or three thousand people down there. And you take two or three thousand people on the end of a train that the President's getting on; you take

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that picture just right and it looks just as much like a hundred thousand as it does a thousand. Well, that's what he did to that. I got 50,000 copies of *Life* magazine, the picture taken at Omaha and the one taken at Cheyenne, and sent them out to a certain group of people that I wanted to get it.

HESS: Who did you send them to?

CHAPMAN: Mostly to professors.

HESS: Why were you aiming at professors?

CHAPMAN: I wanted one good potshot at them, because two or three of the professors had been getting the impression from *Life* magazine that this man didn't have any support. Now, they are the type of people that will study something and analyze it and see what's behind it, more than the average fellow would do who was busy working. He hasn't got time to analyze it. But a professor will most likely read the story, and I wanted it read by a

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few people; that's all I needed. Well, I scattered them across the country just where I wanted them, and it had the most wonderful reaction, wonderful reaction. That *Life* story helped us as much as anything we did on the trip.

He dedicated the airport to the wrong person.

HESS: As it turned out, it was a young girl, Wilma Coates.

CHAPMAN: Well, that again shows you that a President just cannot do what everybody comes along and asks him to do. That's not on my schedule. I checked that out; I knew what it was.

HESS: Did you? Had you checked that out in advance?

CHAPMAN: That's when somebody went behind me.

HESS: Did you communicate to anyone with the President's party as to who Wilma Coates was? Charlie Ross was the press secretary at that time. Did you tell him?

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CHAPMAN: No, I didn't get to see Charlie.

HESS: Who did you tell?

CHAPMAN: I missed Charlie on that particular thing.

HESS: Who did you tell, General Vaughan?

CHAPMAN: No, I didn't tell General Vaughan. I would have had I seen him.

HESS: Why I mentioned that, there was some American Legion people there, the flag bearers, and I thought perhaps it was General Vaughan. Who did you tell?

CHAPMAN: I told Matt Connelly.

HESS: So Matt Connelly knew in advance what the Wilma Coates Airport dedication was all about, that it was not a war hero, but was to a young girl, is that right?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And he had not communicated that to Mr. Truman?

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CHAPMAN: Well, he may have, and they got it mixed up.

HESS: As you know, when Mr. Truman got there, he saw the flag bearers, the honor guard; it was the dedication of an airport. He thought it was to someone who had been killed in war, and while speaking he was told that the person whom the airport was being dedicated to had died right there, but he still thought it was a man.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And then it had to be explained to him. In other words, it sounded like he didn't know a heck of a lot about it when he started to talk.

CHAPMAN: Now, this thing was done so quickly that I don't want any blame to be put on Matt Connelly for lack of proper communication. That is not a true situation. Matt was one of the most perfect clearance men to talk to the President that you ever saw.

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HESS: He was Appointments Secretary, and I guess a good one.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was a good one. He did a swell job, and on this, this was not his fault at all, in any respect, because I just barely had time to give him this; it was a matter of a second or two. I didn't have time to go into it.

HESS: Was it the same morning after they were leaving Sun Valley?

CHAPMAN: They were at Sun Valley.

HESS: Averell Harriman's resort at Sun Valley.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And then that's where they stayed the night before the dedication.

CHAPMAN: I don't want to put this on record, but I'd like to tell you what happened to us there.

HESS: We can close it. We can just leave it running

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and you can close it, if you'd like.

CHAPMAN: No, I'd rather turn it off.

HESS: All right, sir, and then in Eugene, Oregon, during his stop, Mr. Truman, among other things about Mr. Stalin, said, "I like old Joe." I believe he said, "He's a prisoner of the Politburo," something like that. What do you recall about that, and the reaction to the President's statements?

CHAPMAN: I was not at the meeting at that particular place, but I immediately heard the report; it had come to me, that he had said it and I checked that out first with the President (I happened to see him later on that evening), and I just told him that it was being discussed around that he had made some compliment to "old Joe." He laughed and he said, "Well, he's like a lot of other politicians I know. They get themselves prisoners of their own making." He said, "That's his trouble

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today. He's a prisoner of his own guards." He used the word "guard," to me, but he meant the Politburo crowd.

HESS: Why do you think Mr. Truman had that view? The general view at the time was that Stalin was an absolute dictator, was it not?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think he was an absolute dictator insofar as his power would let him go, and insofar as they would carry out his dictation. But the Politburo didn't always carry out his dictatorial orders quite as fast and quite as brutal as Joe would have you to believe he wanted them to.

HESS: Mr. Truman has stated that one of his toughest jobs was getting people to do what they were supposed to do, in referring to the bureaucracy and the operations of the Government. In other words, when he gave an order, it was not necessarily going to be carried out.

CHAPMAN: To some extent it would fit that category,

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but not altogether, but to some extent it does. That is a problem that you have right here in our own country. Your orders are not always carried out like they should be when they are given.

HESS: Just a brief question about some of your conversations with the political leaders that you've had. Did you hear any talk among the political leaders that they would prefer someone else other than Mr. Truman as the Democratic nominee? If you recall, a little later, the Roosevelt boys in California were quite strong for Eisenhower.

CHAPMAN: There were several people, it was rather interesting, who wanted Eisenhower.

HESS: ADA for one.

CHAPMAN: Wasn't that interesting? ADA. Leon Henderson, the economist, was strong for Eisenhower, and he was quite active in ADA. He was always working on some economic issue or something for

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the President.

Now, there was a lot of people, a rather strange combination; there were a lot of people right at that time, who were more or less the liberals, had been liberals, and were liberals in the Democratic Party, had kind of come out with the idea that maybe Eisenhower would be a good

fellow for us to run. They'd make the comparison; they'd say, "Well, he doesn't have a party behind him; he can't be elected."

They would immediately say, "Well, Hoover didn't have any party behind him. He just was elected on feeding the people of Belgium. And they did play that up till they wore it out.

There were a lot of people who were interested. They tried to get me to go for Eisenhower. I didn't see him as President. I saw him as a strategist, leader, logistic mind for the military purposes, for which he served well. But I never could quite see him as a leader crusading for a humanitarian cause. War, of

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course, is not humanitarian in a sense, and he spent his whole life preparing himself to do the job he finally was called upon to do, and he did it well. He never had had much training or much contact, shall I say, with the humanitarian side of the public in his own country. For instance, there were more people in this country who had seen Truman and knew where he stood on this particular issue or that particular issue.

He had been running against Eisenhower, I don't say he could have been reelected. I never was for a third term. If they'd renewed that, and they were trying to, he probably might have beaten the President. But the President was smart enough to interpret the political picture and he did the exact right thing at the right time; his timing was perfect, and his way of doing it was perfect--he gave it the master's touch, to a very delicate, very powerful decision.

HESS: When General Eisenhower did run in 1952 he ran on the Republican ticket. He was a fairly con-

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servative President, I suppose, as far as liberals and conservatives go, but what did the liberals that you were talking with in 1948 really seem to know about General Eisenhower?

CHAPMAN: They didn't; they didn't seem to know. They didn't seem to understand what he was really thinking. I don't think that Eisenhower was trying to deceive anybody; I don't think he thought that much about it, to tell you the truth.

HESS: It just seemed to the liberals that here was a man that might be able to win.

CHAPMAN: That was all.

HESS: They didn't think they could win with Truman and they were looking around to see whom they could win with.

CHAPMAN: That's exactly what they were doing. In '48 that's all they were looking for. They thought, here's a man--they didn't go in to find

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out what the man's philosophy was, what his real thinking on these basic important humanitarian issues was. As we all know, he was certainly not on the side of the, I'll say, the poor man, for lack of a better word to use.

HESS: The common man.

CHAPMAN: Yes, the common man. He never had any particular contact or work with them in any way.

HESS: Except to give them orders when they were in the Army.

CHAPMAN: That's all. Now, I liked Eisenhower as a friend; personally, I liked him. We were very friendly, and I was quite fond of him in many ways. He just couldn't grasp that other side to save his life. I don't think he could. The man was--I don't know how old he was--but at least half of his life was gone, and he had had no experience with this kind of a thing he

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was fixing to take and run. He never dreamed of the magnitude of the power, the power of what one man says, what it meant. Now, he would know what a colonel may say or a general, and that was as far as he could go. He couldn't translate that into the civilian side of thinking to save his life. And I think he tried. I think Eisenhower really tried.

HESS: One brief question about California; did you by chance speak with James Roosevelt? I believe he was in California at that time.

CHAPMAN: Yes,

HESS: You mentioned speaking with Democratic leaders in June. Did you speak with James Roosevelt?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Or make any attempt to?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Shall we close it for today, because we're

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up to the convention.

CHAPMAN: Let's close it for today, and schedule another session next Friday, if you want to, whenever you want to.

HESS: All right, fine.

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Fourth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., May 5, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, I'd like to get your reaction to one matter concerning the trip in June. There were reports in the newspapers and some of the magazines, that some of the local politicians throughout the West felt they were ill-treated during that trip in June, because they were not given adequate time to talk to the President, or they were not allowed to ride from town to town when the President's train was in their state. Do you recall any such reports from disappointed leaders in the West after that trip?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I did. There were a few people that complained that they didn't have sufficient time with the President, and what they really wanted was to ride on the train within their state with the President across the state. That would have made it so openly a political front,

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it would have broken down the whole picture that Clifford and I were trying to establish.

HESS: Of a nonpolitical trip.

CHAPMAN: Yes. We were trying to establish it on that basis just as much as possible, and that's why I got this invitation for him to speak at Berkeley, which was purely non-political. He dedicated that generator at the Grand Coulee Dam; then he had another speaking engagement in Los Angeles, I think it was, with the press there; the local press gave a luncheon for him, and had a rather large crowd. They had charge of the luncheon; they invited whom they pleased, they were there, and all and all, it was a most successful luncheon, most successful meeting, and Truman spoke at considerable length there. He had a chance there to explain a lot of these things that he'd been criticized for that the public didn't have full information on, the entire story. That gave him a chance there to

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really tell the people his side of the story, that he had been criticized for this or that, different actions that he had taken, and so on.

It was a most successful trip from the point of view of presenting Truman to the country just as Truman is himself, and we didn't try to garnish the lily and do something to try to make Truman something that he wasn't. He just went out and spoke as Harry Truman. Sure he was President; you're always President when you are selected to that high position no matter where you are.

That made it very convenient for us, because when a President stops on a back of a train or in the other method, but in this case we'll say on the back of a train, he'd come out on the back of the train and make a little speech, usually a very short speech, not long, but he'd pick a particular subject and he went into that. I hope you will get the schedule that's worked out for that trip. That is in the Library, and it's a full record of that trip, the standing on

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it, the stops he made, where he spoke, and it's an entire, completed volume of that, and I wish you could get that and take a look at it and you'll see where he stopped at so many little places.

Now, normally, he wouldn't get his name even in the press if he'd have said any of those things there on that page you're looking at; his name wouldn't have been in the press if he'd have made that statement here at the White House. But when a President stops at some little town, every press man there knows that the local press is going to play a story up, good or bad; they're going to write a story. So every press man that went on that train (and they all tried to go, as many as could; we had many requests to go on that train), they all wrote a story on it. So Truman got more publicity, and good publicity, out of that entire trip than any period of his time during the whole campaign, and it set the stage for our...

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HESS: For what was coming up in the fall.

CHAPMAN: That's right, it set the stage for what we were going to face coming up. We also were hoping by this time, that the President was going to call a special session.

HESS: You were at this time?

CHAPMAN: Well, Clark and I were doing a lot of talking about it by this time.

HESS: You were?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Tell me about the background of that matter?

CHAPMAN: Well, the background of that is this: There were several bills before Congress that were really quite important, and Congress should have taken care of them before they went home; they could have done it in any one afternoon if they would have. But they were playing politics to downgrade the President and not to pass his program. So he just

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called them back into special session and sent the same bills right back up there to them. So they had, between that and election day, either to get them out or vote them down, and it made a beautiful issue for us. We were sitting right on top of that issue through the country all over. I suppose, I may be wrong on this, but I think I'm right in judging it, that Clark Clifford and I were as much or more responsible for him calling that special session than anybody else. I know we originated the idea with him; at least we thought we did. We talked with him about it. Whether we were the first ones, I don't know.

HESS: About when did you start discussing this with Mr. Clifford, and then when did you broach the subject to Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Clifford and I started talking about it almost before the convention was over in Philadelphia.

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HESS: In Philadelphia?

CHAPMAN: We started talking about it, but we started talking in Philadelphia, or here in Washington, I don't remember. I rather think it was here in Washington, and we discussed the importance of the President's calling a special session and feeling that it ought not to be called unless we could base it on a good, sound, logical reason for the Congress to be in session, and that these were important pieces of legislation, and that for the benefit of the people they ought to be there working on them. We felt they were sound enough that the average man would appreciate them, that it was a piece of work they didn't finish, and that they ought to come back and finish it.

HESS: All right, this is a very important topic, and it brings up the subject of the unsigned memorandum of June 29, 1948, entitled, "Should the President Call Congress Back." This is found in various

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places in the Truman Library. There's a copy of the unsigned memo in Judge Sam Rosenman's papers; there's a copy also in Clark Clifford's papers, and probably elsewhere as well. While you're looking over that, you'll want to notice that the pronoun "we" is used several times. It sounds like a group effort.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: As you know, I left a copy of the memo with you when we met last week. Did you get a chance to look it over?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I read it. This you will notice by its very language; notice it was discussed by a lot of people at the convention, and before then I don't think it would have been discussed any with the President. But I had the feeling that Clark and I had kind of boxed this issue in by each of us separately going to him and expressing to him the importance of calling the Congress back. We felt that it was the right thing to

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start with; we felt it was the right thing to do, that these people in that country were entitled to this help that was being given to this legislation, and we felt that they ought to have it.

Now, you remember that piece of legislation to grant some loans to the farmers to build storage tanks, or storage bins to store their wheat and corn in.

HESS: The Commodity Credit Corporation charter.

CHAPMAN: They turned it down, you know, wouldn't loan them the money. Now, Truman really put the heat on that one really hard, both in making his speeches and in his message he sent to Congress on that issue.

HESS: This particular unsigned memo was submitted or was dated well in advance of the convention. The convention was held in the middle of July.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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HESS: I have the 1948 volume here, and Mr. Truman's address on accepting the nomination was on July 15th. So this unsigned memo as to whether or not the President should call Congress back was written two or three weeks in advance.

CHAPMAN: You mean, of the convention?

HESS: Of the convention.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: He ended his nomination address, his acceptance, by saying:

On the 26th day of July, which out in Missouri we call 'Turnip Day,' I am going to call Congress back and ask them to pass laws to halt rising prices, to meet the housing crisis--which they are saying they are for in their platform.

So this was a subject that was brought up well before the convention. But who do you think submitted this memo? Who do you think wrote the unsigned memo?

CHAPMAN: You know, I read this and analyzed it.

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It has the language of several people; it looks like their own expressions are in here, but it doesn't look like any one person put this whole thing together. This is the writing of at least two people, if not three. I can't for the life of me figure out who wrote this.

Everything they say in here, Clark and I discussed, talked it over. Now, we didn't begin to try to organize our--I don't like to use the word "pressure"--but we began to organize our energies as to when we should see the President and when we should get this thing organized. You know, when you try to sell the President a program, you've got to remember you've got something to sell this man, you've got to convince him this is the right thing to do. Now, the first thing is, it's important that you understand your man, and if you understand him, you can organize your approach to him better, how to do it.

I felt Clark and I together had--Clark

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especially, I gave him credit for that--had especially good contact in a constant flow of give and take with the President, so that he was able to judge his feelings about some of these things extremely well. It was really fantastic, his understanding of the man. He really understood him better than I thought anybody would really. On the other hand, Clark was smart enough that--he was not the head of a department, a Cabinet officer, so he didn't have the staff of a Cabinet officer to call upon the department for different subjects originating in that department for legislation (like this corn and wheat storage program). He might call on Secretary Brannan; he presented and pushed that vigorously. He did a superb job in pushing that issue to the front so that the President was getting the benefit of it, so Charlie kept pouring it on wherever he spoke about it; he would talk about it, and he made a lot of speeches and covered the subject very well.

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First, let me say to you, about writing speeches, I never wrote any speeches. I'm not a speechwriter; I've given memoranda for many speeches, but...

HESS: Ideas for what you thought should be included in a speech?

CHAPMAN: That's right. I've given many memoranda. As you know, Clark was in a strategic position with the President to get the message in to him, and a quick answer, one way or the other, whether we could move forward or drop it. He was able to do that very fast, so we worked together in the greatest harmony and the best harmony that I've ever worked with anybody in my life.

Now, I had no advance man with me whatsoever, none at all. I had the White House Secret Service men that follow every President, but strictly on a security basis for the President. I had no advance men to help me on that trip.

HESS: On the June trip?

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CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: You were there by yourself.

CHAPMAN: By myself. And that helped keep it on the phase or understanding that we wanted to get across to the American people. This was a way to talk to the people about the economic problems of the country, and to get their reaction to what was needed, and what they wanted, and what they felt they wanted; and he got a lot of good information back like that, reaction to his trip, of extreme value to him for finishing up his campaign. It just opened the door for the campaign. We didn't consider it a political trip.

Now, let me tell you one other thing that you'll find running through everything you talk about on this June trip. I've had so many people ask me, "Did the organization support you? Did they fix up meetings for you when you'd go to town?" Well, I'd have to say honestly that the answer to that is no. They were not supporting us; they were not giving us any help. The national

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committeeman would be out of town, or the chairman's family would be sick or something. The top officials of the party, not in every case now, but in 75 percent of the cases, were out of town when we got there, for some reason. They always made a good excuse to us, but I'd just smile and stuck the little letters in my pocket and put them away and saved them for a rainy day. I save them for the rainy day and they paid for those letters nicely. I had lots of letters to me making apologies, "I can't be in Omaha when you go there," and I got them. Up in California, they were there. They met us.

HESS: What seemed to be the general attitude of the people that you spoke with? Did they think that Mr. Truman would be a successful candidate for the Democrats in 1948 or not?

CHAPMAN: No, no, that was the basis for the whole thing. That was the basis for the apparent coolness, personally, but not really aimed at Truman

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personally. It looked like they were, and if you add all these things up that I'm telling you, it looked like they were mad at him or trying to cut his throat. Well, I didn't interpret that they were really as mad at him as I thought they were; they were not. They just did not interpret the picture right.

HESS: They didn't think he could win.

CHAPMAN: They didn't think he could win. They had no idea he could win. I never found a politician from here to the coast that thought he could win, not a one.

HESS: Did very many of them mention other candidates that they thought would be more suitable?

CHAPMAN: This was before the convention in June. Oh, yes, on that trip, they naturally were trying to drop a word in; they had a name they were interested in promoting, they'd drop the name of somebody else, and usually it would be some favorite son. They

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didn't have any real candidate. There was no real candidate against him, frankly. The ones that were trying to be a candidate against him just absolutely didn't mean anything. We could knock them over so fast; it just didn't mean anything.

HESS: During the trips that Mr. Truman took in the fall, did you obtain better cooperation from the political leaders in the field than you did in June?

CHAPMAN: Not until after the 15th of October. I began to get a little better warmth and in depth of the people; I was getting more favorable expressions from them.

HESS: But up until that time...

CHAPMAN: Now, I had some assistance, men helping me with those trips later, because it was humanly impossible for one man to take care of a thing like that on a political basis.

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HESS: Who helped?

CHAPMAN: Usually always I'd get some man in that area to give me some time. They gave me some time, and they were important people.

HESS: Anyone from Washington go out? Did Donald Dawson, for instance?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, Don Dawson went out.

HESS: He was from the White House staff. Did you have anyone from the Democratic National Committee that you used in those matters, as an advance man?

CHAPMAN: Not too effectively. It wasn't as effective.

HESS: Who was it?

CHAPMAN: Well, McGrath was chairman.

HESS: He was chairman.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was chairman.

HESS: But he wouldn't do this; would he assign someone?

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CHAPMAN: He wouldn't do this; you wouldn't expect him to do this.

HESS: He was busy running the Committee.

CHAPMAN: That's right, he was running the headquarters here and trying to raise money. He was doing all he could. He was really working hard.

There was hardly anybody before the latter part of October...

HESS: Well, what happened in the middle of October that changed that?

CHAPMAN: You could begin to feel, the friendliness towards Truman was beginning to show up. It came up slowly after the 15th of October, and then came to its climax just at the right time; it was timed beautifully, the timing of what we did couldn't have been more perfect. Now, you've got to remember, we didn't have anything to throw away. We couldn't lose many votes. We had to hold everyone we could possibly hold,

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because we knew it was going to be reasonably close. We didn't think it was going to be a walkaway, but I was convinced we were going to win after the 15th of October.

HESS: Did anything particular happen on that date that made you feel that way?

CHAPMAN: I just kind of spotted the 15th of October; there was no particular day, other than that was about the time that I could look back and see, that was when the beginning of the good will began to show up. I was getting better cooperation from the organization people; they were beginning to come through with support.

You've got to remember, you're running in a campaign with Strom Thurmond, South Carolina, on the extreme right; and Henry Wallace on the Progressive ticket from the extreme left. Wallace took enough votes in New York that he cost us New York, and I knew that the organization in

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New York really was not helping us very much, with any enthusiasm anyway. So, I was convinced personally (I didn't tell this to anybody), but I personally wrote New York off.

HESS: You wrote them off.

CHAPMAN: I did. I steered some money from going up there that they were going to send the last week, and I persuaded them from sending it to them.

HESS: What seemed to be the main problem with the Democratic organization in New York?

CHAPMAN: Well, you've got to understand New York to understand what this is. They're the greatest experienced people with trading you ever saw. They can trade candidates so easily from one party to the other up there.

HESS: They have the Liberal party in New York.

CHAPMAN: Well, you've got that, you see, which is a

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leverage against the old party organization man, we'll say, who thinks heavily on the other side of the picture, and was not sympathetic to the President. Now, the liberal group was sympathetic to us.

HESS: I understand that when Mr. Truman spoke at Madison Square Garden on the windup trip, that Madison Square Garden was rented for Mr. Truman by the Liberal party and not by the Democratic Party organization. Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: He received more support from the Liberal party than from the local Democratic Party.

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. If we had gotten the same support from the Party as we did from the Liberal party, we would have been able to carry the state anyhow, in spite of it.

HESS: In spite of Henry Wallace?

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CHAPMAN: Yes. Now, Henry took half a million votes, approximately a half a million. That was just enough to knock us off there in New York.

HESS: I have that here. Wallace got--you were very close--509,559. So you're only a little over 9,000 votes off. Dewey got 2,841,163. Mr. Truman got 2,780,204. So they were very close. If it hadn't been for Wallace, Mr. Truman would have taken New York with its 47 electoral votes.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What plans were formulated to try to counter the effects of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party?

CHAPMAN: Nothing special that you just wouldn't do as a normal thing.

Here's a man that's speaking out on some liberal things, and some of them were not thought out adequately enough to go to the public and try to explain it to them, to tell them, "This is

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what I'm going to do if I'm President."

Wallace, to me, was a very good man; at heart, he was a very good man. He was hurt, like most humans would be when they get disappointed, and he had been disappointed that he didn't have anything going. But he couldn't stay with Truman and say the things he was saying in his speeches; he just couldn't do it. No President can keep a Cabinet officer and let him say what he pleases about everything. You've got to stay within the realm of reasonable association with the President.

Now, Wallace thought he had a good liberal program that would attract largely middle class people. That was exactly the group we got ourselves. All that he got was the extreme liberals. When I call them extreme, they were the extreme liberal voters.

HESS: Do you think we could use the word Communists?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't think that would be quite accurate, because you had many people in there--I think

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Wallace was taken in by the Communists in that, but they were not the principal supporters necessarily of Wallace. They supported him and they sponsored him wherever they could, and they did anything they could to embarrass the President. Their main purpose was to hurt Truman; they didn't care what happened to Wallace. He didn't see that; he didn't know that. I tried to tell him.

HESS: You did? Did you speak to him about this matter?

CHAPMAN: I did. I was very close to Wallace, we were very good friends, and I could talk to him very frankly.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: I told him; this was in the presence of Helen Fuller and Bill Walton. He was at the luncheon that we had at his house. It was in Georgetown somewhere. And Helen Fuller set up

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the lunch. She was a newspaperwoman. She did a lot of writing for the left. I knew her very well and she knew me. She wanted me to meet William Walton. I knew him personally, this artist, painter. He was very close to the Kennedy group afterwards. He didn't say he was acting on Wallace's instructions or on his word, but he left it to appear that he was speaking for himself to see if I would consider managing Wallace's campaign. I said, "That would depend upon which party you run him on." I said, "I'm not going off on any third party, because they're not going anywhere; they're not ready for that yet. The country's not in the mood for a third party. You may think they are, but I don't think so.

HESS: This was before the convention?

CHAPMAN: Yes, this was before the convention. Helen Fuller was there. She heard him make this offer to me, and we discussed finances a little bit. I could see that they had no real financial

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program organized. What they had was a lot of wishful thinking. Wallace, beyond any question, had discussed it with Helen and this man about trying to get me to manage him, because I'd been real friendly with him at a time when he was at odds with the White House.

I felt Wallace could be saved for the cause. I felt he could be brought around, but I was mistaken. He was so deeply dedicated to issues and things that he thought were better for the country than what we were doing. Now, he was so wrong on some of these issues that he was talking about at that time, that he couldn't have gained any widespread support for that in this country at that time. You see, there's a time for everything,

HESS: What issues do you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Well, for instance, in '48 Wallace was trying to press a--I don't know how you would interpret this--he was trying to press for a

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closer relationship to Russia, which you and I could say, "That's fine, we ought to have a closer relationship," but you can't give away your information to the Russian people, any of them, about

what you're doing. You've got to keep confidential certain things. Wallace was pressing that all the time.

HESS: He had been pressing that for a number of years. As you will recall, his speech in Madison Square Garden in September of 1946 was on that subject, greater accommodation and improving our relations with Russia.

CHAPMAN: Now, it was all right to say that once and get it on record that you were for better relations with Russia, but he should not have kept going back to Truman and trying to pressure Truman. You can't pressure him; you can talk to him, but you can't pressure him, and he can tell in five minutes when you're putting a high-pressure job on him. He can tell whether he thinks you are

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sincerely mistaken and you're leading off on the wrong trail. He could tell. He could judge people. He was one of the greatest men for judging people that I ever saw, interpreting their political philosophy and their feelings politically about other people.

HESS: There are a number of historians today who think that in those years, '45, '46, '47 and '48, we should have improved our relations with Russia, and had a closer accommodation with Russia.

CHAPMAN: A lot of people did. There were a lot of people who felt that way.

HESS: And many people feel that way today, many historians who are writing today. What is your view; should we have done things differently than we did?

CHAPMAN: No, no. There were a few things that we probably could have done to improve our relationship.

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HESS: What?

CHAPMAN: It was a question of timing on when we did certain things and when we didn't do certain things. Now, I am not a State Department expert on any of these things, when you start talking about what was said or done at the wrong time or place by Truman. But I got the impression at that time, now it may have been influenced partly by Wallace's constant talking to me about it, but I felt that there were certain things we should do. Just offhand, I can't think of them now in detail as to what they were, but my thought was to do the normal things that would put us on a normal diplomatic relationship with Russia, if we could. But, as you know, Harriman went over to Russia and did a very good job. I think Harriman did one of the best jobs we had in Russia for thirty years.

HESS: All right. Some people say that the June 29, 1948 unsigned memo is a product of the Oscar

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Ewing-Clark Clifford group that used to meet each Monday night at the Wardman Park Hotel.

CHAPMAN: I think that could be as true as anything I can think of.

HESS: Other people say that it may have been a product of the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee. That was set up by Bill Batt, Johannes Hoeber, Kenneth Birkhead, Philip Dreyer and others.

CHAPMAN: Yes, now that well could be their memo. It has some of the language that Bill Batt used.

HESS: It is dated June 29th. That was about two weeks before the convention opened. Did you speak to Clifford after that time, after June 29th?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: Closer to the convention.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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HESS: This is when you brought up the subject with Clifford?

CHAPMAN: Yes it was.

HESS: Do you know if before the President's announcement there at the convention hall in Philadelphia when he was making his speech early in the morning, 2 o'clock in the morning, and he made the announcement, do you know if he had cleared that announcement with the leaders of the Democratic Party? Had he talked to Sam Rayburn, for instance, to let Sam Rayburn know that he was planning on calling Congress back?

CHAPMAN: I can't say for sure that he did. My answer is going to be based upon what I interpreted out of what I knew to be a certain relationship there. The President and Sam had a very good relationship, and they could talk very frankly, and Sam was there at the convention. I had a feeling that he had talked to Sam.

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HESS: Vice President Barkley?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: At that time, Senator Barkley?

CHAPMAN: Senator Barkley then. I had a feeling that he had talked to Sam and possibly Johnson.

HESS: This is a question that interests historians. And possibly Johnson?

CHAPMAN: Because Johnson had helped him a great deal, although Johnson was one of those who leaned over backwards when he asked. He didn't think he was going to win. I don't think Johnson thought Truman was going to win. I shouldn't say that as a positive statement, but I have a feeling that he probably thought that. But so many people did, it's understandable.

HESS: I'm going to have to ask which Johnson?

CHAPMAN: President Johnson.

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HESS: Lyndon Johnson. At this time in '48?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: I didn't know that he was considered that influential in 1948 that the President would be clearing things with him at that time.

CHAPMAN: He didn't necessarily clear anything with him, but the President felt that Johnson had an unusually keen political feel for a situation, and he did have.

HESS: When did he first come to Congress anyway, 1937? He was a member of the House of Representatives for a number of years.

CHAPMAN: He came here while Roosevelt was here. He came to the House, you see.

HESS: He first was in the House.

CHAPMAN: He first was in the House, and then Roosevelt got him to run for the Senate.

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HESS: Is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I know that to be a fact. I know that he asked him to run. Sam Rayburn was a real mentor of Johnson's, always had been. He guided his political steps in bringing him into Washington all the way through. Sam had helped him in every detail, in every way. Johnson

wouldn't turn his hands on a political question without checking with Sam Rayburn, and that lasted as long as Sam lived. Johnson never made an important decision of anything that would come within the range of Congress at all that he didn't get clearance or discuss it with Sam.

I want to clarify--and I think this is a good place to do it--as to how Barkley got nominated. We discussed the last time a good deal about Bill Douglas and some other prospective candidates for President. We did not discuss Barkley at the time, but Barkley was counting on that Vice Presidency with Truman and I could

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tell it, I could just feel it in my bones when I talked to him.

HESS: Why do you think he wanted the nomination in 1948? Many people thought Mr. Truman was going to lose.

CHAPMAN: Well, Barkley didn't think he was going to lose. Barkley was one of the few that--well, let's put it this way, "Whether he loses or wins, I may be of some help to him, to the ticket and to the Party, and I'll take it." He was doing something there that he really believed in all of his life, that a man ought to help his party's candidate. He felt he could give some unique help to the party, and he did.

HESS: Do you think that Mr. Barkley would have liked to have run in the top spot?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he would.

HESS: Did you talk to him about that?

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CHAPMAN: Not really.

HESS: What did he have to say? What were his feelings on that?

CHAPMAN: Well, he would always say, "Well, you'll have to just wait and catch the mood of that convention, see what they're going to do."

Here's what he was counting on and he was playing his marbles absolutely straight. Barkley was convinced that he could pull one more political speech out of the hat that could turn that convention around. Now, he had analyzed the delegates there, who they were and all, better than any man in Philadelphia. There wasn't a man in that convention that understood the overall complexion of that convention as well as Barkley did.

HESS: They say that his keynote address secured for him the Vice Presidential spot. It was a very good keynote address. It put some fire into an otherwise very dead convention.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Do you think that he had in mind at that time that if he gave a very good address he might get the top spot?

CHAPMAN: That was what he counted on as his key to get into that convention.

HESS: It was his keynote address?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He was convinced that he could turn that convention around with a real top speech, and from an orator's point of view, it was one of the best I've ever heard. It was not an intellectual speech in the sense that he was trying to be an Adlai Stevenson.

They are two different types of men. Stevenson could sway the convention if the country was in a certain mood, a certain condition; he couldn't otherwise. But Barkley, that convention was made for Barkley; it was just made for him. They were all mixed up; they were all for different candidates.

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I was pushing Senator O'Mahoney. If Barkley hadn't made that speech I would have gotten him nominated.

HESS: For what, the Vice Presidential spot?

CHAPMAN: For Vice President. If Barkley hadn't made that speech I would have gotten Senator O'Mahoney. Truman told me he had no objection to him, "Do anything you want." So I went to work for Joe.

I had it lined up to where I had really a good block of votes in that convention, for second place now, not first. Joe was helping me in turn with Truman, in the meantime. If you get a good man that is hopeful of getting something out of the convention, he'll trade. Well, I traded with Joe very well. I knew he was good trading Irishman and that he would trade with me. I worked with Joe very close, and I opened it for him. I told both Truman and I told Barkley--I told Truman that Bill Douglas was not going to run, and I'll tell you why. Tommy Corcoran and Harold

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Ickes had advised Bill not to run, to wait and take the next shot at the thing., on a straight run for the Presidency, that they thought he'd make it, that Truman was going to lose and not to take a chance on it. Now, that's what was told, I was given that pretty straight and I think it was absolutely accurate, that they put that across to Douglas, that he shouldn't run.

HESS: Do you think that Senator Barkley felt that he could obtain the nomination for the Presidency, if President Truman wanted it? Could he have taken it away from President Truman at the Convention in Philadelphia?

CHAPMAN: No, no, he couldn't have. We had enough to hold it against anything.

HESS: What was the danger of the convention selecting someone other than Mr. Truman? How great was the danger?

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CHAPMAN: The danger was if some other candidate had had a chance to do it, it would have been a great danger to the success of the party, of winning. You'd have had a terrifically hard time to pick somebody that could have won under those circumstances, with people in that frame of mind, and you're kicking the underdog out, as they'd be doing in this case with Truman. The other man would have gotten no sympathy from the country at all. He'd have had nothing to build on that would be going for him.

HESS: Is it difficult for someone to take the nomination away from the incumbent President if the incumbent President wants the nomination?

CHAPMAN: I don't recall its ever being done. Now, you remember in 1912 Taft and Teddy Roosevelt split up in the convention because Roosevelt tried to take the convention and he couldn't.

HESS: He had to establish his own party, the Bull Moose Party.

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CHAPMAN: He had to organize the Bull Moose Party, and he really tried on an organized professional way; he was really organized. He put his very best in it and a lot of money in it to put that 1912 banner behind him. He couldn't take it away from Taft; he tried. Now, it's almost impossible--I don't recall any time that it's ever been done; it probably has been done somewhere in our history, but I don't recall any case--but it's almost impossible for another man to build himself up where he's got stature to the extent that he can go into a convention. They are generally oriented toward the President more than any other one man anyway. Very generally that's true. You just can't walk in there and take that convention away from him and hope to win the election. I think Barkley saw that; Barkley knew that.

HESS: I have heard that Leslie Biffle, the Secretary of the Senate, was pushing Mr. Barkley, not just for the second spot, but for the top spot, is that right?

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CHAPMAN: That's right. I think that's correct.

HESS: One other thing I'd like to get on tape this morning is a correction of an error that I made last week. I mentioned that I had heard that there was a time when Dr. Sproul at the University of California had introduced Mr. Truman in an uncomplimentary manner. I believe that if he did it at all, it was at a luncheon that was held that noon, and not at the university itself where President Truman gave the commencement address. Were you at that luncheon?

CHAPMAN: No, I wasn't there. I had helpers there to keep an eye on things and to help me out. I didn't go into the luncheon, but I had two local men helping me that knew everybody at the university and knew the Truman situation. I had those men helping me, and they gave me a detailed report. That was one of the questions that I asked them.

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HESS: You asked them to look for this both at the luncheon and at the commencement address?

CHAPMAN: I did. I said, "Now, let's see if they're trying to use this man and throw a curve at him at this meeting." I said, "If they do that for lunch, I might talk to Truman about canceling the afternoon meeting, walk away from him." And they would have looked as bad in the country or worse than he ever looked. If he had any evidence to prove that, I didn't get that at all.

HESS: What made you suspect that this might be done?

CHAPMAN: Because there were some members of that board of regents that I didn't trust. I don't mean I didn't trust their honesty; I didn't trust their thinking in our direction. I didn't think they were for us. And having that kind of a situation to deal with, you've got to be cautious.

You have to be cautious not to let yourself

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get caught in a trap where he could get hurt. That could have hurt Truman terribly there if I'd have gone ahead and steered this thing in there and they would have come out with a ripsnorting attack on the President, which they could have done. But Sproul had more sense than that. I knew him well enough that I didn't think he would do that.

Sproul was a pretty level man, more than people thought he was. I had known Sproul before. I knew what he would do, just about, and I didn't think he would do that; but I had my eye open from the influence of a couple of members of the board of regents there, and whether they would be sympathetic, or if they'd try to pull a fast one on him. I was watching for that purpose. I don't know what I would have done if he had done this.

HESS: Are we about through for the day?

CHAPMAN: I think so. I want to clear up the Barkley

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thing. I was sitting on the platform when Senator Barkley was speaking. Howard McGrath was sitting right in front of me; we were leaning over talking to each other, like you and I are sitting here. And as Barkley was getting further and further along in his speech, we could see that he was turning that convention. And Howard looked at me with a startled look, and I said, just as Barkley was getting through, "Howard, go to the booth and call the President immediately, and tell him that this speech settled the second place." Barkley had some people opposing him there; the labor people were causing him some trouble. They lined up with Truman, of course; they would take it that far, but they didn't want Barkley, and he had some problems there that had to be straightened out as far as Barkley. Howard and I both sat there, and when Barkley finished they were standing on their chairs and the convention was in a complete uproar. You should have seen it. Some of them even started to talk about front

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place, first place, but that was shut off in a hurry by Barkley.

HESS: By Barkley himself?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was smart. He was smart enough to know that you don't do that and get away with it. You might get away with doing it but you'd never be President of the United States.

HESS: You might win the battle but you'd lose the war.

CHAPMAN: Exactly, and Barkley had sense enough to know that. He was a smart man. Barkley was a very astute man. On any political matter, he was as astute as any man I've ever known. So, I wanted you to know that McGrath went to the telephone immediately, in a booth right back there, and I stood there with him while he talked to the President.

HESS: He phoned back down to the White House?

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CHAPMAN: He phoned the President; he got him right away, and to quote him, he said, "Mr. President, this convention has gone absolutely out of control as far as doing anything about Barkley. He's won that second place cold. There's nobody that can take it away from him now if they wanted to."

He said, "Don't take it away from him; don't try. Let him have it." He said, "Barkley can get more votes than anybody else we've been talking about anyhow."

HESS: So that suited Mr. Truman just fine.

CHAPMAN: He was perfectly happy with Barkley. He knew, as I knew, and there were a lot of people who knew Barkley, that Barkley was getting old. He was showing signs of his age, and he had a very difficult time with his eyes.

HESS: Yes he did.

CHAPMAN: Oh, he could hardly see how to sign his

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name; he could hardly write his name, but nobody said anything about that. When he got up there, he didn't have to read that speech. He got up and gave a speech from his heart; he didn't have to read a word, he didn't read a word. That in itself had an impact on that audience, because he had it right in his mind, one, two, three, just like that; went right straight through it, and he had it lined up beautifully in his mind.

HESS: He was an excellent orator, and took great pride in that.

CHAPMAN: He had a memory that could absolutely shock you. He took great pride in being a good orator, and he was.

Well, the President just said, "Let it alone, Howard. Help him. Get it for him. Tell Oscar to get Senator O'Mahoney and talk with him."

Well, O'Mahoney issued a statement before I could get to him.

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HESS: He saw it just as you did.

CHAPMAN: He saw it just as I did; he saw the same thing. I called him just as he--he had just finished giving his statement to the press as I got him on the phone. I said, "Senator, I was coming around to see you to suggest that you probably ought to issue a statement to the public, because I don't believe we can cut this thing off."

He said, "I've already issued a statement, Oscar, to the public. You can't beat a man that's got it all in the basket that he's got it in. There's no use fighting an impossible situation. You lay off of him now; don't push any further at all."

I said, "Well, I wanted to get you built up at this convention a little bit, and I want you to make a speech here."

He said, "No, don't do it after tonight." So he begged me not to do it. I was going to work it out with Howard to call on him as an

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unexpected guest to make a speech. He asked me not to do it.

HESS: He'd rather not do it.

CHAPMAN: He didn't want to do it. He saw what he was up against. Joe was smart, too.

HESS: Do you think that's enough for today?

CHAPMAN: That's all I think I can give for today.

HESS: All right, fine.

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Fifth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C. May 19, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, we have a Xerox copy from the *New York Times* of August 1, 1948. It's entitled: "Professionals Take Full Charge of the President's Election Campaign." It's an article by Anthony Leviero. The first two heading the list are yourself and Oscar Ewing. What are your recollections when you look back on those days? Did you regard yourself as one of the top professionals that were taking over at this time?

CHAPMAN: Well, I never thought of myself as a professional. I thought of myself as a crusader on the issues that Truman was fighting for, and that was always utmost in my mind. I developed some experience in handling a presidential campaign. I had traveled throughout eleven western states for President Roosevelt on two campaigns for him, not as an advance man, but as one of his many men

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that were gathering information and putting together groups that we could get together to develop a campaign.

HESS: What two campaigns did you do that for Roosevelt?

CHAPMAN: Well, I was working in the '36 and '40 campaigns very much, and in the '44, too. I worked in the '44 campaign. The '36 campaign was an easy road. That was an easy campaign.

HESS: You didn't get into Maine and Vermont in that one?

CHAPMAN: No, I didn't. I didn't get into Maine and Vermont. I followed the instructions of Jim Farley very carefully. He was chairman most of that time, and he was a very good chairman. He had an exceptionally good chairman, far better than the average man that could manage this kind of a thing. He had a personality that was very intriguing and interesting to people. He would

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give me instructions to go into certain areas, spend some time there, as much as I felt was necessary, to gather the information and get some people lined up and get them together and get them to work together. That was a lot of my work.

HESS: To build an organization.

CHAPMAN: At that time it was to build an organization out in the states; that was primarily what I was doing then.

HESS: Did you concentrate on the Western States?

CHAPMAN: Pretty much.

HESS: Did you work in Colorado?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I pretty much concentrated on the Western States. I didn't go into the South at all, because as far as I was concerned, I was not the best person to work in the South with them, because I had been too outspoken on the

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issues of civil rights and things like that, and I had done several things that gave my position a good airing, a good airing to the public mind, of my feelings about civil rights for people, particularly there the Negro was the principal one that needed help. However, there are many other minorities that needed the same help, and many the very same kind of help.

You see, you get to working in the civil rights question and you work from a principle that this individual has inherent rights, as you do. You begin to follow that through in a practical sense and to bring it about in a coordinated way so that the help that you want to give to the minority groups, and the Negro especially in history; he was so far behind in doing the little thing that should have been done a hundred years ago. There were so many things that were still undone, that had not been attended to, in clarifying their rights and letting them exercise their rights.

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HESS: What is your opinion of Mr. Roosevelt's view of civil rights?

CHAPMAN: Oh, I was very much impressed with his fundamental belief and his sincerity in trying to help these people. He realized that there were limitations to what any one man can do before he would lose his power in getting together an audience.

You see, in President Roosevelt's last term, he was not too well, and when he came back from the Yalta Conference (that was his last trip), he was obviously, at that time, you could see his health had deteriorated very seriously. I had the opportunity to see him, visit with him one day, and I said, "Mr. President, I hope we can get some of these basic principles nailed down in law

and some legislation to protect them, because whoever succeeds you will have a hard time trying to push the program that you have been pushing."

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He said to me, "You know, you're mistaken about that. People get the wrong impression on that. As a matter of fact, a man that succeeds me can push it further than I did, because the groundwork has been laid so hard and so solid that my successor can even be more aggressive about it and can push it further and probably faster than I did." He had gotten the basic work done in terms of some legislation to create some of these things.

We so often think of the civil rights program as, say, giving a minority or the Negro, in this particular case, his rights to attend meetings with white people, and participate in sitting in hotel rooms and not be excluded from the right to use of a hotel, for instance right here in Washington. They couldn't do it when we first started. Before we finished the second term of President Roosevelt, practically every hotel had come around and let us use the hotel for a Negro banquet, we'll say, and it didn't cause us any

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trouble after awhile.

But what we had not accomplished, we had not gone far enough to establish his economic rights and give him the opportunity to an economic foothold into the present economy of our country and into the level of society that we were trying to maintain. There is one of the weakest points that we have at the present time on the Negro and the minority groups, the economic opportunities that we've got to work out to help him. We've got to give him some help, too, so he can be able to make his own living, make a standard of living that is substantial and is adequate for his health and welfare.

HESS: How can that be done?

CHAPMAN: That can be done in many ways. For instance, if we spent one-tenth as much time trying to find a mechanism to work out help for the poor people of this country, regardless of their color, as

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we spend on trying to give Lockheed three hundred million dollars to keep their manufacturing going, you'd find it mighty fast; you'd find it mighty quick, a method to do it. It can be done. There are several ways. I don't claim to be an expert to say that this is a better way to do it than we are now doing it, but we should improve it. We ought to improve it each year a little bit, and tighten it up in the administration as we go. That has to be done, and over the course of years it will be improved.

HESS: Some black leaders point out that it's often difficult for some of their men, some black men, to join unions, or to be accepted as trainees in unions.

CHAPMAN: That was one of the hardest places that we had difficulty with, but the union people...

HESS: That picture hasn't completely changed yet today, has it?

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CHAPMAN: No, it hasn't completely changed, but it has begun. It has begun with a substantial, solid backing, and it's only a matter of a few years and you'll have that, I think, the other way. I think that will clear itself away in a short time, partly because of the need for a labor force that we need to have. You've got a certain number of unemployed practically all the time. I think it was five and one half million this year, approximately.

HESS: Let's go back a little bit more to civil rights and the conditions that existed here in the Nation's capital during World War II, shall we say. Now, it wasn't until after World War II when Negroes could eat in restaurants, was it not?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And housing was and yet today is quite a factor.

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CHAPMAN: Housing is still the hardest place to break through with harmony with the community and so on.

HESS: Did you have a lot of pressure brought against the things that you were trying to do by real estate interests?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. They were obviously trying to oppose any advance help towards the black man's having a free choice of buying a livable house in a community which he wanted. He had a lot of trouble with that. Now that still exists to quite an extent. It's not cleared yet.

HESS: It still exists today.

CHAPMAN: Yes, it does. Now, the Roosevelt campaign contrasted with Truman's quite differently, totally different. You had two types of men, two entirely different types of men. Truman had, but most people didn't appreciate it at first, Truman had a real understanding of what I

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consider the real poor people, the real man on the farm and on the street looking for work. Truman had a much better understanding of him and his problems than even Roosevelt.

HESS: To what would you attribute that?

CHAPMAN: That was the difference in their backgrounds. The thing that Roosevelt had that more than made up for that, was his sincerity and desire to find a way to improve a situation that he found, and he wanted to improve it. He put a whole bunch of us young fellows to work on certain programs and tried to work them out, test them out, and try them out on different people, and find a better way to do certain things for the poor people that he wanted to help.

HESS: To what extent would political expediency enter into the thinking of both men?

CHAPMAN: Truman had absolutely no thought politically whatsoever in what he was doing on the issues.

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What you had to do with President Truman was supply him with proper and adequate facts, give him the facts about a situation, and he knew which way he wanted to go. You didn't have to convince him about any part of the rights of these people. All you had to do was convince him of the true facts of life of what we could do.

HESS: We were discussing the political views of the two men.

CHAPMAN: The two men had the same objective in mind, in their hearts, but they had a little different approach about how to accomplish it, how to do it, you see. As I said to you, Truman understood the minds and the hearts of the poor people, the underdogs that needed help. What you had to do was to supply him with a formula and with information, or facts, that would support his position on this thing, and he wanted it solid and sound.

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Roosevelt would strike out and he would throw two or three balls in the air at once. He'd have Congress fighting over three bills at one time, and he'd always get two of them through. That was one of his unique ways. But if he'd put three bills up there on Monday morning, and I've seen him do it, he'd get through with two of them.

HESS: Would he do this on purpose, knowing that one would probably fail?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: He knew it would fail. He knew he wouldn't get all he wanted.

CHAPMAN: But he'd get it later. If he got the other two through, later on they'd give him this one. He had a unique way of approaching Congress.

HESS: How did he do that?

CHAPMAN: Well, in the first place, he kept a rather

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close contact with the leadership in Congress, much more than people realized. He kept a close contact. The fact that he couldn't get around and go walking, getting out of the way, he was more available all the time to see more people, and he saw more people. He worked; that man worked the hardest I ever saw anybody work. Roosevelt really was working. You see, when we were working out a plan for him to visit, say, San Francisco, I would have two or three Secret Service men from the White House; they would be there with me, and I would work out with them the details of what I wanted to do, then they would trim it and set it to a security base for protection. They were the last word. I always left the last word to them on security, and there were some very good men, very good men. They never did mix with the political phase of it at all. They were there to watch the President, looking out for him.

HESS: Strictly the security angle.

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CHAPMAN: Strictly. They never interfered with our program at all.

Now, Roosevelt, as I said, had a different approach from Truman, but it was extremely good for the time, the timing of it.

I want to read this when you get it put in typed form, and I'll probably have to make some adjustments in the language if nothing more.

HESS: That's a normal thing. When we get the drafts back, we can make changes, additions. It's usually an excellent place to make a good addition, because quite often we find a place where we started to say something, started to tell a story, and something came up and we did not. We can just write it out in longhand and insert it, so when the final transcript comes out, the full story will be there.

CHAPMAN: That's it. I want to be careful not to appear that I'm attacking somebody in this thing. I don't want to get into that. All I want to do

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is tell the story of my experience with Truman and what he said and what he was doing, and how he was doing it. I caught his technique on that first trip I handled entirely by myself.

HESS: The June trip.

CHAPMAN: I want you and me to research the records to see if he didn't make a May trip as well as June.

HESS: He made a May trip in 1950. He went out to the rededication of Grand Coulee Dam in May of 1950.

CHAPMAN: That's right, that's when he dedicated another generator.

HESS: For some reason they were rededicating the dam again.

CHAPMAN: That's what they all kidded me about, all the reporters on the train. They said, "How many

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times are you going to rededicate this thing?"

I said, "Oh, every time we add another million kilowatts, we rededicate it."

HESS: Was that the reason?

CHAPMAN: No, we really did dedicate these generators when we put them in.

HESS: That's right, but it doesn't necessarily take the President of the United States to do it though. What was the reason for the May 1950 trip?

CHAPMAN: Let's be sure to pinpoint that trip as to what time, what year it was made in. My memory has absolutely done tricks on me with that trip and I can't pinpoint it to the right year and time.

HESS: I feel pretty sure it was '50.

CHAPMAN: You're probably right. I just absolutely can't...

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HESS: Then in '48 was the June trip; that was the trip out to Berkeley to receive the degree.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: You also stopped by Grand Coulee on that one, too.

CHAPMAN: Do you remember, they had a big flood up there in Oregon, what year was that? They had a big flood and we called the Red Cross in. There were a lot of people killed in that flood in Oregon. What I did, I canceled the part of the program I had lined up for Truman, because I had him scheduled to ride in the head of the march for the Rose Petal Day--I've

forgotten what they called it--but that was the city of roses, beautiful roses there at that time of the year in Oregon.

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The roses were pretty, and they had beautiful girls lined up. The local people handled that; I didn't have anything to do with it, for this was something they were handling.

But I took Truman out of that niche and got him to cancel his part of the program of marching in the parade, because too many people had been killed and their bodies were still not found when we were there, and you didn't want get the President in a position of having a good time visiting Portland and seeing...

HESS: Right after a tragedy.

CHAPMAN: That's right. It was not a good time, and I called the President and told him that I was to cancel it entirely, any speeches. He said "Set the whole thing up to suit you." And I did. I set it up, and we had good coverage on that with both of the radio stations and everything. We had the Red Cross man to come and appear with Truman, and make his commitment, that they

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would have their field men there tomorrow delivering some goods to the families that had been very seriously damaged, some of them having been killed. Then we brought in the Corps of Engineers and the Reclamation Service to help develop some protective features to that river there. We had had so much destruction that year, and had had then once before, but it was many, many years before, and this particular year was the most devastating that we'd had.

That incident is the thing I can't put together as to the time. It's in my mind that it was the first of May, and I can't be certain of it at all. I was out there, of course, ahead of him, on the June trip anyway. He may have made two trips. I'm not sure.

HESS: I know that he went out West in June of '48 and in May of '50. We can find out when the Oregon flood occurred and that will pretty well pin it down.

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CHAPMAN: Yes, that will pin it down, because that was specific and definite. We canceled his program of participating in the rose parade, that and one other program that they had for that night that I didn't think he ought to go to, and he didn't.

Now, we came out of that from Oregon and I don't know whether we dedicated the dam on that trip or the next, I've forgotten. I'll have to research that to see. Now, that you can get from the files.

HESS: I feel quite sure that the dedication of the dam was in '50, and in June of '48 he stopped by the dam. He visited the dam, but I don't believe there was any dedication.

CHAPMAN: Just stopped by to see how it was progressing and so on.

Now as to the form of what my work consisted of during that period from the convention time on, I devoted my full time to his campaign entirely.

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I took leave without pay--no, that was another time I took a leave. But I devoted full time to his campaign.

You should have in your files up there a book that thick, a very thick book, of a breakdown of Truman's trip, where he stopped and what he talked about in each place, because we got together for him, from each department, things that Truman had made decisions about, something in that community, and we would make a brief paragraph or two on that and refer to it as to the subject matter which he spoke about and so on.

Now, a lot of that trip was keyed to the Reclamation Development Program. Naturally since I was in the Department of Interior, I was interested in reclamation, and I keyed a lot of it to that. I knew that better than I did the other, and it was more substantial than anything else, except the farm end of it was substantial, more so than the reclamation.

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HESS: Is this the way an itinerary is drawn up? Different people with different expertise in different fields will recommend where the President should go in a certain area. Perhaps the Department of Agriculture could recommend where he should speak in the farm belt, and yourself in the Department of Interior could recommend where he should speak in the West?

CHAPMAN: Well, to be rather closely accurate to that idea, Charlie Brannan and I, between us, pretty much indicated the places we preferred him to speak, and the subject matter he should cover in that area. That was what I referred to you in my last interview, that Brannan had done a magnificent job of really putting together a fine schedule for the President, and the subject matters he ought to discuss and where. He did a superb job of that and it made the President's work come out looking better at the end, because he placed him properly.

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HESS: At the time that you would recommend subject matter for the specific speeches, did you also turn in a draft of a speech, or an outline of a speech?

CHAPMAN: No, I never drafted a speech. I was not a speechwriter. I would give him the subject matter.

HESS: Would you get someone in the department to submit drafts?

CHAPMAN: Well, what I would do, for instance, if we were going to Kansas, Omaha and through there, some of Charlie Brannan's men would prepare drafts of speeches.

HESS: Farm subjects.

CHAPMAN: Yes, Charlie himself would pitch in on that.

Now, do you want to have a meeting next Friday?

HESS: Fine. Same time next Friday?

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CHAPMAN: Same time next Friday. This is the best time for me to cut out appointments from clients at this hour in order to finish up my homework in the office here.

HESS: Do you want to cut it off for today?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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Sixth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman Washington, D.C., August 2, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, let's discuss an occurrence that took place in June during the trip to the West, and that was the flooding of the Northwest at that time. What difficulties arose because of the flooding just before the President's trip?

CHAPMAN: Well, you understand the psychology of the public when there is a tragedy of such moment, as this was. There were many people who had lost their lives in this flood. The flood was around Portland, and extended down the river a considerable way. The measure of damage in dollars would be almost impossible to estimate at this time. You can't estimate the loss of life in terms of dollars. The people were very much disturbed, very much concerned, about some immediate help right now, to help these people, because some of them were wiped out completely. It was similar but on a much smaller scale than the recent flood

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we have just had down in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

HESS: From Hurricane Agnes.

CHAPMAN: Yes, Hurricane Agnes. That one was not as large as Agnes, but it was, nevertheless, extremely heavy and a number of lives were taken in that flood. Actually the people were very unhappy and disturbed. They needed help and they needed it quickly. I got there into Portland, traveling for the President, trying to make arrangements for his appearance at each one of these towns that we stopped in, and there we had to change the program a little for this reason: We had a program set up where he would march in what we called the Rose Parade. Portland is noted for its beautiful roses at that time of the year, and they were gorgeous. The roses all over Portland were just beautiful. They were in full bloom. The

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schedule was set up for him to make a little brief talk at one of the halls down in town, then getting cars and starting to march behind the parade, or in front of the parade rather. As they went by they came by this hall.

But I saw the atmosphere that had been created because of this terrible tragedy, and I saw the President and I told him that I would recommend strongly that we cancel what we called the Rose Parade and let him drive out in a car, or we could take his train if necessary to Salem. So instead of going to some building downtown to a couple of those meetings with the officials of the Rose Festival, we went over to Salem that morning and the regional Red Cross man met us there and he set forth the things that they were doing and would try to do immediately for them, a strict emergency thing, and it showed us right where we had to pick up on the Federal Government side.

I had his speech. He gave me a copy of his

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speech, and I had several of the men that were helping me on the train take that speech and outline the things in it that we could do as a follow-up to what the Red Cross representative had said. They took it and picked out the things that could be done immediately and fast, such as the Corps of Engineers sent in quite a crew of people to help clear the debris and the other things away from the river channel, and keep the channel open. There were trees and logs rolling down that river and some of them were hitting houses and knocking them over completely. If you have never seen a flood, real damage like that, it gives you a shock when you first see one. I had never seen one of that size before. The local people's homes, you'd see them turned over sideways and mashed up against the banks and over in the trees.

These men took that speech of the Red Cross man and we analyzed it very carefully where we could pick up and go in. I had these fellows to

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stay on the train until we got down to San Francisco. By that time they had it all outlined, the whole thing.

Then we put some orders into effect, the President did, to have the Corps of Engineers to send their crew in immediately and start to work and see what they could do, the Reclamation Service of the Department of the Interior to see what they could do in the way of help, and to help immediately. We did it and in several cases we didn't overrun our budget; we just simply overspent for the emergency of this, some extra money that we had that we were saving for other things, and we took it and turned it into this and started into helping those people. For instance, they went into such detail of helping them. They went down and bought a lot of bedclothes and things like that for them to sleep on. Some of these families didn't have anything. They were just wiped out. They were people who had lived comfortably and had nice little houses, and they

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were people that were well-organized in life and worked hard for their living and they had nice little homes. They were small homes, as a rule, but they were nice houses. They didn't have, in some cases, any furniture whatever. Then they got them some furniture. The Red Cross did this part. Another thing they needed which people didn't think of, they needed groceries. They had to have some food. They didn't have any storage to keep any that hadn't been wiped out. So they got them adequate food supplies and what they did, they gave some kind of credit at two or three of the major stores in town where they could go and get what they wanted and just charge it. What they did, they gave them a limit, I think, so much, and they could go in and get their groceries and pay for it by just letting them tear off a little piece of paper off of this ticket that they had. Of course, this record just simplified it down to the nth degree, I honestly don't believe that there was a single case of unfair or

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dishonest taking of groceries or anything else that could have been so easily taken through that system. You couldn't use that system widespread. But those people there used it as conscientiously as if it had come out of their own pocket, and they bought just what they had to have, what they needed, and that's what they did.

HESS: Did you ever later talk to any of the Oregon Democratic politicians to find out or to ask what effect on the election Mr. Truman's handling and your handling of matters there might have had?

CHAPMAN: Well, I talked to several of the political leaders and was asking and inquired of them whether the flood and the effort we made to take care of the emergency had had any effect or changed those people's minds about Truman's competency in handling a real problem. There wasn't any question; everyone, to the last man, gave him, in

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a complimentary way, a comment as to how decent he was to do this without trying to get a lot of publicity out of it, which he didn't try to do. He spoke over the radio with this Red Cross man. I didn't put anybody else on that program. I just had the Red Cross man. The Governor was not

there or I would have put him on. I think it was Governor [Douglas] McKay who later became Secretary of the Interior.

HESS: I think he was Governor at that time.

CHAPMAN: I think he was Governor at that time. Well, he was not there, or I would have had him. But the other officials all showed up and we spoke around 12 o'clock on the radio right on the steps of the capital. The checkup that I had made, I had asked two or three of the leaders there to make a little checkup for me to give me any idea as to whether this was having any effect on us one way or another, if we were lacking in anything we should do, to let me know. They

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came back with glowing reports about the appreciation of the people. They were just thrilled, because by coincidence of facts that happened, I was in Portland before the water got through going down, and so consequently we were there on the grounds getting things lined up and I got the President's program outlined for him as far as what he had to do and should do. We got that straightened out for him and then I had several of the agencies of the Government that I had worked closely with and I contacted some of them direct and talked to them, and they started right in to help. They did it very quickly and very fast. It was one of the most efficient jobs that I ever had the pleasure of working on.

I like to work on a job that moves smoothly and nicely. This didn't have any crossing up of orders, and what one group was going to do and the other one was not going to do. And there wasn't one bit. Just each group went ahead and did just what it was supposed to do. It was

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outlined to them very easily, because it was very easy to outline to the Corps of Engineers what they should do, and the Reclamation Service. Even the Grazing Service was brought in to this because there were so many sheep up through the valley; they run a lot of sheep, and they lost nearly all of them. There again is where your money value loss comes in. The poor fellow doesn't have anything coming in for the next fall for his income, for the loss of his sheep. Some cattle were lost, but not many cattle. Sheep was the biggest loss in that area.

All in all, I was very pleased with the reports I had gotten that the people had appreciated what the President had done so quickly, because he arrived there. I stayed there to meet him in Portland. I couldn't meet him in Denver. I stayed there to meet him in Portland, because I, by telephone, had pretty much lined up my San Francisco meeting anyway, and my plans I wanted to work out. I'd gotten

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men I wanted to help me down there and I got so much better support and help than the press was giving us credit for having. There was a lot of gossip about the coolness of the people and

so on. Well, you did have some of this. You had some of that where the politician was scared to get too close to Truman, afraid it wasn't going too well. But by the 15th of October, you couldn't hold them back. I could tell by the change in the mood of the crowd that Truman was really coming to the top. He was surfacing to the top, to the lead, in this program. I could tell by the mood of the crowds from one town to the next.

HESS: That things were progressing and getting better.

CHAPMAN: Oh, absolutely. It was so obvious that you could see so clearly what was happening. For instance, if he stopped at the littlest place, little town, there was nothing but a train stop once in a while, not necessarily a big town or anything of the kind. Remember, when the President

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goes anywhere and stops, the press has to be there, and they are there. I don't care if he spoke out there to just three people, if he made a speech and there was only three there, they'd have to write about it, even if they did have to write it about three people being there. They'd have to tell you why.

HESS: It would get in the papers.

CHAPMAN: It would get in the papers. And we got it in the papers by the sheer force of the office, you see.

We moved from that stand in Portland, which gave us a wonderful backdrop for the mistakes we made in Omaha.

HESS: Tell me about that.

CHAPMAN: Well, the Omaha situation just simply got crossed up between several people trying to set up the President's program.

HESS: Ed McKim was in charge of setting that up,

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was he not?

CHAPMAN: Well, he took charge. He took charge of it and was setting it up and the local people, because he had just been at the White House, had been working there; they thought he was really running the thing and they had gone to him and he had talked with them and he had lined up the program in such a way that it was impossible for the President to meet that evening, to have spoken. It was humanly impossible. He couldn't do it. He had doubled his program for that evening on a timetable that you couldn't possibly keep.

HESS: Did you point that out to him beforehand?

CHAPMAN: I did.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He said, "Now, I'm handling it. Now, you just don't understand Omaha. I know these people and I can handle them."

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I said, "Ed, it's all right with me. You can handle it, but I'm going to leave tomorrow and go on to Cheyenne." That was Saturday and I was going to be in Cheyenne on Saturday night to get a lineup for the Sunday meeting. Sunday afternoon the train was to arrive at 4 o'clock. The new mansion that was built in the capital there for the Governor to live in is, I would say, two or three hundred yards (I'm not a good guesser on distances), from the station up to the Governor's mansion.

HESS: In Cheyenne?

CHAPMAN: Yes, to the Governor's mansion. The setting was perfect. We didn't plan for him to stay there. We didn't want him to take his time there, because the press we knew would be there. The *Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News*, all from Denver, sent their reporters up there to cover it. Our newspapers from over the areas sent their local reporters in, and then practically all of them, the major papers,

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I think, had someone on the train going with us. We had quite a good representation of the press on the train, better than I had expected, and it picked up as it went. By the time we got back to Washington we had...

HESS: Why do you think so many papers sent reporters along on this so-called "nonpolitical" trip? As you know a large number of reporters went along.

CHAPMAN: Yes. They were expecting to see a complete flop and they wanted to write about it. They got so disgusted after two or three of them. They, of course, wrote the one up in Omaha. *Life* magazine took pictures of that empty hall, and he wasn't even supposed to be at the hall. The schedule that this fellow had worked out for him didn't have him going to the hall at all, but a little handbill had been passed out by his Army buddies...

HESS: The 35th Division Association.

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CHAPMAN: The 35th Division, and he marched with them that afternoon for a little ways. Then he couldn't go that night because what Ed had done, he had set up a cocktail party without telling me. I didn't know anything about it. That was the first I learned about it. After I called the President, I left on Saturday morning early and went on over to Cheyenne. The situation was obviously going to be very difficult to handle there under the circumstances and I wanted to get out of the way of it.

HESS: Did you communicate your feelings to President Truman?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. I talked to him personally over the telephone, direct, through Matt Connelly. I talked with Matt and then talked with the President. I talked with both of them.

HESS: And you told them that it looked like things were going to go wrong?

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HESS: I told them that I was very concerned about it. He had a schedule that I didn't think could possibly be worked, and he would just have to play it by ear when he got there, and take what he could and the rest he'd have to--Matt being with him all the time, would just have to watch it and "make changes that you'd have to make when you get here, because you'll just have to make some changes, because you can't keep them all."

Well, they got there and they had it that way, but they got with their empty hall because he didn't go out there to the hall at first. He was a little late. It had been put in the press that only the 35th Division were to come to this meeting. Well, they thought the place would be so packed, and half of them didn't come.

HESS: And the public thought that they were not invited.

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CHAPMAN: That's exactly what happened. They didn't come. That's one time that the public listened to the newspaper and read that article. It killed me. Well, we decided we'd just make the best we could out of it and let it go and not worry about it. "Well do something to cover that some other way." And we did later on get a chance to recoup that in Omaha. The whole program in Omaha was simply not the feeling of the people at all. They were in perfectly good spirits and as friendly with him as they could be. They were just not given the opportunity to see him in any way. Ed kept him completely surrounded with his own friends.

HESS: Kept him isolated.

CHAPMAN: Well, for instance, this is one of those things that has been printed. He took the President out to some place around 5 o'clock in the afternoon to meet some people and to see a hall or some new building. I never did know quite

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what that was. But he leaves there and brings them all on by his house to a cocktail party that he had set up there at his house, and he had invited a lot of friends. What Ed didn't know was that invitations to something for the President have to be scrutinized so closely that I thought the Secret Service boys would go crazy. They were just wild.

HESS: They were taken by surprise?

CHAPMAN: They were taken by surprise, and so was I. Of course, I had left and I was in Cheyenne working on that meeting by that night. Matt called me in Cheyenne that night, at midnight or later, and he said, "Well, your predictions came true to perfection. You were exactly right."

HESS: It was a debacle.

CHAPMAN: But he said, "I'm sure glad you called the President and told him about it because he would have been surprised." He said, "You had put him

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on notice and he was kind of ready for it, and he didn't let it bother him, and he just went on and handled it."

HESS: It didn't take him by surprise.

CHAPMAN: It didn't take him by surprise, so it didn't give him a chance to think what he wanted to do and say. He handled it in such a way that he didn't leave any implications on anybody that didn't handle things right, because this man was a friend of his family's and was a friend of theirs.

HESS: He used to work for him in the White House.

CHAPMAN: That's right. So he had all those credentials back of him. So that's what happened there exactly.

But I'll tell you what I did when we reached Cheyenne on Sunday afternoon. The plane arrived in there between 4 and 5; I can't remember the

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exact time. Between 4 and 5 it arrived in there. I had arranged for the National Guard to line from the train to the Governor's mansion, and we had a soldier every ten or fifteen feet apart on each side of the street, Maxwell Street. It was fixed up nicely. We had one on each side about every fifteen feet apart, and it looked like a lot of people. We got them all set and we had several hundred like that. Then, besides that all the National Guard people had been notified that they and their families could come and be there, and that they might get a chance to shake hands with

the President. They might not, but they could come and see him. Well, it followed through so nicely. The train arrived on time. The crowd had gathered down at the station, and there was a crowd. It was the biggest that was ever together in the State of Wyoming, even for one of their rodeos. It was on Sunday afternoon. A lot of people from Denver had driven up there. I had worked on that. See, that's a one hundred

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mile drive, and a very beautiful highway; a lot of people from Denver drove up there. And these little towns in northern Colorado, a lot of people drove up to Cheyenne for a little Sunday afternoon holiday. It was a very pleasant little town for them to go to. So we had a crowd from the northern Colorado areas that had come in there that the people were not dreaming were coming. The local people would never have thought of such a thing, that that many would come. They thought a few would come, maybe forty or fifty. But there was some four or five hundred of them that were in there from Denver on up.

The press caught that that way, and I made it a point to introduce two or three of the editors, the *Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News* and the Greeley newspaper, and one other newspaper editor was up there on one of those papers. These were two of the small papers and then two of the biggest papers. Then one of the newspapers from over in the West, the *Grand*

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Junction Sentinel, which was the biggest newspaper outside of Denver. The man who owned that had been a great supporter of Truman. He had been worried about all the things he had been hearing. He said, "I think I'll go on over to Cheyenne anyway." This was by telephone. I was on the telephone, when I wasn't talking with one locally, I was on the telephone. So he went on up. When I left Cheyenne primarily the next stop for me was Portland to organize that Portland situation and to be there in plenty of time to get it lined up.

In the meantime, I had the chance there in Cheyenne to introduce a few of these editors to Truman and I gave a list of names to Clark Clifford and Clark knew one or two of them, like Palmer Hoyt at the *Denver Post*. I gave a list of them, the people there, the local people, to Clifford. He in a very astute way just made it look like it was just as casual as it could be. He said, "Come on and meet the President." He

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would take in two or three of these reporters at a time to see the President and after they had stayed a few minutes he would motion for one of them that he knew, and he would take them on out. He handled that beautifully. He filled in the little finesse that you needed to have to make it look nice, and that overcame the Omaha thing so beautifully.

We had pictures of the Omaha thing in *Life* magazine. They were two-page pictures, terrific pictures, and the front page, that is, the outside, like this, had a picture of the hall with the vacant seats. Then I got an opportunity to get some pictures with the President at the Governor's

mansion because all these people at the station walked up there, you see. As I said, it was 250 yards or more, about that. They all walked up and at the Governor's mansion there was a little balcony out over the front porch that three or four people could stand out on. There was the Governor and two or three other local citizens, including the head

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of the Press Association for the State of Wyoming, and he runs a radio station, so he had him connected up and we had free time on that. He handled that local situation for me and I knew him well. I knew he could do a good job of it, and I had talked with him beforehand about the kind of thing we should set up up there, and he did it. He did a good job, a very good job. He's a typical, slow-moving fellow, but he stops to talk to every one of these cattle people he'd see from around the country. He stopped to talk to every one of them and he had the President meet every one of them. Well, fortunately, we had a time schedule there that gave us plenty of time. We could hold the train there for another hour if we wanted to. So, I told Clark before I left--I took a plane out of there and went on to Portland--and I told him, "Just don't worry about it, this Governor. He's all right. You may get a little nervous about him the first thing. He's too slow but he's exactly the pace that these people

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are in, and when he introduces you to one of these old farmers up there, cattle people, it means something to you and it's worth something. So don't shortchange him on anything if you can help it because it's too valuable. You've got to keep pushing him." He pushed him to get him through. Clark caught that exactly and he handled it just to perfection with the President for me. He just handled it beautifully with the press.

Clark has a facility and a talent. His first meeting of a person, of making an impression; it's like Judge Lindsey, whom I used to work for in Denver, who ran the juvenile court there. I worked with him for seven or eight years; he used to tell me, he'd call me in and he'd say, "Son, I want you to understand that the artistry of approach is the finest approach you can make to those people that will be lasting." And he had always lectured me about the artistry of approach, your first meeting with people. Clark Clifford had

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that just by nature; he had it to perfection. What Lindsay had been lecturing to me about all those eight years, Clark had it.

HESS: And he still has it today.

CHAPMAN: He still has it today. He could bring those people in and he would handle them in a crowd so easily, and he could get the President out of a crowd without any commotion or any apparent disturbance, so everything was running just fine. He handled that so well. We got terrifically good publicity on that one, and the reporters on that really caught the picture that something went wrong in Omaha that had nothing to do with the President at all, and so they

really wrote that story up beautifully. They corrected that Omaha story, correcting what they had written before, saying the problem that they ran into in Omaha was nothing but a faux pas that had been pulled by a local man (they didn't mention his name), who wasn't familiar with handling a President. He

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just didn't know how to handle it. They made another reference to me in the press at that time: "Oscar Chapman or Clark Clifford, had either one of them been there..." Well, it was too late for Clark to do anything. He couldn't do anything but help get him through the night, and I had gone.

So that covered the part of the program, for the atmosphere we started off with was bad from Omaha.

We had a little bit of a flap in Chicago, a little mix-up; the program there got mixed up a little bit by too many ambitious local politicians trying to take the lead, and that's a tough place to handle them in Chicago if you don't know the leaders. If you don't know the leaders and which ones you're talking to you can foul up a meeting terribly.

HESS: Who were the principal leaders in Chicago at that time that you had to contend with?

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CHAPMAN: [Richard J.] Daley was coming to the forefront; right then he was coming to the front, and I spotted Daley as being the brains behind--putting his friends together and making them come to what he wanted to do.

HESS: You saw him as a comer at that time?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. I saw him and I used him. I used him heavily.

HESS: How did you use him?

CHAPMAN: Oh, I had him to get certain people. I said, "I want you to get so-and-so and so-and-so, get them to come in to see the President. You see Matt Connelly and talk to him." I gave him a list and he took care of it. Clark followed it on through like that. I mean, our coordination worked out perfectly and all because Clark had such good common sense.

HESS: That was the address in Chicago before the Swedish Pioneer Centennial Celebration?

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CHAPMAN: Yes. That wasn't serious, or it wasn't big. I mean, there wasn't a serious error, but we could have gotten a little more out of it had Clark and I been able to be there all day that day beforehand, you see. I had to leave before to go into Omaha. Of course, it was a good thing that

I did. But that was the one he spoke at there. Governor Green. Let's see, who was the mayor of Chicago at that time?

HESS: He'll be identified in the Public Papers. The mayor was Martin H. Kennelly.

CHAPMAN: Martin H. Kennelly.

HESS: "In his opening words he referred to Vilas Johnson, General Chairman of the Chicago Swedish Pioneer Centennial, Dwight H. Green, Governor of Illinois, and Martin H. Kennelly, Mayor of Chicago."

CHAPMAN: That's the one. I had given those names to Daley.

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HESS: To Daley. To see that they showed up?

CHAPMAN: To see that they were at the right place at the right time.'

HESS: What was Daley at that time, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: I don't recall what his title was or what he was doing, but he acted more or less as a public relations man for the mayor. They were quite friendly apparently, and he was helping the mayor on public relations matters such as this. He had had a good deal of experience on this kind of a program, and that made him very useful and helpful to us.

HESS: One of the most powerful black men in the House of Representatives at that time was William Dawson.

CHAPMAN: Right.

HESS: Did you work with William Dawson?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. I worked with William Dawson and

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I'll never forget his speech up there on the back of the car or automobile out at the community there, in the black community. I know, Dawson had set up (Daley had done this for me), he had set up a meeting for Truman to stop there in an automobile and make a speech at 5 o'clock in the afternoon as they got off from work, most of them. We caught the right hour. Dawson was riding in that car with the President. I had him riding with the President and the mayor was in the car with him. The Governor had been with us before. He was not with us at that particular meeting, but he was with us before during the day. The Governor had been very courteous and had been a little more helpful than some of them had been.

HESS: Was this during the regular campaign?

CHAPMAN: No, this was on that first trip, nonpolitical trip. But Dawson's speech up there, I will never forget the phrase that he used.

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He had a deep, heavy voice as so many black people have, and he got up, introduced the President, and he said, "Now, the press is telling the public that this man has been in the White House too long, that he shouldn't be there any longer." He said, "I want to ask you, how long is too long when it's good?" That crowd just roared with that. He said, "How long is too long when it's good?" He got a terrific ovation out of that, and Truman got a wide ovation there. They just tore the town down for him almost.

HESS: That must not have been in the...

CHAPMAN: That might have been on the second trip.

HESS: I can't find anything about Dawson in the notes. The President also spoke at Gary.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was in Gary.

HESS: I can't find anyplace where Dawson would have

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introduced him in Chicago, but quite probably it was just not released to the press.

CHAPMAN: I'll tell you, this was nothing, this was purely a...

HESS: Off-the-cuff remarks?

CHAPMAN: I would say off-the-cuff remarks. The whole thing was informal.

HESS: It didn't go through the press office?

CHAPMAN: It was not on any program, you see. So, we did this at the last minute because Dawson was feeling like he was being left out a little bit. I caught that feeling. I had caught it before I left there, and I had tipped Clark off to it. I said, "Some way or another get him in the car with the President if you can and drive down through the black district. You can stop the car on any one of about five corners. He'll have 5,000 people there," He

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passed my guess by a long way. He had far more than 5,000.

HESS: So this was away to give recognition to Congressman Dawson and also to have the President appear and speak before a group of black people.

CHAPMAN: That's right. He did.

HESS: How important to his victory in 1948 do you think that the black vote was, particularly the urban black vote? In Chicago for instance?

CHAPMAN: Oh, very definitely it was a real asset. They gave us a margin for victory. There isn't any question in my mind that they gave us the margin we got. Remember, that was a close election out there.

HESS: Why do you feel that most blacks were voting for the Democratic Party in 1948? Was this a holdover from the Roosevelt era when they voted overwhelmingly for Roosevelt? As I understand, the black vote was still dominantly Republican in 1932, right?

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CHAPMAN: That is correct, and that was principally because it had not been organized sufficiently.

HESS: Then four years later in 1936, we see a definite switch, a definite change, after four years of the Roosevelt administration.

CHAPMAN: That's the part I want to tell you about. People didn't realize what Truman had done those first four years. He had done things for the poor people and for the Negroes. He had supported the Negro position right straight down the line. He was against segregation. He expressed himself. That word got around among people everywhere. And besides, Truman had done some things legislative wise. He had put himself on record on two or three important issues for them that he publicly had supported, which had never been done before by any President for the Negro people. He had put himself on record in such a way and on such important issues that affected the black man very deeply, and they began to realize that

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"This man is really with us. He's really trying to help us." They got the feeling, the Negro group. The black man got the feeling that after his four years in there that he had really tried to do something for them. They had felt that he was trying to carry on the Roosevelt program, which was in their favor, and they believed that and some of the carryover was from that. But his record supported it. That's what made it solid.

HESS: Did political expediency enter into Mr. Truman's view of civil rights to any degree?

CHAPMAN: No, no. Truman--on that issue, I had talked with him dozens of times, because he knew my background. I came from Virginia and came here from Colorado, but he recognized my background from the South, and that atmosphere around me. He knew that I was up against

a tough situation. I couldn't go and make a speech down in my home county where I was born. They wouldn't pay

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any attention to me; they wouldn't listen to me then. They'd be very reluctant to speak to me. Except there was one factor involved there that was very interesting. The Governor of the State of Virginia at that time was a close, personal friend of mine. We were both in grade school together.

HESS: Who was he?

CHAPMAN: Bill Tuck, William Tuck. And Bill had the Governorship. See, they can't run again after they run down there for Governor.

HESS: Just one term, is that right?

CHAPMAN: No. I think they can fill two terms.

HESS: They can succeed themselves one time.

CHAPMAN: One time, then that's all. But when Tuck got through serving his time down there, there came a vacancy in his district in Congress, because one of the Congressmen in that area

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died, just exactly in time for the machinery to be put in motion for his name to be put on the ballot, and he was put on the ballot and he got elected, of course. Halifax County is one of the most reactionary counties in the whole United States. People don't know that.

HESS: Where is that located?

CHAPMAN: It's down on the border of North Carolina and Virginia.

HESS: How far west?

CHAPMAN: Well, it's right in the center of the state; I mean, center that way, not the center of the state, but if you're crossing from the seashore over to the mountains, your line goes like this.

HESS: About halfway across the state.

CHAPMAN: And here's North Carolina. Right in the middle of this are the connecting highways. It puts you right through the little towns both in

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Virginia and in North Carolina on just a line.

HESS: Southern Virginia.

CHAPMAN: Southern Virginia, Halifax County. I was born in that county, and it was about the most conservative, reactionary county in the whole United States. There isn't another one like it. I'd go down there and Bill Tuck invited my wife and me to spend the weekend in the Governor's mansion there in Richmond.

One of the cute stories that I always remember; when we got to breakfast, he brought us all out on the portico there and then walked out into the yard. It was beautiful, beautiful. There's a big stone there, about as high as your shoulder, about as high as a man's shoulder, and kind of oval shaped at the top. He had the name of every President that had ever slept there. As he went down the list reading them off to me, he was reading them off to me [as if I couldn't see them], but he was reading them off with great glory

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to himself because he was following those great men. And he got down the list and they didn't put the first names of any of them; they just had the last name, and they had Roosevelt. He said, "That was Teddy, that wasn't Franklin!"

HESS: He wanted to make it very clear that you knew that wasn't FDR.

CHAPMAN: He wanted to be sure that I didn't make a mistake, that he never had Franklin Roosevelt down there in that place while he was there. And he caught it quickly. "That was Teddy, not Franklin."

HESS: Coming from Halifax County, how did you develop your liberal feelings, your liberal leanings?

CHAPMAN: I'll tell you what brought it on. It was brought on by degrees, the life itself that I lived down there, where I saw the mistreatment of Negro, and he was mistreated so brutally, and it was to me, so unfair, I couldn't contain myself

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even as a boy.

HESS: What mistreatment did you see?

CHAPMAN: Well, for instance, one of my uncles tried to have two little boys, fourteen or fifteen years old, put in jail because they took some wood for their house from his woods. It was old dead wood that they had picked up. I was the only witness because I was with them. We were playing together, and they would run back to the house and they always tried to pick up some wood to take back to the house. It was a natural thing, one of the little things of life. He

had them tried before the magistrate. The magistrate was the postmaster there, and he tried them in the back of the grocery store there around the old, big-bellied stove which you had in those days. He started off the hearing, the magistrate did, and said, "Dave"--this was my uncle. This was my uncle that was no good, so I'll be honest with you and tell you. I did

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have one uncle that was one of the finest men, and was the greatest example I've ever had in my life, this one uncle, and I just worshipped him. I thought he was perfect.

HESS: This was another uncle?

CHAPMAN: This was another uncle, and a brother to this one that was no good. Of course, he drank too much and everything else. But he tried to send those two boys to jail. He was scared of my mother, my youngest uncle was. He didn't get in her way about anything. If he did he'd get a dressing down, because my mother would take him on, and he knew it. But up there he lost his temper when I was on the witness stand, sworn in as a witness. He said, "Now, I want you to tell this magistrate how much wood these boys had when they came out of those woods there," right next to their little house they had down there. "How much wood did they have?" I said, "I didn't see any wood."

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He said, "Now, you know you're a liar for saying that and I'm not going to let you get away with it. I'll have you put in jail."

I said, "You better tell my mother about that first."

HESS: You better clear that with mother.

CHAPMAN: I said, "You better clear that with my mother." Well, he just turned white. He was terrible.

Now, that is an example, and that was no incident isolated to itself. That was the common practice. Throw them in jail for a week, anytime, over any kind of a charge, whether it had any basis for it at all. Put them in jail and hold them for a week so they'll have a hearing, and disrupt what they were doing to make a living, whatever they were doing. Things of that kind were so distasteful to me and so unjust. I couldn't stand it, I just couldn't stand it.

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I graduated at the little two-room schoolhouse there and the two weeks before school was closing we always had the family come to the school and we had a little program, picnic or something. Two weeks before the school closed I was notified by the teacher that I had been expelled from school and I wouldn't graduate from the class, so I should not come.

HESS: What were the charges?

CHAPMAN: No charges. The school board didn't tell them anything. They just told her to notify me not to come back to school. The school board consisted of two Democrats and one Republican, and this is the funniest thing in this world. The Republican was out of the community at the time. He was an Internal Revenue man, and he was watching the stills around in those mountains.

HESS: He was a "revenuer."

CHAPMAN: He was a revenuer, and he was watching those

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stills around in those mountains and he'd catch one...

HESS: That's not the safest occupation in the world.

CHAPMAN: I'll say it isn't, not down there in those hills, because those birds would shoot you like a squirrel down there in those mountains and pay no attention to you. They had no more feeling about it--I honestly can say that they had no more feeling about shooting an Internal Revenue man than they would a squirrel. And they'd throw him in a ditch and leave him and not do anything, and you couldn't get a witness to testify.

This man, that was his work. Well, that didn't endear him to the local population. Well, then he got back to town, oh, about three or four days before school was to close and have its little exercise, and those of us who graduated. When this Republican member of the

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school board got back to the community, the word got to him (I don't know how) about my being expelled. Well, he sent a little colored boy down on a horse to get me, to bring me up to his house. So the little colored boy came down on the horse and he said, "Mr. Wolfe wants to see you. He asked me to come and get you."

I went in and washed my face and combed my hair and then jumped on the back of the horse, no saddle or nothing, jumped on the back of the horse with him, and he took me up to his house. It was about a mile and a half, something like that, I got up there and he took me to his library. He was a man with some education; he read a lot, and he was a great worshipper of Lincoln. I looked at his library there and I picked up a book, Beveridge's *Life of Lincoln* (Beveridge, Albert Jeremiah. *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928). I picked it up and I'd never seen it before, and I can tell you to this day I had never seen Lincoln's picture up to that moment. It was in this book, but I had never seen this book. We

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didn't have money enough to buy groceries, necessities, let alone to buy books.

HESS: Lincoln's photo was not on the wall of too many homes in that area.

CHAPMAN: It wasn't on the wall of any home in that county, not in that county. His picture wasn't anywhere, Magill's *History of Virginia* (Magill, Mary Tucker. *History of Virginia for the use of schools*. Baltimore: Turbull Brothers, 1873) is the history book we studied out of, and that book didn't have Lincoln's picture and it had one line about Lincoln in the whole book of Magill's *History Of Virginia*. That was the name of it. It made one reference which consisted of just one line, a reference about Lincoln.

HESS: Do you recall what that line was?

CHAPMAN: I had memorized it by heart, but I've been so busy these last few years practicing law, I've really forgotten the line; but it was a reference to the change of the era, some reference to the change of an era. What he was saying, I think,

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was the change of the era the Civil War had brought an end to, and so on. And he was talking about the Civil War, the writer was, the author. So he brought that in that way. As I say, there was only one line. That was the history of Virginia as far as they were concerned. That's all he amounted to. And there was no other book that I ever saw that had his name in it as all, nothing else that I had in school. Well, Mr. Wolfe, then I told him the story of what I had done, and I had done a terrible thing for that county.

My little cousin and I had been picked to go to town to buy a picture for the schoolroom. Of course, we had raised \$5 out of our families' pocket, from a candy pulling and that was all we could get--\$5. And they gave us \$5 to go get a picture and they gave us no instruction as to what to get. They had no idea what they wanted, and I tried to get some instructions from the teacher and she said, "No, you and your

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little cousin Grace have got to pick this yourself. I'm not going to have anything to do with it."

Well, on Saturday, that's the kind of a day you go to town anyway, her father got in his wagon, and had his two pretty horses and Grace, my cousin. But we got in his wagon at the little meeting place which was the country store there, and we got in there as early as he told us to, and the distance is about four miles from Omega; that was our post office address. Route 1, South Boston, We went on over to South Boston, and we passed by a terrible looking little junk shop, but a little art place that had a lot of pictures. The man I was with was my cousin and he said, "Now, here's a place that's got a lot of pictures, and you haven't got much money but you can buy one in here with the money you've got. So you kids get off here and look and I'll be back in an hour. I've got to do some business uptown and I'll be back to pick you up."

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Well, we looked around. We had a wonderful time looking at all those pictures. The gilt on the frame was the thing that attracted my attention, and it looked pretty. It was very pretty. Believe it or not, this is what happened. We were in this little kind of a basement store. Like this, you went down two or three steps to go into the shop, and the pictures were lined up against the walls, and some were hanging. There was one hanging over here in this corner as I remember, and it attracted my attention because his appearance, the whiskers he had, made him look distinguished in some ways, and somehow or other he attracted me and he was more than just an ordinary man.

HESS: Did you recognize him?

CHAPMAN: No, I never saw him before. I had never seen him before. You see, it was after that when I went to Mr. Wolfe's library during this little interval about two weeks separate. I

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said to Grace, "Grace, that's a good looking frame. Look at it, it's gold." It was a gold frame. It was nothing but gold leaf stuff painted on there, I said, "That's only \$4.95. That's right within our limits. And that will give us a nickel over and we'll take that back to the school." I said, "I like that. Do you see anything else you like better?"

Well, we looked around at three or four other pictures; they didn't mean anymore than the rest of them, than Lincoln did, because we didn't know them either. We looked at many pictures.

She said, "Really, Oscar, I think that first one we looked at is just as good as any. That's a fine looking personality in that frame. I mean, his face. I like the looks of his face."

I said, "I do, too. He looks distinguished with those whiskers." One of my good uncles used to wear whiskers like that and I thought they were great on my uncle and I was real fond of him.

She said, "Let's get that."

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I said, "All right."

So, we asked the fellow to get it for us and I had his name written down.

Well, Monday morning we went on over to school with the picture. We got over to school a little before school time in time for me to hang this picture, and I hung it right on next to the blackboard, at the end of the blackboard. I hung this picture. Well, about half of the kids went home from school to lunch at noon. The other half had a little too far to go for lunch. They brought their lunch with them. I took mine with me. They went home to lunch, of course, and the children of these two school board members told their parents about how I bought a picture

and they didn't seem to mention my little girlfriend that went with me. They didn't seem to mention her. I was the only one. They'd had their eye on me as a radical anyway. I was about 12 years old, not quite 12 when I finished there. To get the sequence of this story straight,

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it was the next afternoon that the teacher came down to our house, driving down on a horse, to tell me that I was expelled from school by the school board and that I couldn't come back anymore. I said, "What did I do?"

"Well, they said that you had disgraced the school by bringing in a picture of Abraham Lincoln."

I said, "Abraham Lincoln?"

She said, "Yes. Now, I want you to know that I'm on your side and I'm with you, but there's nothing I can do. I just have to pass the word on, what the school board has told me."

They had a meeting that night and I slipped away from home and drove back over to the schoolhouse where they were meeting just to see what they were doing. I was looking through the school window, on the backside looking through watching them, and I saw that school board member take that picture and break it up over the wood box

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we had there for wood. He broke that picture up and left it in the wood box thinking that we'd burn it up.

Well, I waited until they left and I got the big wire screen off of the window, pulled it out far enough that I could get through it, and I got in and went back into school and took the picture and hung it back up on the wire on the nail up there.

Of course, they knew I did it. Everybody knew I did it. I didn't talk about it and I wouldn't admit that I did. I wouldn't talk about it at all. But that was what they had done. The school board members didn't come to my mother; they didn't come and see her. But Mr. Wolfe came to town, came back to this community within those first few days, and therefore I hadn't been out of school but a few days then, and that's when he sent for me. He heard about this story and he sent for me and asked me what I'd done. I told him all with the exception of telling him about going to the school window.

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He said, "Well, now, Oscar, tell me the whole story. Did you do something there that could be considered a violation of the law?"

Well, I don't know whether it's a violation of the law or not for a boy to crawl through the window of the school and get in and hang his picture back up. I said, "That night after they got

through their meeting, I crawled through that window, pulled the screen off and crawled through and got in and hung my picture back on the wire they had left hanging together, and I hung it back up,"

He said, "Did you do that?"

I said, "Yes, I did."

He said, "I'm glad you told me. I will see that they are going to reinstate you, and I am going to get on my horse right now and I'm going down and catch each one of them at home while they're having dinner. I'm going to sue each one of them for their farms, the price of their farms. I'm going to sue them for depriving you of your rights."

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He was a fighter; he was a scrapper, too. He notified these two farmers--he was the third member--he told them that if they didn't reinstate me that night, have a board meeting right now--"We're all three together. Let's have a board meeting and reinstate this boy, cause if you don't, I'm going over to South Boston." The Halifax County office--the court house--is in the little town of Halifax. There's Halifax County and then there's a little village or town called Halifax there right outside South Boston. He says, "I'm going over there tomorrow and file suit against both of you, and I'm going to sue you for every piece of land you've got, take your land away from you. And if you don't think I'll do it, I'm going to put the money up myself and pay for this suit. I'm going to take every piece of land you've got away from you."

So, he scared them into reversing themselves that night and they reinstated me.

HESS: As you know, Mr. Truman was from rural Jackson

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County, and back in the days when he was growing up it had a very southern atmosphere.

CHAPMAN: Very much so.

HESS: Coming from that background, why do you think Mr. Truman developed views concerning the rights of individuals as he did?

CHAPMAN: Well, I was going to tell you in answer to your first question to me, whether I thought he was doing this for political expediency. I had had this experience and I was very sensitive to reacting to anybody in anything like this, and I can tell when a person is just kidding me, whether they mean it or not, when they're talking about Negroes. I can talk to him five minutes and I can find out whether he's anti-racial. Those people down there don't even know it. That's the trouble; they don't even know that they're anti-racial. They think that they're wonderful that they even let these folks live there. They think they're doing them a favor, yet they need them to

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work the fields in tobacco and cotton (tobacco down there). They had to hire them and they were the only people they could hire, and yet they thought they were doing them a favor to let them live there. So, it was the craziest thing. When I think back over some of those days, my boyhood days down there...

Truman had some of the same experiences I did--almost identical. He spoke with a deep feeling when he was talking to me about some of the things he had seen them do like I did, some of the same things. He told me about some boys being put in jail without giving them a hearing first. They waited a week or so to give them a hearing but they had them in jail in the meantime without any bail. They had no money for bail anyhow. He told me about that. It just identically followed what I had seen, and I think those people in Halifax County were pretty close together, except Halifax is in the lead. It's the worst reactionary county in the United States. It's

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still behind, but it's gone a long ways. They've been forced to go a long ways and so they have not violated the law, but they still carry the feeling in their heart down there like in Kansas City.

HESS: On the subject of civil rights: Mr. Truman established the President's Committee on Civil Rights and in October of 1947 they came out with their report, "To Secure These Rights." Then, on February 2, 1948, he had his ten points message to Congress on civil rights, things he thought should be done. Some were carried out, some were not. FEPC he couldn't get through, but other programs were more successful.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: At the time there was quite a reaction growing in the South, a reaction that finally did culminate in Philadelphia after the Humphrey-Biemiller plank was put in the platform, and part

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of the Southern delegates walked out. When did you think there was a real danger of the South bolting and starting their own third party?

CHAPMAN: I had a feeling from the very beginning that they were going to start this thing. I had talked with some of my friends down in Halifax County; you don't hear about them, and they were the ground supporters of those people. Truman had had these same experiences that I had had, and I had sat down with him over there in his office, several nights in his office, and when we were by ourselves and we would talk about these things, and he would talk with great fervor about them. He'd get worked up when he started talking about them, about what a bunch of hypocrites these people were. Then he would tell me a story about something that happened in his boyhood days that he knew about, and he'd tell me the story.

Now, in connection with that, I want to tell you another story on civil rights while

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we're talking about it, to bring it in.

Now, in 1939, on Easter Sunday of '39, Roosevelt was still in the White House, of course. He ran for reelection for the third term that fall.

HESS: Yes, the [Wendell] Willkie term. Willkie ran in '40.

CHAPMAN: This was in '39. And Roosevelt was in the White House. Howard University out here, through one of these peculiar quirks of the Government growing like Topsy, they didn't know where to put it and they put it under the Interior Department, but the Office of Education was at the Department of Interior when I went there as Assistant Secretary. It didn't belong in there. Of course, it belonged in a setup like they've got now. This is what I helped push and recommended, and I worked like the devil to push that thing through, to get that department, Health, Education and Welfare.

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The Office of Education, being under the Department of Interior, that threw Howard University into our jurisdiction, and that meant that the Director of Education had charge of our education program in the Department, had detailed charge of that school. That meant that we had to look at their budget and go over their budget as they presented it to the Bureau of the Budget here, and in every detail of that we had to follow that through. The Secretary of Interior assigned everything over there practically to me, even anything on civil rights or human rights, anything of that kind. He'd assign them to me, until Jebby [C. Girard Davidson] came in later. When Jebby came in later he was given some of that work. He found out, and I told him that Jebby was as strong for these things as I was. I said, "As a matter of fact, he probably goes faster than I do on some areas, but I'm with him, and he is doing a good job in that field." So, the Secretary was very pleased. Jebby came from

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Louisiana you've got to remember, to start with; and I came from Virginia. Here we were, the two southerners in there that had everything to do with civil rights matters, anything to do with Negroes and their rights. Now, the school of music at Howard University had invited Marian Anderson to sing here anytime that they could get her, and they had gotten her lined up. To give the full picture or the impact of the picture itself on civil rights as a whole, I think the story of Marian Anderson's lack of reception here in Washington to be given a place to sing, a hall to sing in, was one of the most disgraceful things that I think our Government ever tolerated in my lifetime. And it was the first time that I ever came up against a real, solid case of discrimination to the extent that they wouldn't even allow her to use one of the high schools to sing in. We tried to get the Roosevelt High School. It wasn't big enough, but it was the biggest thing we had.

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HESS: Where was the first place she was expected to sing? This was the time they wouldn't allow her to use Constitution Hall, is that right?

CHAPMAN: That's the time. They wouldn't let her come because she was black.

HESS: Where were they planning to have the concert first, Constitution Hall?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's where we had planned it.

HESS: I understand it is the Daughters of the American Revolution who have charge of Constitution Hall.

CHAPMAN: They own it. It's theirs and they have a board of directors, and they have a director here that stays here full time that sets the management and rules. They kept the rules supposedly approved by the whole body, but whatever this lady recommends to them they usually do. They turned her down after they had given us, we thought, approval. We thought they'd give us

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approval first, and we were proceeding to begin our work on this, and I was keeping an eye on it because I knew it was going to be a rather tight situation here with some of the people.

Well, anyway, they turned us down, wouldn't let her sing in there at all. I went over and talked to one of the men who was on the board there and he was here at the time, and I saw him, and he wouldn't give me any help at all.

So what I did, Walt [Walter] White, head of the NAACP, was in my office along about 11 o'clock and he was going to catch a train, a train back to New York. He said, "Oscar, wouldn't it be a ten strike if we could have her sing at the feet of Lincoln, at the Lincoln Memorial?"

I said, "You know, Walter, that monument has never been used for a public meeting since it was built, since Harding dedicated it, and it's never been used." The Park Service had a policy that you couldn't use it for any purpose.

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It had no racial overtones. They just didn't want to use it. I said, "That would be a ten strike, and that's the place she ought to sing. And if we're going to do that, let's do it with all the support we can get. Let's not get fouled up. I've got the Secretary; he'll get Roosevelt right away, and we'll get clearance, because this kind of thing can cause trouble on the Hill. Our budget is there every day at the Capitol and on something of this kind I always want to get clearance and the Secretary would already be on notice as to what I'm doing."

I went into the Secretary's office right then and Walter headed for the train and he said, "Oscar, I'm going to call you before I get on the train to see what the Secretary says." I went right on down to the Secretary's office and he went on to the train. I said to the Secretary, "Mr. Secretary, you've seen all the publicity on the front pages of these newspapers around here for the last two or three weeks, and

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it's getting hotter each day, because the Constitution Hall turned us down on that invitation for Marian Anderson to sing there. We thought we had it there but we didn't, and anyway they turned us down, and they won't let her sing at Constitution Hall."

He said, "They won't?"

I said, "No, they won't. I've tried the high schools and I can't get the school board to give us permission for her to sing at one of the high schools."

HESS: The school board stopped that, is that right?

CHAPMAN: The school board stopped that, just cold. They didn't even listen to us. We couldn't think of anything else.

I said, "Mr. Secretary, you know what I'm thinking that I want to do. I'd like to have her sing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which would be on Easter Sunday afternoon which would have a religious aura or background to it.

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We'll build a platform on that low level of steps so cameras down here can take pictures of Lincoln right straight through from the platform we build for you and Marian Anderson who will be sitting there. And when she's singing, they'll be taking pictures; we can get the picture of Lincoln, you, and Marian Anderson all the time." Well that pleased him.

He said, "That's a good idea." He picked up the White House phone and he got "Missy"--Marguerite "Missy" LeHand--FDR's personal secretary--on the phone, and he said, "Missy, is there anybody in with the President that it would matter whether I just asked him a question or not?"

She said, "No, he could speak to you on the phone briefly."

He said, "This will be brief,"

She said, "All right." She put him through to the President. I was hearing all this. I was standing close enough that I could hear it. President Roosevelt came on, and I forget what

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comment the President made when he came on, but he made some comment about him getting in. He said, "Mr. President, I am planning on wanting to do something here, and Oscar Chapman is standing here with me, and he wants to let Marian Anderson sing at the feet of the Lincoln Memorial, at the feet of Lincoln, on Easter Sunday afternoon. He'll be the one in charge to look after it for the Department and the Government here, and I'd have to issue a permit for her to sing. But before I do that I wanted to get your approval of it, because of the Department's budget hearings on the Hill."

In a moment (it looked like to me it was ten minutes, but it wasn't), Roosevelt came back, "Good for him. Tell Oscar to let her sing at the top of the Washington Monument if she wants to. I think that's a wonderful idea. Let her sing at Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday afternoon." And Ickes said, "That's my plan now and

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we're going ahead and we're going to put it on there."

"Go right ahead. I'll back you to the finish."

Ickes turned to me and he said, "You've gotten yourself a job. You may not know it, but you've got a job. In the first place you may have some difficulty with the Park Service."

I said, "I know I will. The two top men down there are opposed to this, and when they know I want this for Marian Anderson, they're going to come up and start making excuses. They can't get this and they can't get that, and I want them to get us some lumber to build a platform and have it wired for outdoor sound, and I want speakers along the reflecting pool, in the direction of the Washington Monument." She has a heavy voice; she can sing outdoors beautifully, because she's got too big a voice for a small room, really. To sing in a small room is too small for her. "And outdoors will be just perfect."

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Well, all day that Easter Sunday it looked like it was going to rain and I thought, "It just can't rain: Just please hold off until after this is over." Well, do you know that at exactly 3:30 the sun in the west had just cleared the way and it was as pretty a day as you would ever want to see for about the next two hours. Just perfect. The sunlight came through and it came over and I looked at my watch and it was 3:30 and I said, "This will just be right. This will be beautiful. And the boys can get some good pictures of this, too." I had the platform built for us; and I want to give Ickes credit for this, too. He supported me on that in every way. I did all the work; I did the planning, and I handled it.

HESS: Did Mrs. Roosevelt have any involvement in that episode?

CHAPMAN: She was out of town. She was not here. She was traveling in the Pacific at that time.

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She was somewhere out of the country. She was somewhere else and wasn't here for that, but she let me use her name as a sponsor. And I had a good bunch of sponsors.

Marian Anderson got on the platform; I introduced her to Secretary Ickes and he picked it up from there and carried the program and introduced her.

She sang these religious spirituals and I'm telling you, there wasn't a dry eye in the whole audience as I looked around, not a dry eye. And I had put every one on the spot by sending them a telegram on the Hill, all of the Congressmen and Senators that I could think of. There were a few I may have missed but I sent telegrams so I would know I had delivery and I told Western Union that I wanted a receipt to show the delivery of these and I wanted them. They said, "All right," and they got receipts for me all right.

When they took one to Garner's office to

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deliver it to him, he took the telegram all right, but he wouldn't sign the receipt.

HESS: Vice President John Nance Garner?

CHAPMAN: Yes. The Western Union man said, "Well, I can't deliver this telegram to you unless you sign this receipt."

Well, he fumbled around a few minutes and cussed a little and he said, "Give me the receipt and I'll sign the receipt." He tore the telegram open and looked at it and wadded it up and threw it down on his desk and said, "They got that squirt down there, Oscar Chapman, stirring up all the trouble he can with these niggers. He's doing everything he can to stir up trouble with these niggers."

HESS: Who told you what he said?

CHAPMAN: The Western Union man. I made him get me every receipt, and he had that receipt. Garner was talking to the press that he hadn't gotten

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one, and I gave his receipt to the press. So I had called him a liar to the public. And it was emphasized very nicely, just enough, just right. That's what he said. Now, the Western Union man knew there was trouble brewing with these crowds, and so he delivered this one to Garner; he went up and delivered it himself because he knew there would be trouble.

Marian Anderson got up and started to sing her religious spirituals. You've heard them, the old familiar ones, "Nobody knows the troubles I've seen." She put all she had into that song. She put it into that song, and I could see those colored people down there. Most of them had driven in here from Philadelphia; about 3,000 came in in buses from Philadelphia.

I had a picture made of the whole audience and I had an official estimate to check it. It all checked out both ways. It all squared that I had a minimum of 75,000. We had never had 75,000 there before except with Lindbergh, when

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he was here that time. She did such a good job with that thing. She got terrific publicity. In the first place, we had the networks; all of them carried it on the radio, they all carried it, no charge, everything was free. The press gave it the most wonderful coverage I've ever seen in anything. Ickes was very pleased. He was very pleased.

The next morning was Monday (this was on a Sunday afternoon). I had a hassle with a lot of people about whether we should have the National Guard around there or whether I should bring in a company of soldiers in here from Ft. Myers. Ickes sent for me on Saturday afternoon (we were working on Saturday afternoon in those days), and he sent for me on Saturday afternoon. He said, "Now, listen, are you sure you've got this thing organized for security and protection?"

I said, "I don't know; what do you mean?"

He said, "You've got sufficient police protection down there?"

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I said, "Mr. Secretary, if we show a policeman down there it will start a riot. I wouldn't have a policeman on the place, and I don't want one around, not even the traffic police down there. I don't want them any closer than up here on Constitution Avenue. I don't want one in sight or close enough to be able to converse with anybody that's close to the monument. We're going to have to have a traffic cop but I want him placed." And I told him that I had already looked over where I wanted to put them, and that was the way I wanted to do it. I said, "If you want to assure having a riot here, you bring a company of soldiers in here with guns on a Sunday afternoon, on Easter when she is singing these religious songs of hers. You're going to create a riot, and I won't be responsible for it, because I just will not take responsibility for that kind of a thing. I think I know people; I know the Negro; I know how they feel, and they've got a hundred years of justification of feeling

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the way they do. If we do something like that and on a Sunday afternoon with a religious aura back of this, and Marian Anderson is singing these spiritual hymns, you're going to cause a riot. I won't be responsible for it because I won't even go down there."

He said, "You want to leave me up there and let me get shot?"

I said, "If you're fool enough to have a man down there with a gun you're going to get shot. So don't make any mistake about it; you'll be about the first one they would shoot, because they'd blame you for having the police out there, because they know I have opposed having the police. I have expressed my opposition; I don't want any police up here at all." I had so instructed my own police in our department. We had 150 or 175 and we had instructed that we didn't want one of them around, not even the police for the traffic. I wanted them to move themselves up out of the way, clear to the edge of the crowd, way back..

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Well, they didn't show up. Ickes said, "All right, if you want to take responsibility for that."

I said, "I'll only take the responsibility if I can handle it right, but if I'm going to be forced to have policemen down there, I'm going to drop it. I'm going to be through with it."

He said, "Well, you can go ahead and run it. Whatever you want to do."

I said, "All right, but I'm not having any police down there, so don't be disappointed."

He said, "All right, I'll leave that to you."

The thing went off so well. I don't think I've ever known Ickes to even go so far as to halfway apologize to anybody for anything. He called me in Monday morning and he said, "I just wanted to tell you that that was a good program yesterday and you handled it well, and you were right. No policeman should have been there. Where did you learn the psychology of black people so well? You seem

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to have an inside track with them."

I said, "I lived with them. I lived with them and I know. I know their grief, grievances, and their troubles. We still haven't corrected them. You'll be satisfied when this is all over." That's what I had told him on Saturday. I said, "You'll be satisfied when this is all over, if you just let me go on and finish it."

So, that was it.

HESS: One brief point. She couldn't sing in Constitution Hall, but could she have eaten in a cafeteria, say, in the Department of Interior?

CHAPMAN: Yes, we opened the Department of Interior to the public, to everybody. That was almost one of the first things that Ickes did. That's what made me really work with him, be able to work with him, because he was so good on that.

HESS: During this period of time, didn't many of the Departments have segregated cafeterias in their lunchrooms?

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CHAPMAN: Yes, every department in Government had them almost. There was one or two that weren't segregated. I forget which ones they were. But ours had been desegregated long before the rest of them had, almost as soon as Ickes came in office. Ickes put out an order, oh, less than six months after he went in there.

Now another thing we did. We took it step by step, I organized this with him. I took it step by step. I said, "Now, Mr. Secretary, you've opened the cafeteria; you've opened the parks up to the public now by letting Marian Anderson sing down there, and if I have any occasion to compare it with her importance I'd use it again. But not just for tinhorn picture outfits that want to come down there and put on a flag-waving show. I'm not doing that kind of a thing. I want something of this kind. This is the kind of an image that I want to see of you, for you, as Secretary of Interior."

That kind of touched his heart. He said,

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"What are we going to do?" And I raised the money for him. I raised some money to have a mural painted in the hall downstairs leading to the cafeteria, a mural of Marian Anderson's event, and it's a big one. They only showed two faces that you could identify. One of them was Mrs. Bethune, Mary McCloud Bethune, and old man [Dr. William J.] Tompkins, an old friend of the Negro. He was an old-timer. He was about out of operation at this time. This experience of having this broke the front lines of the diehards here concerning the use by Negroes of public facilities.

HESS: The swimming pools in the District of Columbia...

CHAPMAN: I opened the swimming pools myself. They just had no ghost. He opened the golf course and we found out that the man down there at this little shed that issued tickets for the fellows to play, every time a Negro came up he said, "I'm sorry, but we haven't got anytime left now until next week." He always put them off,

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whatever day they wanted to use the golf course.

I set him up so I could catch him at it. I had a Negro man and a white man to go in there together and the white man went in the front, got his ticket and this fellow didn't know me. I don't play golf, but I went down there like I was going to play, and he gave the white man ahead of this Negro a ticket to play now. He took his bag and started on out. He said, "I want a ticket for my

partner here," and the partner was a very fine looking Negro man here in town who played golf, and he could play golf too. He was one of the men out at Howard University that I knew very well out there. Do you know that fellow had the gall to say--and I could hear him, I was close enough to hear what he was saying; I was close enough to hear him say to this fellow, "I'm sorry, but that's the last ticket we've got for today."

This other man handed his ticket back and said, "Well, take mine back. If this isn't open

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to the public I don't want to play."

Then he got a little flustered and he didn't know what to do. He said, "No, we've got this period open for one man."

I stepped up at that time and I said, "I'm Oscar Chapman, Assistant Secretary of the Interior. I want a ticket to play."

He tore one off right quick and handed it to me. I turned right around and handed it to the black fellow and I said, "I'm going to let him play in my place. Since you haven't any other time I'm going to give him my time." I gave him my ticket and he went on and played golf with this fellow. The next day we had a big hassle with the Park Service . We raised hell with them. We took that fellow from down there; we took him out and put him back on the beat, a policeman out on the beat, and got him away from that job where he was meeting people every day.

HESS: Why did the Park Service seem to be so reactionary? At the National Park areas there were even segr-

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egated picnic grounds.

CHAPMAN: They had those signs: "Colored Area Here."

HESS: Wasn't the Park Service in charge of the swimming pools here in town?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: And they were segregated. Why was the Park Service at that time so reactionary?

CHAPMAN: They were still opposing everything that had anything to do with integration. They were opposed to it. That's really what it was. But I got ready and prepared myself for a knockdown, dragout. I expected to have it when I got ready to open the pools. I was appointed Secretary of Interior in '49, I believe it was. I think that's when it was, in '49?

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: I was appointed in '49. I got ready to open the swimming pools that summer, the first season.

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I had it all ready and I had brought a man here from Chicago, a nice fellow. He was an expert criminologist, and he was an expert in race relations. He had been in St. Louis and worked with them about a year, with their police on race relations, and he had done a lot of good. He had a good record and a good personality, and he really helped beautifully. I brought him here in January and put him on the payroll. He went to work, talked to every preacher or father or rabbi, whatever their religious leanings were, in the entire community, particularly Anacostia, because we were expecting some trouble at Anacostia and down on the point. That point, that pool, carried a thousand people. They could swim a thousand at one time. They had it filled, too.

Well, I had organized that thing up to the hilt. I got a phone call, an anonymous phone call over the telephone, about 11 o'clock Saturday morning, that the Communists over in

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Baltimore were planning to raid the park swimming pools when I opened them the next day on Sunday, and that they were coming over here in cars; they were going to park down here at the Progressive Headquarters, which was a little building down back here on one of these streets. They were going to park their buses and they would have cars arranged to take them over to the swimming pools. That was just what I wanted, because I had not had the support of the local police at any other meeting I had had. On this particular occasion I went to see Archbishop O'Boyle and he was glad to help, and he was good on these things. I told him what I wanted to do, that I wanted to open the pools, and "I don't think I'm getting the full support from the chief of police." I said, "He's a good friend of yours and if you could call him and have a talk with him, it would be a good religious act to do, and this would be putting into practice what you preach on Sunday."

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He said, "All right. I'll call the chief of police." He sent for him and the Archbishop talked to him about the full impact of the church. He said, "Now, I'm talking to you as a high official of your church. I have the authority to do so, and I want to tell you that I hope that you will cooperate and work with Chapman to see that he gets those pools open without any trouble and you help him coordinate, give your help, and work with him,"

He said, "Yes, sir, Bishop. I'll do it."

He came back and it was the first time he ever turned a hand for me. He hadn't turned a hand before. He wouldn't even send any extra people out there.

Now, you can put the police in certain places and there are certain places you can't, depending on the atmosphere and what you've got and where the location is. So, this is the kind of a place; they could get in the water and a black boy would be amorous with a white girl, and

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vice-versa, just to make both sides mad, you see. And the first thing you know, you'd have a fight in that pool and somebody would get killed, because they had about 150 altogether that came over in a bunch of buses. We had cars parked at a two-car distance behind the other car with an opening for two cars between each car. We put them there long before they came over here, you see. A policeman on a horse was riding around and not letting anybody park there. If they came in to park he would just tell them, "There's no parking here today. It's just temporary. It will be all right tomorrow."

We then got cars and we had plainclothes people, not regular police, but we had plainclothes people, and put them in two cars in between all these other cars, and I had enough cars to take everybody from Baltimore from over there by car if I wanted to. I didn't go down there. I wasn't at the scene, but I had a man reporting to me by telephone every ten minutes. He would telephone me what was happening from the other end of the

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Anacostia Bridge. We took this up to block the traffic on the bridge and tie them up for an hour there. By that time, the pool would be open and they would have been swimming, and some of them would be through, going home, but as long as the pool was full, we would keep the bridge tied up. We kept that traffic tied up there. Of course, nobody ever did know what in the world it was all about, why this traffic was tied up so here. They just assumed that somebody had a breakdown on the bridge, and couldn't get through. That's, of course, what we let go by. We let that pass for what it was.

Then we blocked another incoming road on the other side the same way. Do you know, not more than five or six blacks got in there, and they got out of their cars and walked over there. The rest of them didn't want to do it. These five or six walked all the way over there. We had it organized to the extent that if a black boy would get amorous with a white girl, or attempt to in any way, a black policeman would tap him on the

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shoulder and just quietly say, "I'm a policeman. Now, we don't allow that in here, in this pool."

He'd say, "You haven't got your uniform on."

"No, but I got my badge and I got my fist. You do that again and you're not going to get a dunk in here. I'll throw you out of this pool. You can stay in here as long as you want to if you behave yourself."

Well, there was no more trouble from him.

Then, a white boy got amorous with a black girl. This thing played itself out just like a stage play. I never saw anything like it. It just played itself out. And the thing that carried it out to such perfection--one couldn't imagine it being done this way because it went so naturally that nobody would dream that we had this thing--I had more policemen, or as many policemen in that pool as we did anybody else swimming that day. I had policewomen in there, white and black, and always a black policewoman or policeman would call attention to the

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black person that was trying to get amorous with a white girl and vice-versa. If it was a white person, they'd tap them on the shoulder; if it was a white person attempting to get amorous with them. You know, they stopped that thing in five minutes. We never had but three cases, and we made one black get out of the pool, and they got out of the pool. When they got out of the pool there was a policeman standing back there in his coat sleeves and he had his gun out of sight and when this boy got out he took him by the shoulders and he said, "I am a policeman here and if you go in that locker room to break anything or cause any trouble I'm going to come right in with you. I'll take you right on to jail from here."

All of this happened on a Saturday afternoon, not Sunday. This happened on Saturday. Do you know, we stopped that thing. It was so organized with the number that I had in that pool. The public never did know. They thought

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I had a few in there. They didn't dream what I had in that pool. I did the same thing for the big pool down on Hains Point that swims a thousand at one time. We had truckloads of kids coming in from Virginia to go to this pool, and they had no Communist connection. At least, I had no tip on them. But I got this anonymous call as to what these crowds would do, and sure enough, they did. They came in.

HESS: They came in and tried to cause trouble?

CHAPMAN: They tried to cause trouble. They wanted to create trouble so that they could get pictures and they had a photographer around there looking for a place to take pictures. And after a while we got him out, made him leave. He told us where he was from. He was from Baltimore. "You're not here to take pictures, except for trying to find a picture that would look like trouble. We're just not going to tolerate that. We're going to stop it before it starts."

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He went out of there. He left. And I had asked the press; I had had a meeting with all the newspapers, see, and I had asked them not to play up the pool opening, just give it a little notice. I said, "Somewhere inside the paper put it that the pool will open on such-and-such a day, and the hour; give them the hour, the time. Don't write an exciting story about it. Just 'The pools

will open.'" They did. That calmed the local people down so that no local people got involved in it at all. They just didn't go along with it. Those that went down wanted to go swimming, and they went swimming. The interesting thing is, I never could get Ickes to do that.

HESS: Why?

CHAPMAN: I don't know. I think he let the Park Service man over-influence him, because that would be the one place that he'd have so much trouble. He thought he'd have a riot on his

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hands. Well, I said, "You won't, if you control it. If you want to control it you can." I got ready to open the pool and then as soon as I was sworn in, one of the first things I did was to call this man, Mr. Lohman, from Chicago and ask him to come down here. He came down and I put him to work, working on this particular plan. He worked it out, and we had no problems with any of them since. I had all the signs taken down from the park areas, and I had those taken out when I was Under Secretary under Krug.

Now, Secretary Krug, I had sympathy for him. He was the most uncomfortable man you ever saw, for a man the head of a department. Here he knew I was sitting there under him as Under Secretary, just appointed as he was, and he was sitting there knowing that I had something to do with all the major appointments that had been made in that department. We had sixty thousand people in that department, across the

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country and here; and especially all the key people I knew personally. I knew who they were, and in most cases I had something to do with bringing them in. But the people that I'd appointed, when I became Under Secretary, ran it completely and handled personnel. But Krug liked to travel, and he didn't like to work at that desk; that desk just frightened him. When he'd see a stack of papers this high, he had no more idea what they were than anything in this world. There were some contracts mixed up in there in those papers, and some personnel cases, memoranda between bureau heads, and memoranda for him to approve or disapprove something, and they were far-reaching in some instances. He really was frightened of things.

I didn't like to travel. I was tired of that. I had gotten enough travel, and I'd stay here and run the Department from inside. I told him, "You go wherever you want to. I'll take care of the Department here. You go on and go

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there won't be any problem here at all." Well, I protected him all I could, but he got reckless with what he was doing and I couldn't protect him. So I tried to run the Department to protect the Government services for what it was so I could protect it, and protect Truman. The only way you can protect people like that is to be sure and do your job right and then nothing dishonest or crooked breaks out on you. That's the only way you can protect them.

HESS: Is that enough for one day?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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Seventh Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., August 18, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: In our fifth meeting, we were discussing the *New York Times* article by Anthony Leviero of August 1, 1948. In the article he referred to a number of meetings that were held to form a staff of political advisers and it states:

Such meetings have been held after a fashion for a few months. But the group has been enlarged and has scheduled frequent meetings for an all-out campaign. The first of the new high councils was held on July 22. The White House declined to identify those who attended.

In writing to the Library I got a Xerox copy of the page from the White House Appointments Books for July 22, and we see that the meeting was held at 8 p.m. in the evening and included, according to the list in the Appointments Books: The Attorney General, Tom Clark; the Secretary of Commerce, Charles Sawyer; Oscar Ewing; yourself; Leslie Biffle; William Pawley; Senator Carl Hatch; Stephen Early; Judge Samuel I. Rosenman; and

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Matthew J. Connelly. Let's discuss that meeting for a moment and discuss what was the subject of the meeting and were there others present who are not named on the list.

CHAPMAN: Well, I'm just reading the list off here to see who was present there that I didn't remember. I see one or two here that were there that I had not remembered.

HESS: Who was that? Which ones?

CHAPMAN: Mr. and Mrs. Warren Pershing. That was arranged by Mr. Ross.

HESS: What time of the day there? Were they at the 8 o'clock meeting?

CHAPMAN: No, no, that's right. They were not at the 8 o'clock. It's got the hours here.

HESS: The 8 o'clock meeting is the last one listed for the day. That starts off with Attorney General Clark, I believe. That's the way I have

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it on my list. Yes, that's right.

HESS: What was the subject of that meeting?

CHAPMAN: That meeting in the evening was devoted primarily to the discussion of selecting a few more members to go on the finance committee, add to the finance committee, and to enlarge our activities by that method for the time being. Then we selected from that group; I know we selected from that group, Oscar Ewing, Bill Pawley--I don't see any more on that list that was there that night.

HESS: The article by Anthony Leviero of August 1 mentions that two men at that time were under consideration for chairman of the finance committee, and they were Cornelius V. Whitney, who was Assistant Secretary of the Air Force at that time, and Mr. William Pawley who was former Ambassador to Brazil. Pawley was at the meeting on July 22, but Whitney was not.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Was Whitney's name also mentioned as a possible chairman of the finance committee?

CHAPMAN: Yes, it was mentioned.

HESS: Was the job offered to him?

CHAPMAN: I didn't understand that it had been, that it had been offered him. He was discussed in relation to his duties and what he was doing, and whether he would be in a position to be able to help very much. They discussed him for a little while but not long. They seemed to have dropped him from the discussion as the thing went on in the evening, that it would be hard to do with his duties that he had to perform. Somebody got a telegram from him that night, about his not being able to serve.

HESS: What are the criteria that are looked for when you are selecting someone for a position like that? What kind of a man do you want to head

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the finance committee?

CHAPMAN: Well, you look for first, a man with courtesy.

HESS: Mr. Louis Johnson was finally chosen, or finally accepted the job. Was he discussed that night?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was.

HESS: Why wasn't he in attendance that night, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: Wasn't he there?

HESS: Not according to my list. Do you think he was?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I do,

HESS: For just a moment let's discuss who else attended that meeting that did not get their names on the list? We have Attorney General Clark; Secretary Sawyer; Oscar Ewing, who was head of the Federal Security Agency at that time, what later became HEW; yourself; Leslie

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Biffle; William Pawley; Senator Hatch; Steve Early; Judge Rosenman and Matt Connelly. Who else do you recall being at that meeting?

CHAPMAN: Well, I thought Rosenman was there at the meeting.

HESS: He's listed. What about Clark Clifford?

CHAPMAN: Clark Clifford was there.

HESS: He was there. Sometimes, as I understand it, lists of this nature were drawn up in advance.

CHAPMAN: Quite often they were just a bunch of names that were put down.

HESS: That's right, so the President would know who was coming in at a certain time.

CHAPMAN: Then they would scratch them off sometimes when they didn't show up.

HESS: And other people would come in whose names were not on the list.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Do you recall anyone else besides Mr. Clifford--and you say Louis Johnson was there?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was there.

HESS: Do you recall anyone else besides Louis Johnson and Clark Clifford who attended the July 22 meeting?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't.

HESS: What did Louis Johnson have to say that night, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: Well, he was quite talkative, free in giving his advice and judgment and so on.

HESS: Was it about this time when he was offered the position?

CHAPMAN: I think it was at this time, the next day or soon after when he was asked to do it.

HESS: What kind of a job did Louis Johnson do as

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chairman of the finance committee?

CHAPMAN: I thought he did a pretty good job. You've got to remember the circumstances under which he was working. Truman's stock was quite low at that particular time. That was at one of his low points at that time, and, naturally, no one wanted to take it, to serve, at that time. I think Lou Johnson came to that meeting with full intention and everything of taking it. I think he came there with the idea of accepting it if it was offered to him at all.

HESS: Do you recall if he was offered any inducements to take that position? For instance, if he would take that position and raise money for the Democratic National Committee that he might be offered a position if the President was successful in the election?

CHAPMAN: I don't know who would have offered it to him.

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HESS: How about Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: He wouldn't do that. I have every reason to believe that he wouldn't make that offer in turn for his raising money for the campaign. I just don't believe he would do that.

HESS: There are those who say that an offer of this nature may have been made because when Mr. Forrestal left in March of 1949, Mr. Johnson replaced him as Secretary of Defense, and as you will recall. Mr. Johnson had been in the War Department with Woodring before and had wanted to move up into the top spot when Stimson was chosen back before World War II. But you don't think there's anything to that?

CHAPMAN: I think that came entirely out of Johnson's mind. I think he was spreading it.

HESS: Johnson did?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I think he was giving out information at that time that he had been offered the Secretary

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of Defense to take this.

HESS: The treasurer of the Democratic National Committee was Joseph L. Blythe. Do you recall anything in particular about Joseph L. Blythe?

CHAPMAN: Not a thing. I didn't talk with him; I never talked with him on anything that I can remember. He would work mostly with Johnson, and Johnson would keep in touch with him because he was the money man.

HESS: Did you become involved in the matters of fund raising in 1948 in any way?

CHAPMAN: No. He's got things in here that are mixed.

HESS: That wasn't part of your duties as an advance man?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Anthony Leviero, in his article?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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HESS: Where does he get mixed up?

CHAPMAN: He's got some things that are mixed, and I don't mean that he's got them wrong, necessarily, but not in sequence of their actual performance, when they did it and so on.

HESS: What did you find?

CHAPMAN: I was trying to look for that one spot that I found. I found that you'd already marked one of them.

HESS: We should say for historians that what we are looking at is an article by Anthony Leviero which appeared in the *New York Times* on August 1, 1948, in Section 4, page 1, and starts on column 3.

CHAPMAN: That is right.

HESS: One thing that Mr. Leviero mentions is that two "old hands," as he calls them, are coming back to assist: Jonathan Daniels and Paul Porter. Now, neither one of those men was at the meeting,

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but what do you recall about the assistance of Jonathan Daniels and Paul Porter about this time?

CHAPMAN: Paul Porter was at that meeting.

HESS: He was?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was at that meeting that night, but Daniels was not. I don't remember his being there.

HESS: Do you recall anything about Paul Porter's assistance to Mr. Truman during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was very active, quite active, in assisting in raising money and turning it over to Mr. Johnson.

HESS: The article states that James Forrestal, who was Secretary of Defense might take some part in political discussions, but that he usually disassociated himself from politics. It says: "Observers cannot picture his taking the stump

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for President Truman or any other candidate." Did Mr. Forrestal assist in any way in the campaign, or did he keep himself separated from the campaign?

CHAPMAN: As far as I know he did not do any work in relation to anything I was doing, so I don't know if he assisted in some other way with some of the other men who were working with the President or not.

HESS: Was it the normal course of events for people associated with the Defense Department to disassociate themselves from politics?

CHAPMAN: Yes, it was pretty generally a policy for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, not to make political speeches, not that they didn't make some speeches occasionally. And whether they were or not, they were always charged with that.

HESS: Did the fact that he did not take a role in the

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campaign have any bearing whatsoever on his resignation the following March in 1949?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't think it did. I really think, as I look back on the situation, I honestly believe that it was his health that was detected by Truman and some of the others that were closely associated with Forrestal. I think that that was the basis for problems that arose during the next few months that brought it about, and when Truman was elected, Johnson was beginning to spread pretty freely the commitment he supposedly had.

HESS: Do you recall when you first noticed signs of the unfortunate mental breakdown that overtook Mr. Forrestal?

CHAPMAN: Well, it's very hard for a layman to say that, to know, because you can't tell. It's so hard for a layman to judge. I don't know just at what point he really was going down. I couldn't tell. I didn't see him enough to tell

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at what point he was breaking down. I never talked to a doctor or anyone about him.

HESS: Do you know if he attended Cabinet meetings regularly, say in January and February?

CHAPMAN: I am just thinking about that period.

HESS: This is something we can look up in the record, of course, but did Mr. Krug attend regularly also in January and February?

CHAPMAN: No, he never attended regularly.

HESS: He did not attend regularly at any time.

CHAPMAN: No. He was traveling a good deal through the conservation areas, Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service. There were some people who began to make comments about Mr. Krug's absence from the campaign trail. As a matter of fact, he didn't want to make any. He had been so convinced by Bernie Baruch that he didn't want to take too much of a part in it. By the same

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token, Louis Johnson had a great deal of hesitancy about Truman.

HESS: Louis Johnson did?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Did you hear him make any comments of that nature during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He just commented that there were such a lot of skeptics working under him.

He was not critical of Truman as a man. He was not downgrading him, but he was speaking in terms that Truman would have to overcome; he was speaking in terms that Truman would not be able to carry this state or that particular state, one or two states that he had in mind. They were big states and he carried them both.

HESS: What states were they, do you recall? Some

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of the important states were Ohio...

CHAPMAN: California, Illinois.

HESS: He didn't think Mr. Truman had much of a chance in those states?

CHAPMAN: No, he didn't think he would carry them. I said, "If I were a betting man I'd make a nice bet with you on that, on each, state by state."

HESS: What did he say? He didn't want to take you up on that?

CHAPMAN: He pretended that he did but he didn't. He pretended where everybody could hear that he was taking me up on it, but he didn't take me up on it, and he wasn't intending to.

HESS: If he did not think Mr. Truman would take those states, and perhaps was not going to win the election, why did he accept the position as chairman of the finance committee?

CHAPMAN: Well, you sometimes wonder when a man takes

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a position in a campaign, obviously a lead man in an important position for the President, as finance chairman for the committee would be; you wonder what he's thinking and what his plans are.

I was working pretty close with Louis. We worked very close together. He was trying to impress me with the work that he was doing, the amount of work that he was doing. For instance, often held get a good-sized donation and he would give me a call and say, "Oscar, I've got some good news for you this morning. We can get the train out [or plane] and we can so-and-so, absolutely on time. We can count on him. We got the money."

I said, "In hand?"

He said, "In hand."

I said, "Good for you. That's wonderful."

He'd keep on talking to me. He'd have to tell me. He always wanted to tell me who it was. He fished around and he got it around to where it looked like I was asking him, or trying to, who it was. He had a very peculiar quirk in his

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thinking. He'd like for you to know that he had done certain things, but some things, I know, did not get done at all.

HESS: Even though he said that he had done them, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Even though he said he had done them, they had not been done.

HESS: Could you give me an illustration?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I don't like to use a man's name though.

HESS: That's all right.

CHAPMAN: He was telling me about the success that he had on his New York trip. He says, "I had a wonderful trip to New York these last three days." We happened to get back here the same day; we got in about the same hour. I had flown back in and he had taken the train, and so when I got here I telephoned him in the office and

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I got his secretary who had been with him for twenty-five years, and she would give me almost any information she had; whatever I would ask her about, she'd tell me. I would ask her views, fishing, giving information to get everything in line that I could so that when I got down close to the end of the road, I had notes from the meetings of what had been said and done by certain people. This particular incident was recorded in a little memo I had, a brief memo, and I had kidded him about it a little bit and I said, "Lou, what is your explanation for Mr. So-and-So not coming through with that money?"

He was surprised because he didn't know that I knew about that. He was a little surprised and he said, "Well, he's coming through. He's coming through. He got a little bit late in some change of stocks and so he's got to find the right time to dispose of those stocks and he's going to do that. I'll have that ready."

I said, "That's the stock that I put on my

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notation that you had in your pocket and I committed it."

I always kept back enough money to pay my bills on the current trip, each trip, always knowing that political commitments are not kept two thirds of the time, or at least a third of the time. Should I say that political commitments are not kept as easily as they would if they were making a commitment to you up on the Hill as a Senator. "Johnson, I'll do so and so for you as Senator," They would have much better headway had we been able to get someone, but I don't think we could get any Senator to do it. If you had had a Senator helping you, a Senator that was loyal to the President, you would have had to work close with him as you do any chairman of any campaign committee. I know Johnson was quite disturbed in his own mind. I don't know how to follow this up now.

HESS: Senator Carl Hatch was at that meeting on July 22.

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CHAPMAN: Yes, he was.

HESS: Did he provide assistance during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did, but not the type we needed. We needed more of the intense contacting work than we did. Carl Hatch was very loyal and he was very good. He was very loyal to the President, and I know he thought a great deal of him. He was trying to help us all he could, but he couldn't do but so much. He was still in the Senate; he couldn't resign. You see, it's a little difficult to resign from the Senate and go back in when you want to. Now an administrative man can take a leave without pay anytime he wants to, if the President agrees to it. That's the way mine was done. Ickes had gone but he was still shooting behind the scene.

HESS: A power behind the scene?

CHAPMAN: He was trying to be. You see, he was trying to get back with Truman, but he didn't want

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it known, in any way at all. But he was not too happy with the President. He didn't agree with him, and I know he made the comment in my presence that he thought I should take my leave without pay.

HESS: Without pay?

CHAPMAN: With pay, excuse me. That I should take my leave with pay. I said, "I think that's too dangerous and would be subject to criticism. I'd rather do without a few dollars than to be put in a position of having to defend myself because I'm helping President Truman,"

Johnson was trying to get next to Truman all the time, closer, and in that interim, transition period, Lou was keeping up with him like a bodyguard. There was one thing I was going to tell you about, Johnson's lack of activities, some things he had done, reported done as if they were accomplished, and they had not been accomplished.

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HESS: Did you run across that several times?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I ran across that several times.

HESS: I understand there were times when the funds ran low and there would be difficulty getting the train out of the station or paying the bill for radio time.

CHAPMAN: I didn't handle details on train expenses for that particular instance, but I know we were caught once where we were up to leaving time, within an hour before we left, and we didn't have the money. I said, "Let's go get on the Pennsylvania and put the President on that train and let's see them put him off." I said, "They're a lot more worried about it than we are."

Truman looked at me and he said, "I think you've got an idea there."

I said, "But we must work diligently to get the money and get it in there as soon as we can. We must do it because it's not the foundation of a specific law which affects a

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President of the United States, but it might cause some criticism for us to take advantage of that situation to do it."

HESS: Where was that recall, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: Right out of Washington. We didn't have the money to leave here and naturally we were right under the spotlight right here in Washington.

HESS: Was that one of the western trips?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that was a western trip. On this trip west, he was making little stops, a lot of stops between Washington, D.C. and Indianapolis, and we took advantage of that, made a lot of stops on that.

HESS: Going back to the July 22 meeting, what was Mr. Truman's attitude that night? Do you recall anything that he said?

CHAPMAN: Nothing other than in keeping with our discussions. We had had some discussions .in

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which we talked about the campaign, and which section of the country we should start first, and I think I recommended a general outline that we should start first in the far away trips from Washington and close in on New York and Washington and Philadelphia and the big cities.

HESS: Later in the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Bring it in as to the last part of the campaign.

HESS: That was done?

CHAPMAN: That was done.

HESS: Why did you think it should be handled in that manner?

CHAPMAN: Well, it was a question of saving time for the President so he would cover more people, see more people, and more people would hear him, more in that way than in any other way I could think of. You've got to control your time and let more people see you, and by that time of

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the campaign you're under heavy pressure; each day it increases, the pressure for him to come to "my town and stop there and make a speech."

HESS: Do you recall any discussion about whether or not he should go into the South during this campaign? As you recall, the South had walked out. J. Strom Thurmond had started the States Rights Party and they were going to be running, and Mr. Truman did not go into the South very much. He went to Raleigh, North Carolina to the North Carolina State Fair, and to Miami to the American Legion convention. But he did not take an extended trip through the South.

CHAPMAN: No, he never did take a full-fledged trip into the South.

HESS: Was that by design, to limit his appearances in the South?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: "We just can't go into the South."

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CHAPMAN: Well, the point was, we wanted to be sure that we were not wasting our time. Our time had to be measured in very careful terms, because we had run pretty late for the convention and consequently we wanted to see more people than it was possible to see, really.

HESS: And Thurmond took Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and one electoral vote out of twelve in Tennessee. So was it pretty well recognized at this time that the Deep South was lost to the Democratic Party?

CHAPMAN: Yes. We had that about as well tabulated, up to the nth degree, as to what we would be able to do and not do there. We had that pretty well scheduled out and that was one of the most accurate pieces of work that we did. You see, we had a man--I didn't go South myself, I never did go South, because I was known as a crusader for rights.

My position on the civil rights issue was so

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well-known and I had more or less crusaded on it and had done some speaking on that subject. I had done a great deal of work on that and it was well-known in the South, although I was well panned for it at the time, being criticized as a Virginian who was against my father and so on. My father was in the Civil War.

You know, things of evil intent seem to travel at such high speed compared with things of honest intentions. They don't travel as fast.

HESS: They say the truth never catches up with a lie.

CHAPMAN: Never, never catches up with a lie, not to a full degree. You may sometimes curtail it; you may sometimes do some good by trying to curtail it, but you don't really catch up with the lie itself.

HESS: Mr. Truman's first talk that year was the traditional opening address, the Labor Day address

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at Cadillac Square in Detroit. Back in those days when labor could pretty well be counted on to be in the Democratic line, that was traditional, wasn't it, to open at Cadillac Square in Detroit? Did you go up there that time?

CHAPMAN: I did.

HESS: What do you recall about that day?

CHAPMAN: Well, in the first place, Jimmy Hoffa was always in a fight with his labor competitors in the union and he would take advantage of any opportunity to knock them down where he could, and he did a good job of it. I'll say that. It came up pretty close to Labor Day and we still didn't have a good organization as I thought they ought to have worked out to get the delivery of bodies in the hall.

HESS: What labor leaders were you working through?

CHAPMAN: Well, at that time, you'd be working through

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the various top labor leaders.

HESS: Phil Murray...

CHAPMAN: Yes; Phil Murray was definitely with us all the way through. He was a hundred percent.

HESS: Was Dave Beck in charge of the Teamsters at that time?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was with the Teamsters at that time.

HESS: Walter Reuther, of course, with United Auto Workers.

CHAPMAN: What I did, I got in between those two or three people and did all I could to stir them up on each other.

HESS: How do you do that?

CHAPMAN: Well, in the first place, I went to a meeting that they had invited me to and I attended the meeting and made a little talk. I didn't

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try to make a speech, but I made a little talk that would help. I knew Jimmy Hoffa would see red if I mentioned Walter Reuther's name or Phil Murray; he'd go wild on it. I had mentioned something they had done or had planned to do, or was going to do, and added, "I wish this group would take the subject up themselves and pass on it and pass it down the line to your people, and get their real help in this location, in this area." That set Jimmy Hoffa off. His fuse was at a low burning stage, and I set him off in two minutes just by one or two things. He would never wait to see whether you would qualify your statement or not, so I was always careful about doing it. I saw Jimmy on Saturday before Labor Day. I saw Jimmy. We had quite a session, a long session.

HESS: What did he talk about? What seemed to be his mood?

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CHAPMAN: His mood was, "Now, you quit working with these other bastards and I'll help you fill that damned hall. I'll have every seat in the hall taken and 10,000 people outside, standing outside to get in."

HESS: But he more or less wanted to be the exclusive agent, is that right?

CHAPMAN: He did. He was trying to maneuver for that. He saw that wouldn't go over, that that couldn't work. So, I tried to do it in as nice a way as I could, to get him off of this shift as easily as I could.

HESS: Because in Detroit you could not ignore the United Auto Workers, even though the Teamsters are a powerful union; you can't go to Detroit and ignore the United Auto Workers.

CHAPMAN: No, you couldn't. It would be just as foolish as anything you could think of. It was just plain foolish to think of it.

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I was just trying to look back in my brains, the things that I've been holding in my mind for you, to give you. I didn't get a chance to go through some notes I had there at the house that I would have used with you this morning. That's what I planned to do. I clearly forgot them this morning.

HESS: One thing of interest that we might develop, you mentioned the difficulty of getting Senators to help with the fund raising. Is one of the problems there, trying to work with Congress, is that they're trying to get reelected, too? Every member of the House is up for reelection, and one-third of the members of the Senate, and they have their own fundraising to do, do they not? I believe that Congressman Mike Kirwin of Youngstown at that time was trying to raise money for the House, wasn't that right? I don't recall who was the head of the Democratic senatorial fundraising.

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CHAPMAN: He was.

HESS: He was, for the Senate, too?

CHAPMAN: No, just the House.

HESS: Just the House. I don't recall who was in charge of the Senate's.

CHAPMAN: Let me see. I think I can tell you that, I believe Mike Mansfield was. I can't be sure, but I think he was.

HESS: Does competition for funds sometimes cause friction between the people who are trying to raise money for the Hill and the people who are trying to raise money for the executive branch?

CHAPMAN: They're always running into each other. But back to labor--if we got an entree to a place that we can get to this man and his group, we try to reach him as fast as possible. Otherwise, if you're expecting anything like that, we

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would always know where he was going to be at all times, and they kept up with him pretty regularly as to, where he was. They were always keeping me informed of where Jimmy was. I kept up with most of the other labor leaders, and I kept up with where they were most of the time. Then I'd keep in touch with them. That's the way that I stirred up all kinds of little contentions among--I didn't lie to them, I didn't do that--but I would tell them what they had actually done, and that they had done these things, you see. I'd tell them something about a meeting in which a commitment had been made to me to do certain things; that Reuther had committed himself to do certain things, and I made it a point to keep it no secret at all. Well, that just burned Jimmy Hoffa up, his name not being up among the first four or five, you see. That's what he wanted. So, he really put the heat on Dave Beck. There was one spot in there where he put the heat on him pretty hard.

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HESS: In what way, what did he do?

CHAPMAN: Oh, by pressuring him to get his unions better organized out in the West to help Dave. They didn't have them as well-organized out West there as they did certain little spots. Dave would tell me which spots they were, if they had a good solid organization. Dave would tell me, and I had that information and I would go to some meeting that he was going to attend. Well, I'd have a good flash going by the time I'd get through that meeting, because I'd said something at which I knew that Jimmy Hoffa would be mad. He didn't get mad for nothing. It always paid off for him, but he never got anything out of me. I want to say, he never asked for anything. He never tried to get anything out of me. Not once did he try to get anything out of me.

HESS: Did Mr. Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 make it easier for you in your dealings with labor leaders?

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CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, much easier.

HESS: What was the image that labor had of Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: It was a changing stream, going down hill here. They were uncertain which way he was going to turn into the irrigation ditch, and whether he was going to turn out in this direction, or into another ditch. I'm speaking in reclamation language at this point.

I had to turn down a client, a good client, this morning, who made me a good offer, but I couldn't take it, because I found that it was one of the things that I had signed. I'd signed the contract. You don't just pick up a case that you have handled in the Government. Now sometimes, a question of time eliminates the evil of that, the particular thing, but it doesn't always eliminate it, and certainly the question of what is evil and what is not, the subject of that nowadays, comes to me pretty freely and pretty fast. I have been trained under a man

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like Ben Lindsay in Denver, the judge who really taught me some things about that kind of a thing. Ickes did the same thing. Ickes was very much like Lindsay. They both were a lot alike.

HESS: What trips in 1948 did you act as advance man for? For all of the western trips?

CHAPMAN: Yes, practically all of the western trips. He may have made a quick flying trip--in some cases, for instance, where he would fly up to Chicago for a quick meeting. Matt Connelly would be along and I would have my problems because I had my schedule already made ahead of time and I couldn't make two of them.

HESS: You just couldn't do it.

CHAPMAN: I just couldn't do it, I said, "Mr. President, I can't possibly make it, I have a conflict." I was briefed by Richard Daley on his situation, what it was, and I knew pretty much what his problems were there and I said to Richard,

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"Richard, who in the administration in Washington would be helpful to you out here, that would know enough about the politics to know how to handle the President of the United States when he comes here? You know, a lot of people don't know how to handle a President as different as Harry Truman when he goes out on these trips. Two different men. You don't handle him like you do an ordinary man. Therefore, you have a sensitive touch there, that could flare up and hit you in the face before you realize what you've done."

He said, "That's just what I thought. I got the lay of the land when the last three Presidents campaigned. I had their campaigns down pat. I got them from you; I got them off of your pad."

We would go over it like that and discuss it, see where we stood. Then I was able to say to the President, "Mr. President, they're pressing me very hard to come on down to Kentucky to be there and help with the arrangements down there;

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help with the seating for one thing, and to keep them off the necks of the local boys." They wanted somebody to put the heat on, you see. Some of them could take the heat and not get excited and not get worried about it.

HESS: Is that all part of the task of an advance man?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's part of the task. You really take the heat for some local leaders; or some other local people are needling him for something that he can't do, difficult for him to do. So he'll come to me and he'll say, "Can you help me out of this?"

I'd say, "What can I do?"

He didn't know how to handle a President, you see. He didn't know what would be good. It takes good protocol and this was something that Truman recognized. You know, as I do, he has very deep feelings about certain things, and there's no use wasting time talking to him because

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he's made up his mind; he's studied the subject, he knows it. You'd have that kind of a thing coming out at all stages of the trip. Somebody would be asking you to go with them and help them, take them off the spot. These invariable little commitments about the President, "Could you stop over here, and take him over here to John Smith's little place," and it was a little honor for local John Smith who had been very helpful with money. He'll do anything he can to help you. Well, you don't want to hurt this fellow, if you can help it. If you can get that fellow without hurting him you should.

HESS: If you can find a way to let him down easy.

CHAPMAN: That's right. Find a way to let him down where he won't get hurt. Well, I usually worked it out where I didn't have much trouble after the first trip. After my first trip I soon found out there was no problem there. Of course, I helped in the '36 campaign. Hardly any of the leading

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people came out to the West. Jim Farley made one trip out there. Of course, I insisted on his coming by and talking to the hardboiled politicians that were working.

HESS: They didn't travel quite so much in those days, did they?

CHAPMAN: They didn't.

HESS: Travel was more of a problem back then.

CHAPMAN: It was more of a problem. Second, there was a need for it for the Truman campaign. There was a need for it that was much greater than anything we ever had in the Roosevelt campaigns. We could fly Roosevelt from one airport to another and get off in a little town and make a speech and leave right quick and make another speech somewhere that night a couple of hundred miles away. And he could do that very easily.

HESS: President Truman's campaign was conducted mainly by train, as you know, and you have men-

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tioned the whistlestops. Was that part of a designed plan to give him as much exposure to the American public as possible, to stop at every whistlestop, as Senator Taft called them?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that was done purposely, and Taft helped us out beautifully on that.

HESS: He gave it a good name, didn't he? Whistlestop.

CHAPMAN: He did a good job for us.

HESS: A new word came into the political vocabulary then, didn't it?

CHAPMAN: It did. A new word came into the political vocabulary.

HESS: Do you recall what Daley said were the problems in Chicago about getting out the vote? What did he see as the problems in Chicago and Illinois?

CHAPMAN: At that time, on that particular trip, I had really worked to get them out. His campaign was not so hard. The attitude had not frozen

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against Truman. I must get my dates in there straight. I get my campaigns mixed up. I handled so many during the course of twenty years.

HESS: Daley wasn't Mayor at that time, was he?

CHAPMAN: No, he became Mayor right after that.

HESS: Mr. Truman spoke at the Chicago Stadium on October 25th, and the people who were there at the time that the President referred to were former Governor Henry Horner, Democratic candidate for Governor, Adlai E. Stevenson, and Democratic candidate for Senator, Paul H. Douglas. Those were the men that President Truman acknowledged at the beginning of his speech, but the Mayor is not listed.

At that time the percentage of the Negro population in the major northern cities was increasing. How did you view that situation, and did the black vote in the North help in Mr. Truman's victory?

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CHAPMAN: It very definitely helped. It was my own feeling that he was getting deep support from the Negro of the North. They were a little bit better educated and a little bit more sophisticated on the political questions and issues than the Negro of the South, so consequently they were looked upon with a great deal of respect and appreciation. They would call upon them, they'd make speeches, everywhere.

HESS: Now, in 1948 one of President Truman's major addresses to a black audience occurred in Harlem during his trip to the northeast when he went up to New York and took a drive over into Harlem. Were you on that trip?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Did Donald Dawson travel with you on all of your trips?

CHAPMAN: No, he'd come in. I'd call him in and ask him to take Texas, be down there a week ahead

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of me, to go down there and get things lined up ahead of me.

Dawson was very knowledgeable about how to handle a President and he was a very dignified looking fellow. He was a very helpful person and I'd call for him. What I would do in order to keep from being mixed up with the Democratic National Committee, and I didn't want to get mixed up with them anymore than I had to...

HESS: Why?

CHAPMAN: Well, there were several reasons, but one impelling reason was, you can't work with two organization heads trying to run a program of this kind scattered across the whole United States and having two heads to report to. Now, it's obvious that I was going to keep up with Truman. Now, if I had to spread that to two more keeping up with them, it would make it a rather impossible task.

HESS: J. Howard McGrath was one of those other two,

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is that right?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Who was the other one you're referring to?

CHAPMAN: Well, I was referring to the Democratic National Committee up there. Then you have an independent group of leading Democrats that are always looking to take over the party.

HESS: Back to J. Howard McGrath. What seemed to be Mr. McGrath's attitude? Do you think that Mr. McGrath thought Truman would win the election?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He did not.

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Did you hear him say so?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he told me that, I was doing a thankless job, and it was certain to be appreciated. I said, "Well, it's going to be a double

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headed victory then when we win. The appreciation of people who know what I'm doing, what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to do as good a job as I know how on this. I'm trying to influence as many people as I can."

Truman and McGrath were beginning to have differences. They felt differently on many things by that time, and McGrath just almost, but not quite, had almost pulled out of that fight.

HESS: He almost resigned as Democratic National Committee chairman?

CHAPMAN: Yes, almost resigned.

HESS: Was this during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Let me get these things straight that I'm telling you here because it's serious. McGrath didn't talk about resigning or anything of that kind. Let's see now, was he Attorney General?

HESS: Not yet. He was Senator from Rhode Island and

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Gael Sullivan was acting chairman for a while, and as I understand it, he would have liked to have been appointed as head of the Democratic National Committee, but was not. Then Senator McGrath was appointed and served through 1948, and he did not become Attorney General until August of 1949--just a year later, after the campaign. That was when Tom Clark was moved from the Department of Justice to the Supreme Court, and then McGrath was made Attorney General. This was in August of '49. So, in other words, during the campaign, he was Senator from Rhode Island as well as head of the DNC.

CHAPMAN: I want to keep that in order in sequence of its time according to the event, because it's very important. Now, Howard McGrath was appointed to the Cabinet, Attorney General, August of 1949.

HESS: The day was August 24, 1949. But was there a period of time during the campaign when he

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was thinking of pulling out?

CHAPMAN: Yes, at one point. Now whether he was relating this to the President or not I never did find out. I never did know whether he was relating this kind of remarks to the President, to him personally, his power, or what. Howard and I individually worked together in perfect harmony. We had no differences in regard to our work and our area that was carved out for us to do. A lot of times I'd get a call from Matt Connelly and the Boss had just left, had gone, and I couldn't get him to follow it up for me. He called me and said, "The Boss says you've got a chore to do."

I said, "Let me have it easy now. What is it?" And he'd kid me.

He said, "He wants you to go and handle that trip for him in Texas,"

I, for a definite reason of my duties in my office as Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary...

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HESS: Under Secretary at that time?

CHAPMAN: Under at that time. He wanted to keep everything straight and all. He was trying to keep everything as peaceful and happy as he could. But by that time in the campaign, they had reached the point that Howard McGrath was not in perfect harmony with the President. He was making a good face and a good show all he could. He was trying to put a respectable face on it, and he wanted to do that. I'm trying to think of the date when he told me that. He was appointed in October...

HESS: When he was appointed Attorney General?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: August of '49, about a year later.

CHAPMAN: Yes, I was appointed Secretary of Interior in November.

HESS: December 1, 1949. That's when you were sworn in.

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CHAPMAN: That's when I was sworn in, yes. My name was sent up in November.

HESS: The nomination went up in November.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Veterans' Day, in fact. November 11.

CHAPMAN: That's exactly the way he did it. That's the way he appointed me. It was the funniest thing I ever saw. When the appointment came, you'd think that a man, a person that appointed another man to work in close confidence with his high echelon and would be in close confidence with him, that he'd want to know more about him. He'd want to ask him a lot of questions and talk to him and ask him a lot. But you know what he did to me? We worked on Saturdays--that was a Saturday by the way--and he pulled this one on me. That day John Sullivan was chairman of Brotherhood Day. I had had it the year before. John had had it that year; was chairman of the

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Brotherhood luncheon. I was invited, naturally, to go over to that as I'd been chairman of it before, and they had asked me. I had been active in that organization--National Conference of Christians and Jews. I was working, and during those days everybody worked on Saturday; we didn't pay any more attention to Saturdays than any other time. Well, I was at my office with almost my entire staff. My administrative staff was all working. Generally the girls that wanted off could take off.

HESS: Did you get a call from the President?

CHAPMAN: No, I was just coming to that. That's the part that puzzled me. I didn't get a call from the President, because my memory is--I want to get this straight because it's a long ways from now to then.

HESS: That was a long time ago, wasn't it?

CHAPMAN: That was a long time ago. That was a long time ago, twenty years now.

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I got a call from Charlie Ross about 11 o'clock. Charlie says, "Oscar, did you serve in the Navy or the Army?"

I said, "I served in the Navy, Charlie." I further served in the juvenile court in Denver under the famous juvenile judge Ben V. Lindsey. If you remember he was disbarred from the Supreme Court in Colorado, disbarred from all courts, and I worked for two years, nearly two years, until I

got a rehearing on his case before the Colorado Supreme Court. Also involved was a committee of the Bar Association, who had organized a committee to try the case for me; I had gotten the members together. One of them was the president of the University of Colorado. His daughter's married to Byron White on the Supreme Court. He was a real conscientious Republican. He was chairman of the Bar Association committee that would handle these kinds of things for the Bar Association. So I got him to call the committee together for me to see if they would agree to

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make a study of this case and review it carefully and then prepare to present it to the Supreme Court for review of that case, the purpose being to get the Court to reverse its previous position. I did seven or eight months work on it. The case was presented. The press completely turned around, turned around and supported him, and they got a unanimous decision of reversal of the previous case. The judges who sat on the first case, only three or four of them sat on the second hearing. Some new judges had come in.

When Charlie Ross called me from the White House, I noticed it was 11 o'clock, and I knew that the habit and the practice and the schedule was always that the President would be at Arlington Cemetery at 11. That was scheduled in my mind so thoroughly; I knew what time he always went there, at the same time. I said, "Charlie, this sounds funny. Are you investigating me? If you are, let me come over and sit down and go over anything that I have done, right or wrong..."

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HESS: "Skeletons in the Closet" type of thing.

CHAPMAN: Yes. Strangely enough, I used those words. I said, "I'll be glad to show you all my skeletons." We made that comment and he kind of laughed. And I said, "Wait a minute, Charlie, seriously, if you are investigating me I want to sit down and have a real interview."

"Well," he said, "there's no real investigation, Oscar. The President's going to send your name up Monday for the Secretary of Interior, but we don't want it out until after he has spoken this morning."

I said, "Charlie, look at your watch. What time is it? He's going to be before that microphone in about three minutes. He'll be speaking from over there. The minute he does, you'll have that release. You've got that all ready. You'll be giving it out and it will be on the front page of the *Star*, and I'm meeting him over here for lunch at 12:15 at the Brotherhood luncheon. He's coming to the Brotherhood luncheon."

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He asked me to go. He was going to speak, so naturally I went.

He said, "Well, there's no problem, Oscar. Nothing to worry about. He just wanted to get one or two questions."

I said, "There may be one or two questions he'll want to ask me. He might disagree with me completely on tidelands oil, and if he did I couldn't accept the appointment. It would be a fiasco. I would get right in the middle of a terrible cabal here with a lot of Senators and a lot of other people. I ought to talk with him first about it so he can know how to protect himself after he's appointed me."

He said, "He knows your position on every one of these issues, Oscar. He knows your position on every important issue, and he knows them by heart. You've done a good job these last seven or eight months running that department as Under Secretary. He wants you to take over the department. Mr. Krug has resigned."

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I said, "When did he resign?" He said, "Last night."

HESS: And you hadn't known about it until then?

CHAPMAN: I didn't know that Krug was thinking of resigning. He was doing just what he always has done ever since he had been there. He'd never done any different. He liked to travel and that's what really got him trouble. He was traveling too much. It didn't set well.

HESS: Did he work very hard when he was around the office?

CHAPMAN: He would work but he was never there. He had a good mind, and one that you appreciated the technicality, his knowledge of power (utilities), things of that kind. He was very good on them, better than I was on that. He just didn't like to work at the desk. He didn't like it at all. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon they would bring you a stack of mail this high to sign, and you'd better take at least some glance at it.

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You've got to learn how to read those papers quickly. You've got to learn how to check who has initialed them, and who on there could you trust that initialed them, and who on there that you don't pay any attention to. Some names are initialed on this second page which goes to the record, stays in the file, and you look at that and you know immediately, "Well, I don't care what this fellow says, I'm not going to bother about him. I'm going on down until I run across a couple of fellows." There would be a couple of Assistant Secretaries and a couple of Bureau of Land Management people that I trusted. One of those Assistant Secretaries signed it and one of the Bureau of Land Management people signed it; I trusted those two very much. That way the Assistant Secretary would sign them. Now, I signed papers that Jebby had initialed very quickly.

HESS: Davidson?

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CHAPMAN: Davidson was an honest person; you might not agree with him, agree with his good judgment sometimes, but you had to trust him. He was a good, honest man. I'd scan through those, look through those, and I'd be signing them as fast as I could.

I'd sign those and get them out, but it would take Krug two or three hours. I'd sign them all in thirty minutes, because I didn't have to go through them as carefully as he did. He didn't know any of those people. I'd been there seventeen years or more, just about.

HESS: Ever since May of 1933.

CHAPMAN: Yes, ever since May of '33, May 4th. I had that back of me that I had the advantage of knowing them, so consequently it took him twice as long to sign that stack of mail. They'd get it into you always around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They couldn't get it in much before then. I tried every way in the world I could

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to speed them up and make them get it in before 3, but I couldn't. There was too much of it.

HESS: There was an article written by Harold Ickes on November 28, 1949--that was between the time that you were nominated and when you were sworn in--and published in *New Republic*. Mr. Ickes mentioned Mr. Krug's interest in a textile mill in Knoxville, Tennessee, and said: "...which did not leave him time to attend properly to the affairs of this department." Do you think that the textile mill took too much time from attention to administrating the department?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

So that's the way my appointment went into the White House on Saturday. He sent it up to the Hill the first thing Monday morning, but he had given it to the press Saturday, and he got all that Saturday publicity. He gave it plenty of time on Saturday to get the Saturday afternoon's publicity, some of the later papers. Then he got

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the good article stories; he got a good sized article, because he got it in in time to have space. The papers in Chicago, of course, had given it the thorough pinpoint story, because every time something had the slightest color to it, it would reflect back and be referred to by the columnists who would write that kind of a follow-up; they would refer to Secretary [Albert] Fall in these columns. This fellow had written columns on Fall and his downfall.

HESS: Teapot Dome type of thing.

CHAPMAN: Yes. He tied it up, the Teapot Dome, and he made it the amount of evil influence that that would create around your department. Ickes, of course, gave it to me to print the whole thing. They didn't print it.

HESS: Speaking of the Teapot Dome and Secretary Fall as a Secretary of the Interior: I know you ran the office in an honest manner, but were there ever times when you felt that you were kept

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on the straight and narrow by what had happened to Secretary Fall?

CHAPMAN: Well, I'm not egotistical enough to say that those things influence every honest man that would try to run his department. He had an example before him, of what had happened to that department by doing these dishonest things. It would naturally keep you reminded of them, because the press would keep you reminded of them every so often through one story or another, all those years. I don't suppose even in the last month I was there they would make some reference to Secretary Fall. There was never at any time that I ever found a single article which was in any way critical of me or trying to make my method of operations that would lead to that kind of action. Fall had done so much more than the public realized. They didn't get all of the story. The Republican Party had been very successful about cutting that story down.

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HESS: What had been cut out?

CHAPMAN: Oh, there were things that I wouldn't dare mention, that were in there, in the official record, and they didn't put it in. And things that would be--well, you'd just kind of get your breath when you'd read such things about a man. The amount of money he got was so much greater than they came out with in the story, or in the hearing. That was done with the assistance or the connivance of the Attorney General's office. He was really into that up to his neck, the Attorney General's office was, in a way. He hadn't done anything, but he later assisted--I would say that he assisted in the committing of a crime.

HESS: Who was Attorney General at that time?

CHAPMAN: Harry Daugherty. He was one of Harding's cronies down in Ohio.

I believe that's enough for today.

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HESS: All right.

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Eighth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., August 25, 1972
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, continuing on with our discussion of the 1948 campaign, and we have just been talking informally about the Dexter plowing match, the National Plowing Match at Dexter, Iowa. Tell me what you recall about that occasion.

CHAPMAN: I remember the occasion with a good deal of pleasure, because the President was called on to plow. Instead of using the machinery for plowing, he used a two mule team and he plowed a straight row with a twelve inch cut in the soil. He was plowing as straight a row as any man that ever has driven a mule anywhere. They were two of the most beautiful mules I ever saw that he was using to drive that day, and they were well-trained, well broken in for this work. That was also the occasion at which we had lots of fun, more or less teasing Margaret.

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We didn't let her know the truth about the situation, but we told her that we were going to call on her to sing, that the committee, local committee, had asked that she sing a song they'd heard her sing--"Ave Maria." She, of course, didn't want to sing in the great outdoors space and there were several reasons that she didn't want to do it, and they were legitimate reasons, But she was really scared that I was going to introduce the President or make him introduce Margaret too--and ask her, at the request of this committee, if she would sing "Ave Maria" for them, that they had been so impressed with her singing of "Ave Maria" when she sang at Constitution Hall in Washington.

HESS: Had you talked to the members of the committee about that?

CHAPMAN: No. Because I wasn't going to do it; I wasn't going to do it anyhow, I was just having fun with the inside group. It was just the inside

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group and we were having the fun with Margaret.

HESS: And she didn't want to do it.

CHAPMAN: And she just didn't want to do it, and I was very much amused by it and he was--I spoke to the President about it first before I started the little cabal on her, and he laughed. He said, "'You get her to sing, introduce her, let her sing.'

I said, "All right, I'll see if I can get her to do it."

He said, "Well, you ask her and see. I don't think she will do it, but you ask her."

I said, "All right, she may come to you to get you to call me off."

"Oh," he said, "I'll tell her I've given you carte blanche authority to run this thing; you'll have to run it your way."

And, if I remember correctly, she did go to see the President at the head table, went around to see both Charlie Ross at the head table, and the President, and told them to make me--to call

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me off of doing this particular kind of a thing and to ask me not to introduce her to sing. She said she just could not sing in the great outdoor theater of this kind, and that she just thought this would be out of place for her to try to do it. She, oh, she had a good argument that she'd made up, with some good answers for me, and she didn't know that I really wasn't planning to use it anyway; I wasn't going to introduce her anyhow to sing, because we just did it for having some fun with her.

HESS: That was on September the 18th, 1948.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: I have a list of the speeches. Let me see, "September the 18th, Address at Dexter, Iowa, at the National Plowing Match."

Did you leave with the President when he left Dexter?

CHAPMAN: I took a plane and left there way ahead of

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them, and left them about three stops in between that and Portland. I let them take those stops and handle them; they were small places behind the platform on the train.

HESS: The whistlestops.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Did you generally try to stay about two or three days ahead of the President?

CHAPMAN: About a week. I tried to stay ahead of him. I couldn't always do it; there were several places I had to remain with the President's party because I felt certain differences among some of the local committees that would be in controversy with each other about what they were going to do and wanted to do, and sometimes I...

HESS: Can you give me an illustration, a point to illustrate that fact?

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CHAPMAN: Well, just to illustrate that perfectly, was--well, Portland. I had to stay with him in Portland during the whole trip he was there. I couldn't just leave him and go on then ahead of him and leave somebody in charge to introduce him; some one of his men on the train would

introduce him. Charlie Ross--I mean Clark Clifford was on the train and he would help me out beautifully, and if something came up like that I could always call on him and get him to fill in to introduce the President on the back of the train and he knew just what to do and how to do it. Clark was extremely helpful, and he knew--he had the touch and the feel of the President and the local citizens, how to deal with them and how to handle them, better than any man that I have ever known. He made a perfect man to--not to do the footwork. In the way I'm telling it it may sound like that. Not the question of the footwork and things like that; there were other people that had to do

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that. But Mr. Clifford would come along and do the important things and things that would give it standing and give it prestige as we went, because he is a man of nice physical stature and intellectually he was a man of real stature, and he could speak on the subject that applied to that locality and community as well as anybody. He had this brief that we had with the President that was bigger than any one of these you've got here, one of these books; we had two of them as a matter of fact. One continued on with the subject matter. But I was used to people. Well, particularly the one in Portland, I had to stay there, not so much for the question of introducing the President; that was not an important factor in most cases. Sometimes that became an issue with the local people about which one of the leaders of this faction, of that faction, was going to introduce the President; it got down to where there was--a question would be resolved by my just saying, "Oh, there is a man on the

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train with him, Clark Clifford, who will introduce the President, because he understands the program, how long it will have to run, and so on."

HESS: What were the main problems in Portland?

CHAPMAN: First, they had a real political difference going on among the political parties there; political leaders were having this little controversy about what to do and how to do it and what they ought to do. For instance, one group was recommending that I schedule the President in the "Rose Parade," an annual event. They wanted us to keep that schedule and put him on there because we'd have a lot of publicity on this, but two or three days before, that devastating flood had come.

HESS: This is in June.

CHAPMAN: This was...

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HESS: Yeah, we discussed that last time; this was in June,

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: The same year though.

CHAPMAN: I didn't discuss this phase, on June 5th; it was the same trip I believe.

HESS: Yes, that's right, what was called the western or that so-called nonpolitical trip.

CHAPMAN: Nonpolitical trip, yes.

HESS: So-called nonpolitical trip, usually seen in quotes.

CHAPMAN: That is right.

HESS: One of the important trips though for 1948.

CHAPMAN: One of the most important trips; it is one of the most important trips that made the groundwork for the pattern which we followed. And I was really laying it out as to what I was trying to do, which was

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to leave a pattern to follow so that we could make another trip and do it easier, and so on. I was trying to do that, and having to try to settle the differences between the local political people, and you ask the question what were some of the problems they had. Well, it would go into problems like this where the official committee, the proper committee that had charge of this, that legally was their representatives, who had legally been elected as their national committeemen and committeewomen and so on, and they wanted to do it a certain way, and they thought they had the right to set the course. Normally that would be true, but sometimes you would run into a situation where you couldn't follow what would be the normal procedure and what ought to be followed. There were circumstances that intervened on a lot of these occasions that meant you would have to change their pattern and

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their plans. You didn't want to change their local plans a bit more than you had to, and you wanted to...

HESS: You didn't want to step on any toes.

CHAPMAN: No, you wanted to leave them actually in control as much as possible, you know, to make them happy about the whole situation and then in that effort try to bring together the contending parties. Sometimes you would succeed by a change of program a little bit, which satisfied these people. As a matter of fact, the Portland one turned out fine. In fact, I thought I was going to have a terrific headache with that one before I got through, because from the looks of it and from what I was getting from some of the local people, the problem was being overstated to me a great deal. And therefore, I was expecting a lot of difficulty there, and I had

asked Clark to help me, but I didn't need anything then, because by the time the President got there, the crest of

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the water had been reached and was going down.

HESS: The flood was going down.

CHAPMAN: Yes, the flood was going down, and they were still finding bodies though that had not been recovered, and that made it a very sad occasion. And they were still searching for some missing parties they had not found. And they did find eight or ten more that night and the next morning; they found eight or ten more bodies. All of that tied in with a change of plan that I made there and then I telephoned it back to the President's train and got his permission to do this, to cut his noonday luncheon, where he was going to make a speech, and talk to the big hall full of people and then go in the cars and line up in a parade. We were to drive in this beautiful--it was a very beautiful occasion where each car was decorated with roses and was done with really a beautiful show that could be put on and usually was put on with that and

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nobody wanted to miss the rose parade; they wanted it because it was something they had advertised for years.

HESS: Traditional.

CHAPMAN: They didn't want to miss it, and I could understand their feelings, but I could also understand how quickly it could be turned against the President. When you were outside of Portland, got outside of Portland, they turned that kind of an event against Truman by implying that he was kind of a hard-hearted fellow and didn't have the sympathy of the people that a man ought to have, which you and I know is not true of Mr. Truman. We know just by nature he didn't have to put on those things; it came by nature to him because he was a man that had a real heart for people's troubles. He really did have a heart for them, and he tried to help them all he could. I felt that we had gotten by the Portland program unusually well, much better than--it was worth

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more to Truman for this to have happened when it did, and for him to appear there when he did and to make his appearance and ask the Red Cross to immediately start to send some help.

I had developed that. The regional Red Cross man spoke from the podium there at Salem, which is a little ways outside of Portland; it's the state capital. I had the regional Red Cross man speak there and had the President ask him for a report. I had tipped him off ahead of time that he had to have a report ready for the President, a report that tells what they had done, what plans they had to help carry on and provide help in this disaster. And that went off beautifully; it went over

the air nicely. We had radio and television on them, and it went over beautifully. I think really it turned out better for us in the long run than had we been able to follow the original schedule that they had there. It was nice and one I would have

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liked to have seen very much, but I had...

HESS: Had conditions have been normal.

CHAPMAN: That's right, but I wouldn't stay there under normal circumstances. I would have gone on to the next place, because the people had pretty much gotten together. This disaster kind of helped bring them together.

HESS: When you would get into an area, was one of the main considerations in seeing that there was going to be a good turnout to see the President and to hear the President speak when he came?

CHAPMAN: In some places I'd make that a special effort, but not in all of them.

HESS: In some places you'd just leave that up to the local committees to handle the beating of the drums to get out the crowd?

CHAPMAN: That's right, I'd leave it to them to handle that.

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HESS: Which cases did you look after specifically to try to get a crowd out for President Truman?

CHAPMAN: I checked on his luncheon in San Francisco and in Los Angeles, stayed with him at the Los Angeles lunch, but I didn't stay up at San Francisco. It was all harmony up there; everything was harmonious, and there was no interparty squabble going on and he was--the President was far more popular than people realized. And it wasn't a question of getting a crowd there for him; it was a question of how to keep them out, because you couldn't get seats for all those people who wanted to sit at that luncheon. And my problem in Los Angeles, just like San Francisco; there's a reverse from the problem of getting a crowd, but a problem of appropriately taking care of the crowd that came. And you have an open meeting and you have a local committee, which I had there, and that local committee would give me suggestions about who ought to do this, and do that, and it worked out

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very well, the Los Angeles one, in the front of the...

HESS: The Greater Los Angeles Press Club.

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes, that is under the Greater Los Angeles Press Club on June the 14th. I stayed there for that because there's always some problems that would come up down there, quite different from San Francisco, and I had to stay, but didn't feel I did at San Francisco. I had been there, two days, and talked with all the leaders and I had asked certain ones too, if I could I'd take the party chairman, if I could use him. Sometimes they were not friendly enough that I wanted to trust it with them, and I wouldn't, and I'd pick somebody else that was active in the particular company, and...

HESS: Was sometimes their unfriendliness caused by a lack of support of Mr. Truman; they didn't think that he would win?

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CHAPMAN: A good deal of the time that was the background.

HESS: Did you run into that very often?

CHAPMAN: Well...

HESS: Not just in June, but all during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. It started like this: We started on the bottom step; he had to go to the top, and it kept going like that to a point I could tell it.

HESS: Things kept getting better during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: Yes, and they were easier to get to come out when I called the national chairman or the committeeman from a certain state, and he would be in this time. I could see him when I got there to his place he would be available. The first trip...

HESS: But there was a reluctance early in the campaign?

CHAPMAN: That's it, the earlier part of the campaign they were reluctant to come out.

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HESS: Well now see, the Dexter plowing match was in the early part of the campaign; that was on September the 18th. Just taking a glance at some of the other stops I see your home state of Colorado...

CHAPMAN: Well, he came through Colorado and then went on West.

HESS: ...he spoke at the State Capital in Denver, on the 20th. Do you recall having any difficulty with lack of cooperation with any of the Colorado leaders?

CHAPMAN: No, we didn't have any problem there. That was a very, very good experience. I want to say that I took some credit for myself to think that they thought enough of me that they weren't going to cause me any trouble, knowing I was handling this program. They didn't want to cause me any trouble,

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locally. I had some people there that were obligated to me politically that I could call on and tell them I wanted them to do this and do that, and I knew whom to get and whom not to get for myself. And that was a very simple one; I got that straightened out in the first afternoon.

HESS: On the point of lack of cooperation, do you recall any times when that may have been a problem? Lets start with Labor Day in Cadillac Square.

CHAPMAN: Labor Day in Cadillac Square.

HESS: And then we come on down through Dexter. He made rear platform remarks in Iowa, in Missouri, Pennsylvania and Ohio...

CHAPMAN: That's right,

HESS: ...went on out to Utah, and then on out to California...

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CHAPMAN: We got a wonderful reception in Salt Lake. We stopped in Salt Lake. They really gave us a good reception.

HESS: His address at the Mormon Tabernacle was on September the 21st.

CHAPMAN: You know that was a--and I want to be certain of this, I'm not sure, but I think this was the first time the Tabernacle was ever used for a straight out-and-out political speech.

HESS: Did you have any difficulty arranging for the Tabernacle to be used in that manner?

CHAPMAN: No, because I could go to George Smith; I could go to him direct and see him, and sit down and talk with him.

HESS: The man who was head of the church at that time?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was head of the church, he was 82 years old.

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HESS: I wonder if he was there at the time the President spoke.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: The note in the *Public Papers* is as follows: "The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in the Mormon Tabernacle. In his opening words he referred to Herbert B. Maw, Governor of Utah, and George A. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So, President Smith was probably in attendance.

CHAPMAN: Smith was there. I had seen Smith; I had gone up to see the old man. And as I said, I call him an old man; he was nearing 90 years, but he had a vigorous, sound, mental standing in this community. He was well thought of and they liked him and it was really a very fine thing he did there in Utah, because he knew the sentiment, what it was; he knew how it was, and

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he really was for Truman. He didn't publicly say so, I don't think, but he absolutely gave authorization for the use of the Tabernacle. I don't recall its ever being used at any other time when he was speaking in the state; of anyone going up there for strictly political purposes, or of anybody speaking in the Tabernacle for a strictly political purpose. Now there may have been and I don't recall it, so I don't want to be positive in that statement.

But I want to say that we had warm and close cooperation with the people in the organization itself up there, and support from the people was enthusiastic. They were coming along nicely. They had the background of all these stops you see all the way from Chicago and Pennsylvania and Ohio stops, and Illinois stops, and on to Chicago, and they followed us. The press had to write something. Wherever the President stopped they had to say something, so they wrote something about him.

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You see, that's what the average person doesn't realize. If the President stops at Timbuktu, it wouldn't make any difference whether there were five people or five thousand, your press people had to be there, and they were there and that's worth something. And they didn't have much to write about since he stops there for only ten minutes of remarks from the back of the platform. They say he was here today and he was well-received and drew applause, something like that. Nine out of ten would use that phrase, and the story on Truman began to build up. The whole idea of Truman's strength was beginning to show, to come through. But at the time we had made all these stops through Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and then on back to Salt Lake. I think he spoke at Salt Lake after he spoke at American Fork, Utah; the people there had the benefit of that much publicity on the campaign, and I think it showed.

HESS: But still this was early in the campaign...

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CHAPMAN: Well, they had had, though, quite a bit of speaking on the first part of this trip.

HESS: I'm still interested in this proposition of who you had some difficulty with, and at what stops you may have had some difficulty.

You mentioned that there were certain state chairmen that early in the campaign were unavailable.

CHAPMAN: Well, when I would get to Ohio for instance, Governor [Frank J.] Lausche was not available for me to see him, to make arrangements for him to get on the train to see the President. I wanted him to get on the train as the train entered Ohio, and ride with him when he got to Cleveland where he was to speak there that night.

HESS: Here on the list are "Informal remarks in Pennsylvania and Ohio." That was on the 17th...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...but I don't think they stopped at Cleve-

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land at that time.

CHAPMAN: Did they stop in Cleveland at this time? They may not, maybe not.

HESS: I don't think so.

CHAPMAN: That's probably not the one; that was probably that second special trip we made.

HESS: Did they stop in Cleveland in June?

CHAPMAN: I think they did.

HESS: Let's take a quick look at the list and see.

CHAPMAN: We stopped there, but I don't know just for sure when it was.

HESS: I don't think he went to Cleveland at that time.

CHAPMAN: I don't think he spoke there on that trip.

HESS: Probably later on another trip, but anyway, you did have some difficulty and lack of cooperation on Governor Lausche's part, right?

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CHAPMAN: I had very definite problems with getting him to cooperate in publicly showing himself with us, being with the President. Perhaps I shouldn't get into this but it was funny, and I will tell this on him.

When I tried to get him to get on the train when it entered Ohio (I think from Illinois), I think we came in from Illinois into Ohio, and the first stop we entered Ohio was a stop quite early in the morning, between 7 and 8 o'clock. Governor Lausche didn't show up for the meeting to meet the President or to get on the train there. Now we were only going to make a few stops through there, and he had two other chances; he had several (I'll put it in those terms), he had several other chances to get on the train.

HESS: In the note on page 287 of the 1948 *Public Papers* is the following: "In the course of his remarks on June 4, the President referred to former Governor Frank J. Lausche, Democratic candidate for Governor of Ohio," and a couple

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of other fellows. Now this is Crestline, Ohio on June the 4th.

The President mentioned him in Sandusky, Ohio on...

CHAPMAN: In Sandusky, Ohio, what time of day?

HESS: Well, it's late in the afternoon, 3:37 in the afternoon, but this was on October the 26th; this was late in the campaign.

CHAPMAN: I see.

HESS: Yes, in the course of his remarks he mentions him, but I don't know whether he was there. "I am very happy indeed to be here this afternoon. I can't tell you how much I appreciate this wonderful turnout. I sincerely hope you will send Dwight Blackmore to the Congress. We need Democrats in the next Congress to look after the interests of the people, and you can't do better than to send Dwight Blackmore to the Congress. I know very well you're going to elect Frank Lausche Governor." Now that doesn't say if he was there or not there, it is not specific, but here in June it says, "It is a pleasure to have been able to see the Governor."

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CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: "I know he is going to be the next Governor of Ohio."

So, in June it looks like he did see him; in October he refers to him, but I don't know whether he was there or not.

CHAPMAN: Now here's the story; I just can't fit it in the timing, but this story happened. I can't place it in the right context of the time of the trip.

Lausche did not come and get on the train as I had asked him to do over the phone. I had talked to him over the phone and I had difficulty getting him on the phone, but I finally got him and asked him to come to get on the train and appear on the back platform with the President at this particular place.

I don't know the name of the little town. I have that in my own papers there in the Library, I think, a memorandum that I made there regarding the incident because it was rather interesting.

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He couldn't come, he was so busy. But he got a report of the five thousand people that stood back of the platform to hear Truman speak at 7 o'clock or 7:30 in the morning, whatever it was, and we did have a crowd. And the enthusiasm was expressed by the crowd, by their applause. The reception they gave him was warm. You couldn't miss it.

So, I got a call from Lausche sometime there early in the morning. We stopped at some other place and Lausche wanted to know if he could get on the train with the President. I told him the President would welcome him and would be glad to see him on the train. I said, "I will like to introduce you to the audience or have you to introduce the President to the audience would be better."

He said, "Oh, I'd be glad to, I'd be glad to." He had gotten a beautiful report from his scouts from that morning whistlestop, and as I

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said, we had over five thousand people at some little small town, I don't know what it was. In such a small place it didn't require much of a crowd for there to be a crowd, but we had a good crowd.

HESS: This brings up a point that we will want to cover and it interests historians a great deal. The question of how the decisions were made of who would ride on the train, who would be invited to come on the train, who would be invited to talk to the President while the train was moving across the state.

CHAPMAN: Well, that whole problem, that would be wrapped up in this kind of a statement. I would quite generally, in a lot of cases, indicate who would get on the train, but the President...

HESS: Who made that decision though?

CHAPMAN: Well, it depended on the state leaders; it

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depended somewhat on the state leaders' attitudes, what they had been saying and doing. If they had not been making public statements for Truman I wouldn't invite them on.

HESS: Anti-Truman statements in other words, anti-administration statements.

CHAPMAN: If they made some anti-Truman statements I personally wouldn't invite them on, but maybe the President...

HESS: Would you give me some illustrations?

CHAPMAN: I'm trying to think of this fellow's name.

HESS: Which state.

CHAPMAN: California, out in San Francisco, and that's where we had a very general warm background up there at the President's speech. We had a very generous turnout there in San Francisco, a warm reception.

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HESS: But someone there had been making statements against the President?

CHAPMAN: There was one fellow who had been making some wild statements about the President and that was not true generally of that area. That area was very friendly to Truman. Now had that come from some other area I would have expected it.

HESS: In Southern California during the June trip they were having trouble with James Roosevelt. I think we have covered this. But did you speak to James Roosevelt before Mr. Truman went out there?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What did he say, what was his attitude?

CHAPMAN: You know, his attitude was very interesting. He was not hostile to the President, but he was so skeptical as to his possibility of being elected.

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HESS: He just didn't think President Truman could win?

CHAPMAN: He just didn't think President Truman could win. And he wasn't hostile to me in talking of the President, and Jim always talked to me very, very frankly on personal matters and he told me of the local problems they had and I listened to all of his problems first and then let him get them off his chest. And then we started talking. And I said, "Jim, you know the troubles that you have; they don't appear to be any serious trouble here for you. You're going to be re-elected; it won't be any problem with you."

He said, "Do you get that impression?"

I said, "Why, sure, you're going to be elected without any question, you'll be reelected." And I said, "Therefore, you are strong enough? You believe that there may be possibly a prospect that Truman will not be elected; you're the kind of person I'd like to get to go out and make a public speech and express some optimistic points."

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HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: Well he said, "Oscar, will it hurt me if I speak for Truman?"

"Well," I said, "Jim, I think that 9 out of 10 people would probably answer that question by saying, 'Yes it would. I wouldn't get into it.'"

I said, "That's just because people do not interpret the whole picture of what's going on." I told him, I said, "You may not realize that we've got four candidates in this campaign," and who was our Republican candidate, Dewey?

HESS: Dewey.

CHAPMAN: Dewey.

HESS: And then there's Wallace...

CHAPMAN: Wallace.

HESS: ...and J. Strom Thurmond.

CHAPMAN: J. Strom Thurmond.

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HESS: So, this was during the campaign, when you were speaking to him; it wasn't June.

CHAPMAN: No, I spoke to him in June.

HESS: In June too.

CHAPMAN: This was early, because I made this kind of a talk to him in June. When I talked to him up on the second trip, he had changed completely.

HESS: In what way?

CHAPMAN: That he began to believe that I was right. You see he said, "He's picking up in this area so very fast."

HESS: This was during the campaign?

CHAPMAN: This was during the campaign. He indicated that he thought Truman was picking up quite fast at that time.

HESS: And Mr. Truman did win California.

CHAPMAN: Oh, he carried California by the number of votes that Wallace lacked in getting two hundred

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thousand, and the only political prognostication I gave in the campaign was that one right there.

That was because this old fellow on the *Times* there was a nice old guy; he wrote the political column. He was an older fellow but he wrote a darn good column. He always wrote a good column, and I thought so because he always came out on my side, as a rule. And he had a long talk with me. He said, "I wish you'd give me some ideas about this campaign;" he said, "I can't depend upon what these folks said around here. I can't risk my reputation on what they say, because I know he's stronger than what some of these political leaders around here are trying to imply," But he said, "I just wish I had somebody like you that would give me a real story on that."

"Well," I said, "the trouble with it is, Mr. Bowers, that everybody knows that I am working for Truman." But I then gave him the prediction

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that Truman would win California by the number of votes that Henry Wallace lacked getting two hundred thousand votes. And that's the way the vote went in California in November.

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Ninth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., September 1, 1972
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: To begin this morning, Mr. Chapman, I want to read a paragraph from Harold Ickes' article, "Farewell, Secretary Krug," that appeared in *The New Republic* of November the 28th, 1949, We have already cited this article in a previous interview, but in the article Mr. Ickes says:

Secretary Krug had run out on his chief during the desperately fought campaign last year. He hid in the sagebrush of the Far West where none could discover him. He failed to volunteer his services in the Truman campaign. He even refused to make speeches, except on one belated and inconsequential occasion.

Is Mr. Ickes' appraisal correct?

CHAPMAN: Unfortunately it is. I say it is unfortunate, but it was unfortunate for Secretary Krug to have made himself unavailable to that campaign. He traveled during most of that time around the country visiting fish and wildlife preserves, and parks, and outdoor places of the Park Service and other bureaus of the Department. He enjoyed those kinds

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of things. However, that was not a good excuse for--that was not considered a good excuse for him to not make himself available and useful for the campaign.

HESS: Were there times when the White House tried to reach him to ask him to participate?

CHAPMAN: It did. I was on the train with the President, going to the lower part of California at the time, and we were trying to reach Secretary Krug. I couldn't reach him through even the Department switchboard, and his own secretary here was not able to give me his phone number. And so I was unable to reach him myself.

Let me add a sentence for that. I know of several occasions in which the White House tried to get in touch with Mr. Krug during that time and was unable to reach him at all. This, of course, made it very embarrassing for me and somewhat difficult for the management and continuing to run the office and keep it going,

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because I was devoted, and arranged to devote full-time to the campaign, and have Mr. Krug to make special speeches and be at the office to take over the management of the office, but he did not choose to do that.

HESS: What was the President's reaction? Did you ever hear Mr. Truman make a comment on Mr. Krug's lack of participation?

CHAPMAN: Well, he was very unhappy about the fact that Krug didn't make himself available to participate in the campaign at all. Had he made himself available for a few speeches he might have gotten by with it, but the President felt the way that he handled himself, he was deliberately trying to defeat him.

HESS: The President felt that way?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did,

HESS: What is your opinion as to why Mr. Krug did not participate?

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CHAPMAN: He thought that Dewey was going to be elected and he had been working behind the scenes with Mr. [Bernard] Baruch, and Mr. Baruch was working behind the scenes with Dewey.

HESS: Do you think he thought that he could stay in the same position in the Dewey administration?

CHAPMAN: Yes, or something better.

HESS: Or something better?

CHAPMAN: If he thought there was anything better. There isn't anything better as far as I'm concerned than the Secretary of the Interior; that's the best job in the Government. I think he had in mind that he could stay on in his administration in some high position.

HESS: In the Republican administration?

CHAPMAN: Yes,

HESS: Did you ever hear him say that?

CHAPMAN: No, never heard him say it, in any respect.

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As a matter of fact he would never talk about the campaign to me, except to comment that Truman couldn't win.

HESS: He did make that comment?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did to me. And I told him he was going to be a surprised man on November 5th, following the election day in November.

HESS: A11 right. Now to what extent did his lack of participation have in his resignation one year later?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think it had a very definite part, in the overall picture; that with other things.

HESS: Why did he stay there for so long? If the President was unhappy with him...

CHAPMAN: And he knew it

HESS: ...in November of 1948, and he knew it, why did matters drag on? He didn't resign until a year later, in November 1949. And a year in an

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appointive position is a long time.

CHAPMAN: What seemed to a lot of people that the White House was dragging its feet on Secretary Krug's action of not resigning right after election, had another reason for it that the public didn't know. There was an investigation that had started, that arose out of a trial that had been filed in New York. As I said, the public was not aware of what was going on in regard to that, and it was not appropriate to make it known, or to make it public at that time, because a hearing was underway on a suit that had been filed against Secretary Krug for the repayment of a rather large sum of money to a man in Philadelphia, who was the--who was in the textile business and had gotten what was considered by some people as favors, in the terms of favored position in getting priorities for material for his plant. Then in this trial it began to base itself on the fact Krug had paid back some seven hundred thousand dollars on this loan, and the public

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was not aware of it or anything until that suit was filed, and they wanted to let the investigation finish if they could. But when the suit was filed, the President I'm sure decided that he would move and take an action on this matter at the time. He didn't want the suit to become the opening thing on this first. So, he asked for his resignation at that time.

HESS: All right. Where were you on election night, and what are your recollections of those momentous times?

CHAPMAN: Well, it was a very pleasant time for me that evening. I was enjoying the evening much more than some of my friends were, because I had a different outlook of what was going to happen that evening than some of my friends did. And I was at my wife's uncle, Basil Manmouth Holmes, and we had quite a few guests in and we were looking at the television and discussing the campaign, during the course of the evening, and how many of them that were there had

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thought that he could win. And I must admit that most of them that were there, were quite honest about it and said that they had not thought that he could win.

My conviction was really firmed up by different incidents and things that were happening from the first of October until election. The month of October absolutely confirmed my conviction that he was going to be elected. What one of those incidents amounted to was a trip that I made through Iowa to check the different elements that were acting for the party and those elements that were in opposition to the party. I was absolutely certain that Senator [Guy Mark] Gillette would win reelection--he was running for reelection. I was certain he would run for reelection and win. He did, and then I was certain that if he ran, Truman and he would carry Iowa. As the month of October went along and I kept a check on it, my convictions became more definite and concrete that he

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was going to carry Iowa.

Now when I tell my friends about that back here, hardly any of them could believe it or would believe it; they thought it was my enthusiasm that was running away with me, but I never let my enthusiasm for my man be the basis for my judgment, because I always found you had to allow for that with everybody. You have a friendship for a man you work with like that, and you might say a wishing and hoping that he would win; you had to discount a certain amount for that, with almost anybody, including myself. I found that most of the people, a lot of the people, that I talked to in the first of September, or the last week of August, and during the month of September, had absolutely changed their minds in October. This was my own Gallup poll that I took and I found out how it would go. I made a little poll of my own in Iowa. I did this in several states, but this is a pattern that I followed. I would go into

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the State of Iowa; I would call somebody that was active in the Teachers' Association and get their reaction about this. It would usually be somebody that I knew.

HESS: Why did you single out the Teachers' Association?

CHAPMAN: Well, I was going to follow and tell you that the teachers were one, the American Legion was another, and I would pick different organizations in different states.

HESS: Labor unions?

CHAPMAN: Labor unions. I checked labor union officials and I'd check the officers or friends, not necessarily officers--friends of somebody I knew well, where I knew they knew their own people well in their own organization.

HESS: Did you also try to contact business organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, or did you figure that those were too far Republican?

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CHAPMAN: Oh, no, I never passed up a chance to talk to them if I could. I would make a talk to them if I could, and usually I would be interesting enough. I'd get invitations to speak to Chambers of Commerce in a lot of places. I was not making many speeches; I couldn't, because my time schedule was such that I just didn't have the time to prepare my speeches and to keep a schedule with any of these organizations very much. So I didn't make many speeches of any kind, but often I'd get caught in a town, and the Chamber of Commerce was meeting that day or something and they'd ask me at the last minute if I would address the Chamber of Commerce that day. It was their regular luncheon meeting and so it wasn't even a special occasion, of any kind.

Now, I met with them in circumstances that didn't have any political overtones at all, because I was invited at the last minute. There was no publicity to it, or hardly any, that I was going to be there, because it wasn't known until so late that we hardly

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got any publicity about my going to most places.

Now I would check two or three of those people at that luncheon that I would know. I knew them; that was always so much better if I happened to know them, and I did have some very good contacts among the young Chamber of Commerce people and I really got some surprisingly good help from a lot of them, from the young ones in the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce, of course, didn't come out, shouting and endorsing Truman.

HESS: You didn't get quite the support there that you did when you would speak to a union?

CHAPMAN: No, you didn't get the same enthusiasm. And as a matter of fact, they would be afraid to applaud for fear the other fellow would see them.

HESS: And report them.

CHAPMAN: And report them. That would happen in place after place that I saw it happen. Now those were little meetings that would hardly be publicized;

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there wasn't time. They were done on the spur of the moment in most cases, and I would fill in at the last minute. It was when I saw we weren't going to leave town until 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock, and I'd have time to have lunch with them and go on. Now that's what I did in my way. That was not a planned idea and I made no effort to try to get appointments to speak to that group per se. Oddly these invitations came to me by the fact that I was there that day and they were having

a luncheon and they thought, well, they always wanted to get somebody from Washington. I had lots of fun discussing things with some of those younger Chamber of Commerce people. I found we had much more sympathy in that group than people have given us credit for. The old-timers in that group weren't giving us any help at all; that was very obvious, but I didn't let that bother me. I'd talk to the younger ones and others when I could.

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HESS: Among the group that you were with on election night were you pretty well in the minority of people who were confident that Mr. Truman would win?

CHAPMAN: Oh yes.

HESS: Before the returns started coming in?

CHAPMAN: I was in the minority when the returns started coming in. The time difference between here and Iowa and here and California was a very innocent thing. I was sitting there and there were three or four fellows in that group; one of them was a regular professional gambler. I mean professional; he always gambled on every election, and he wanted to get some good bets up, and he had by telephone got some good bets put up here. Finally he said, "Man, don't talk to these people for a minute, talk to me. Get me on this story on Iowa. You said they could carry Iowa," he said; "I could get a good

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bet on Iowa, and I could get a good margin on that." He said, "Give me the story why you think they will carry it, and if you do think Truman will carry it." I'd explain to him why Truman was going to carry it, and when I explained to him the circumstances of that state and what was happening, he began to see that I had a lot more information checking on that state than the average poll would get of the picture. I had gotten very close-in to this and wanted to follow through the close contact that I had with those different people in some of these states.

Anyway, I did have close contact with individuals and that could give me very accurate information. They could give me, and I could tell from past experiences in the campaign, what they could do and what they had done before, and these estimates were very accurate. I could get them.

One fellow got up and went to the telephone. I don't think I should bring all of that story in; it's pulling in too much that isn't a good story to tell that way. I'm not a

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good storyteller from the point of view of history.

HESS: Well, you do a good job.

CHAPMAN: But I have many things of memory in my mind, not well-coordinated as it should be or as I want it to be.

HESS: Mr. Truman was in Excelsior Springs and the Kansas City area. When did you first see him after the election?

CHAPMAN: I think that he took the train the next day I believe...

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: ...and came back here.

HESS: And came back here. Did you see him when he got back?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I saw him when he got back. I went down to the train.

HESS: What was his attitude? What did he do and what

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did he say? What do you recall about that occasion?

CHAPMAN: He says, "Well, you and I told them." This was his good joke; he says; "You and I told them." And we have of course a lot of fun with the *Tribune*.

HESS: The "Dewey Defeats Truman" issue.

CHAPMAN: "Dewey Defeats Truman." And they had put that thing over so hard; they would try to influence a few more hundred votes in Illinois. I've forgotten now whether we carried Illinois or not. I've forgotten the history of that; I've forgotten the story of what happened.

HESS: Illinois went for Truman. 1,194,715 to 1,961,103, so it was very close.

CHAPMAN: Very close.

HESS: Pretty close, Illinois usually is though isn't it?

CHAPMAN: In my reporting on Illinois I have quoted we carried by 85 hundred. Now there's a man who was—

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that publisher and editor of the *Chicago Sun*, a Marshall Fields publication, and he used to work in the Department with us as our public relations man.

HESS: Who was he?

CHAPMAN: Pete Akers. And Pete was a fine newspaperman; he was really a man that plugged desperately to get the real truth of a story. He'd try to get around all the fallacies that surrounded these exciting stories. People would get excited and say a lot of things they aren't sure they hadn't repeated before, you see, and he would try to run these down to get the truth about them. Pete was one of the best newspapermen that I think I ever worked with, in the way of getting accuracy into his stories. Now on a yellow pad, like this one, like this yellow pad here...

HESS: A legal-size yellow pad.

CHAPMAN: Legal-size yellow pad; he took a pad with him

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and I had stopped in Chicago that night which was a--I think either a Wednesday or a Thursday night. I stopped just for the night there to do one more little checkup thing and to get \$5,000 transferred to the Illinois area instead of letting it go to New York, and I cut it out of New York and gave it there.

HESS: You thought it could be put to better use in Illinois?

CHAPMAN: Well, I knew it wouldn't be put to any use in New York, because I knew Fitzpatrick had not supported us and was not supporting us. He had traded us off for everything under the sun, from a dog catcher on up to the Presidency, and he had traded us off completely as state chairman. I knew it and I had a close check on him. We didn't feel very happy about Fitzpatrick doing this. We thought that Paul had been given recognition and honors that goes with such recognition, and we had tried to help him in the State of New York

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as much as we could; we felt that he was unfair to us in New York taking the position he did in this campaign.

HESS: Did you ever talk to him about why he did not support the President?

CHAPMAN: I did on Saturday night before the election.

HESS: Before the election?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He said, "I just learned this afternoon that you were the one that transferred \$5,000 up here this weekend, and," he said, "we need 65 thousand."

"Well," I said, "Paul, time has come to be perfectly frank with each other now and we can quit kidding one another. I hope you don't think you've been kidding me all these months, that I don't know that you have absolutely sold us down the river in New York, and you personally have done it," and

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he had and I knew it. I said, "You have not turned your hand to help Harry Truman get elected President of the United States. You have traded him off for other jobs in this state, such state positions you wanted."

HESS: What did he say to that?

CHAPMAN: He said, "That is not true." He denied the truth in my statement, and he said I'd been listening to a lot of his enemies and it was totally unfair to him for me to say that.

And I said, "If I didn't have a couple of letters in my hand and the person is perfectly willing for me to make them public, I wouldn't say this."

HESS: Did you at that time call to his attention the fact that the American Labor Party had to pay the rent on Madison Square Garden for Mr. Truman's speech?

CHAPMAN: I did.

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HESS: And that the Democratic Party would not do that?

CHAPMAN: Now he claims that he was out of money and he claimed that it was my fault that they didn't send any money up there.

HESS: Is that what he wanted the money for?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: For Madison Square Garden?

CHAPMAN: Well, that was one of the things.

HESS: One of many things.

CHAPMAN: One of the many things, but he learned about the \$5,000 that I shifted to Illinois and I got it shifted up there, rather than to spend it in New York, and [Ed] Flynn said, "Oscar, you're absolutely right." He said, "You're not going to win a thing in New York." He said, "You haven't a chance in the world." He said, "Kirkpatrick has absolutely been against us; he

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has sold us down the river." And he said, "You've got the picture exactly right, and that was the right thing to do, and I'm glad you did." And he said, "I know you were trying to get me on the phone the other day to tell me; I couldn't get to the phone, couldn't take the phone at the time, but," he said, "when I found out what you were doing, I was completely for it, was glad you were doing it." And he said, "It was difficult for me to take a part in that up here in New York," now it was based here. "So," he said, "it was a very good move for you to do that to get the benefit of our money." We didn't have much money anyway, and we had to spend it where it would really count.

I used to laugh. You see, I never collected any money when I was in that vast campaign, working in the campaign at all, and I would not accept contributions. I'd have somebody else to take it; they'd give it to somebody else that wasn't in the Government, and I just said, "I don't want

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anybody in my Department to accept any money, or anything at all."

HESS: Did you usually have somebody from the Democratic National Committee who could handle financial matters?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Well, in my case I had with me as my co-chairman of the eleven western states, old Governor [Nathan L.] Miller of Wyoming, one of the grand old men that you would ever talk to, and he was the greatest help in the world. These fellows that would come in and want to take a couple of hours to talk to you just to visit about everything and you'd be surprised how many of them would want to do it, and I couldn't take the time right then. I just couldn't do it.

HESS: You were a busy man.

CHAPMAN: I was busy working the program, in each of the eleven western states and getting them coordinated, mostly by telephone and sometimes by plane. And

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somebody would come in and say, "Well, I've got \$5,000 I can get for you," say, "I can get it to you today."

Well I'd say, "What time could you be here today?" And if I could get them to come up to the hotel where I was staying, I'd have Mr. Miller there when they got there.

HESS: So that he could take the money?

CHAPMAN: And I'd have them to make the contribution to him and held sign the receipt for it, and we kept the closest records you ever saw. We kept absolutely tight records. And I refused to accept the money because I was still Under Secretary of the Interior.

HESS: Concerning your active participation in 1948, what weight do you think that that gave to your receiving the fob of Secretary of the Interior?

CHAPMAN: I think it gave the President an opportunity to observe me in my approach to people and in my

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efforts to really help him. I think it gave him opportunity to understand me and to know me, because I had been with Ickes, but I had never criticized Ickes to him. I had never criticized him to him at all and...

HESS: Or Krug?

CHAPMAN: No, Krug--I never criticized Krug.

I told him on one occasion how I couldn't be critical of these men because if I felt bad enough to do that, strong enough about it, I ought to resign and let you put somebody in my place that will run these things, or put somebody in the head place to run it, because I shouldn't be in that position. I said, "You can't undercut the man that is your immediate boss in running an organization if you expect to produce and do an effective job for giving service, and effective service," and they are a few of the little problems I had on that.

Now I had just to avoid criticism of both

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Ickes and Krug, one for different reasons. I was really very fond of Ickes in many ways; I was in the doghouse part of the time with him, and then I was friendly with him provided that he worked with me perfectly beautifully this month. Maybe next month I couldn't get to see him.

HESS: When you were in the doghouse, what were some of the causes for falling out at that time?

CHAPMAN: It probably was because I had testified before a committee and didn't give him a copy of my testimony beforehand.

HESS: Did he like to keep pretty close tabs on what was going on?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, he did. He wanted to keep pretty close tab. Now this is the thing with him, he wanted to stay at the office and work; he didn't want to travel. Krug was just the

opposite. He just hated that office; he didn't want to stay there, and when he could see that girl coming in

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around 4 o'clock in the afternoon to bring a stack of papers to be signed by the Secretary, he'd almost faint. In the first place he didn't know the least thing about them; he couldn't know. This is not against him, but as I say, no man could know. He just didn't dream that there were that many papers that a Secretary would have to sign each due, and you don't get a chance to sign them until late in the afternoon when you could cut your appointments off about 4 o'clock and start...

HESS: Then get into your paperwork.

CHAPMAN: Get into your paperwork. And that's what you have to do, and that will last as long as is necessary for you to finish, and that may be 7 o'clock, and many times it was 8 o'clock for me; but I tried to finish them by 6 and a lot of times I did. I'd finish most of the times about 6 or 6:30, but also probably as many times I'd finish at 7 or 8. I tell you this only to give

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an idea of the function of the Department of the Interior. People don't quite understand; the average public is not acquainted with the mechanism of that department.

HESS: It's so huge.

CHAPMAN: Well, it's huge and made up of a conglomeration of bureaus that operate with a conflict of interests with each other, because...

HESS: The Park Service and Reclamation...

CHAPMAN: That's right. That's right. The Park Service would want to kill a dam that was being built in some stream somewhere, and Reclamation was politically, and every other way, was trying to get support for it to get it built. Well, poor Ickes was like I was; we were trying to get information to make some judgment of our own, because we were trying to make independent judgment around the two respective parties, you see. We were trying to get enough informa-

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tion that we could make some intelligent judgment about this thing. Now that was one of the hardest jobs I had to do; that was to do all the research and talking I could, with someone on the conservation side, and the Park Service side, then someone involved with power development. There is where our friend Davidson had such a struggle. He was a strong power man, a public power man, and so was I. I was very strong for power, public power, but Davidson would fight a little bit, probably a little bit tougher than I would and sometimes a little bit more brash about it

than I would be. That came from years of experience, of always knowing that the other fellow probably knows more about it than you do.

HESS: In your opinion, was there more coordination between agencies under Krug than there had been under Ickes? Did Mr. Krug try to get some sort of coordination between agencies?

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CHAPMAN: Well, you see, when Krug was made Secretary I was made Under Secretary, and he knew that he was taking an Under Secretary that he had never seen before, didn't know, and that I had been in the Department for...

HESS: Since May of '33.

CHAPMAN: Yes, since May of '33, May 4, and I had that many years of experience in working with the personnel of the Department, the key people especially, the key men in the bureaus I worked with. And I had gotten a long ways down on the lower echelon of operation in working with them, because I wanted to know all I could find out about this program, how it worked; and we had some mighty fine people in there, in the Department that really were dedicated people. They were not just in there picking a scrap all the time; some people think they were, they were not. They were dedicated people and hoping to accomplish something. Now their accomplishment--in one case there would be a

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conflict between their interests, and support for a project would come from opposite sides. We've been using the Reclamation Bureau as an example, but they're not the only ones wherein a difference of opinion would arise. The Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service often had a difference of opinion about how things should be handled and managed. You had to try to find out what was the best way to do this. You had to try to get the very best information you could and you had to do it fast; that's why I was always concerned whether I was doing it efficiently enough. It was a fact that I had to do it so fast.

Now our friend, Secretary Davidson, was an activist in every sense of going after a program, and a project, and working at it very hard. He really tried hard on some of these programs, particularly public power; he was especially good on that.

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HESS: One of the projects he had was to try to get the Columbia Valley Administration established. Right?

CHAPMAN: Ickes, of course, was supporting him on this, very strongly, because anything that brought something else to the Department of the Interior, Ickes would support him, any of it. To me it was the wrong time to get it done, because you had Lilienthal, who was running the TVA, Tennessee Valley project. He was running that post. Terrific powers had been given him, such

as giving him a right to borrow money against the credit of the Government, to borrow money himself on notes of his own company, from TVA. That was a tremendous breakthrough for him, because it gave him the opportunity to have money to go ahead and proceed with his program.

HESS: We might discuss the methods that you tried

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to use to bring about better coordination.

CHAPMAN: Let me talk about that a little bit, about trying to develop the Department, allowing better coordination.

I felt that the Department of Interior should have the Forest Service and it should be put together with the Park Service. Those two agencies really should be together, and whether they should be in the Department of Interior or in Agriculture isn't too material one way or another, except there's a history to the Park Service in the Department of Interior since 1916. Since Teddy Roosevelt's time the Department of Agriculture has had the Forest Service, and [Gifford] Pinchot spent the latter part of his life fighting for the Forest Service.

HESS: He was quite a conversationist.

CHAPMAN: Oh, he was; he was a great friend of mine

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and I was very crazy about him. I got some nice pictures of him in his robe and pajamas when he and I were sitting out on the lawn up there at his farm at Milford. He had a very beautiful old home there, very beautiful thing.

HESS: Was that New York?

CHAPMAN: No, it's Pennsylvania, just across into Pennsylvania, Milford. Now his brother, Amos, was the financial genius of the two. He was a broker and handled funds for the family and he'd made a good deal of money for the family by pooling their money and having it together. He did a very fine job of it.

Now going back to the question of the Department of the Interior, it was a cross-section of functions including conservation of land and conservation of human resources, coordinated with land use resources. Involved with the latter is the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Eskimo people have a claim to a large amount of land that belonged to them in this thing.

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We have opposed it so long to keep them from getting their fair share of that land.

Governor Gruening became Governor of Alaska and he fought so hard for the state bill; he got everything in that he could for the Eskimos and other natives. He got everything he could for them. He put everything he could into that bill to give the natives a better share of the lands, and more of the wealth of the country than they had been given in other places, in other states. And he is still supporting a move with some of the Indian groups to pressure Congress, or anybody that they can, to get a bill through Congress to give them, identify their title, and give them title to a larger percentage of that land.

Now they got one bill through and got another in their hands, but not as much as they are entitled to be any rules of the game. They are entitled to more of that by any rules. You can say that maybe Alaskans are entitled to far

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more of the Alaskan resources than they are getting. It is my belief that they are entitled to more than they are getting of the resources of that country. The state has the power now to give it away or dispose of it in some other way. A lot of it will be state land.

HESS: What are the main pressure groups that come in to try to prevent the Indians and the Eskimos from receiving their just amount of land? The oil interests, and timber interests?

CHAPMAN: Well, you don't find those fellows out front; they work behind the scenes, very carefully, but well, the oil interests don't particularly bother too much; they have never got out in front too far on it. But the timber interests are primarily the ones, along with the fisheries. Those two have been the strongest interest groups of those that I know, and they have given tremendous time to this effort.

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HESS: Did you receive a good deal of pressure from those groups during the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. Oh yes, I got a lot of pressure. I got a lot of pressure from those groups during Truman's administration. But the wonderful part of working with Truman was he worked with his Cabinet officers. If he felt that that man knew what he was really doing and was really trying to help these people, he'd work with them, and he'd work with his Cabinet team, I thought beautifully. This was true if that Cabinet officer was working with him and was trying to coordinate to his policies.

So many people that go after the oil people go after them with such emotion that it's awfully hard to get them straight on the line, to get a factual story and statement in what they are charging. We felt if they are going to charge a company for violation of the law, they should do so with as much substantial evidence as possible and not just do it because they are major companies. The

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Government permits them to be major companies and do a lot of things we criticize. If I was ever in there again I would go and talk to the President and see what his policies tended to be, regarding conservation. The issue is pretty well cleared up legally now; not all, however, since some are still fighting that.

HESS: In your opinion, how interested was Mr. Truman in the general subject of conservation?

CHAPMAN: Well, I felt this, that he didn't want to be misled by a lot of the emotional people on the question of conservation, just for the sake of conservation. He wanted to take action, whatever action he had to take; he wanted to do it based upon a pretty thorough knowledge of that particular section of the country he was working on. I can't think of a single project that I was

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working on, in conservation, that Truman didn't support wholeheartedly. I don't know of a one. Now, I said I don't know a single project that I was supporting, and working for, that he didn't support me on.

Among the cases that came along one by one, I was not as enthusiastic for one case, I'll say, as a conservation officer is sworn to be.

HESS: What case is that?

CHAPMAN: Well, I had one case, the Dinosaur National Park. I was trying to handle that. There's a way you handle these things; you'd kill them without hurting yourself, if you'll handle them right. Well, I don't think the dam should have been built where they were proposing it, that is the...

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HESS: Bureau of Reclamation.

CHAPMAN. Bureau of Reclamation was proposing it, and to my chagrin, [Newton B.] Drury, who was director of the National Park Service at the time, got a secret memorandum of agreement with Mike [Michael W.] Straus in which the two of them had signed that they both would work together to try to put over this dam and the national park.

HESS: A secret agreement...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...between two of the bureaus of the Department of the Interior.

CHAPMAN: Right, and they hadn't told me about it.

HESS: Was this at the time that you were Secretary?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: They intended to carry out an action that the Secretary was not in favor of?

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CHAPMAN: That's right, and they both knew it.

HESS: They both knew your views.

CHAPMAN: That's right; they knew my views thoroughly on it.

HESS: How did you find out about that secret memo?

CHAPMAN: Purely by accident. You see they were planning to spring their secret memo--the Reclamation Service was, not the Park Service--Reclamation was planning to bring that agreement, signed agreement, between the two bureaus to present it to me when I held a public hearing on the matter here in the Department. And that would put me on the spot pretty bad. Fortunately for me I had got ahold of this information and got a copy of this thing. I had gotten a copy as soon as I found it was in existence; I got it. And I sent for Mike Straus; he said, "Yes, we've got a secret memorandum out." He said, "It's not secret. We just haven't given it out because

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we haven't sent it to you." He said, "We were supposed to give it to you before the hearing and he said, "that's all there is to it." He said, "You know I've been supporting that."

I said, "Yes, I know; you know I've been opposing it."

And he said, "I know it, but we've both had our own views and we express them."

Well I said, "You keep on expressing your own views through proper channels, and that's all I ask you." And Drury denied signing the memorandum, but Straus brought me the original and handed it to me at the hearing.

HESS: And both signatures were there.

CHAPMAN: Yes, both of them were there. Drury got terribly mad at me because, oh, he had cursed me. I sent for him a few days later and I said, "Newton, you are such an ardent conservationist. I want you to be promoted up to Assistant to the Secretary, have that title and with the same

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salary you are now getting and become my real adviser on all these conservation matters." Well, he was wise enough to the old tricks. He knew what I was doing; put him in there and I'll take him out of line of operation, have another line of operation and he wouldn't have anything to do with administering, except for what I handed him each day, and that would be nothing.

HESS: Give him a nice office and close the door.

CHAPMAN: Close the door; that's what I was going to do. Now, see, he wouldn't accept it, and he kept on trying to talk me out of it, and I said, "No, Newton, we've talked a month over this now, and so the first of November I'm going to announce the appointment of Connie [Conrad L.] Wirth as Director of the Park Service." And I said, "Connie Wirth has been Associate Director of Forest, and he knows it. He knows it well, and he's well-liked on the Hill, and he's,"--I said, "I can't remember during all the time

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that I've worked here that he has ever signed a memorandum of agreement with another bureau on something that was in opposition to my policy, that he didn't bring it to me first, and discuss it with me." There's when Drury kept denying that he signed this memorandum. Well, there it was, I had it. I had the memorandum of an agreement that they had signed.

HESS: Did you show it to him at that time?

CHAPMAN: Oh, I read it at the meeting; I read it at the public meeting I was holding. I said, "Now this would normally be embarrassing if I hadn't already known about this for some time," but not through the two principles involved.

HESS: Not through proper channels.

CHAPMAN: "Not through proper channels," the very words I used. And I said, "Now, you people who are interested in conservation, and you who are interested in dams and building of dams for the purposes of

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power and reclamation and things of that kind, I'm for these programs. I'm for building every one we can, and another thing we should do, we should raise the time limit on the project as to how long the credit could be given on any given project. It could be spread over twenty years, or forty years, or fifty; it didn't make any difference. It was a credit due the United States that will be paid to the United States by these people, due in that course, whether it was twenty or thirty or fifty years, would make absolutely no difference in the bookkeeping of the Government, or affect their bookkeeping in any respect at all." I said, "I've talked to the Treasury Department about that and they just said they would not oppose the bill at all and go along." And I was trying to get that kind of a bill put through, and we got a good deal of support for it at least there, when I broke the bubble on that Dinosaur National Park and they knew that I'd buy it. Drury, he was

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the only man I actually fired.

HESS: What was the outcome of that? Did they build the dam?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Just one brief question about Columbia Valley Administration; we may want to discuss it further on other days.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: But did you mention that you thought that it was premature, that the CVA should not be established at that time?

CHAPMAN: I thought it couldn't be, I was torn...

HESS: Were you for it?

CHAPMAN: I was for the idea, but I was for us timing it better. We were not using our best judgment in planning the development of this; it was a good thing to do and still is.

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HESS: How would you have developed the timing?

CHAPMAN: Well, the timing was this; you look your field over and what group do you have supporting you. Well, it just didn't have any support in Congress at all from either of them.

HESS: They sure didn't have the Idaho Power Company behind it either.

CHAPMAN: No, they sure didn't! They were crucifying him; they really could. Well, those are the things that made me support him so far; the background was always after him. But it just didn't have any support among the Congress, both houses. Had he had enough support among them to carry this fight, I'd have been willing to have tried it, but we didn't have any support from the White House.

Roosevelt was for it, but Roosevelt was not going to take anything away from Lilienthal while he was there and they should have known that. I

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tried to stress it with my friend Jebby Davidson that that was our hardest part, the position of Lilienthal, and that his position with the public and with the Congress and with the President was

so much stronger than Ickes'. Thus, they'll beat us before we get started, and you won't have a chance to present your case adequately or properly. And Congress was deathly opposed to this at that time.

HESS: Ickes left in February of '46 and then Krug was sworn in in March of '46, and the effective date of Krug's resignation was December the 1st of '49, the same day that you were sworn in. Did Krug have any better support in Congress than Ickes had had so that he might have been able to get something going on CVA?

CHAPMAN: He could have, had he not been such a good friend of Lilienthal. He wouldn't fight Lilienthal.

HESS: But hadn't Lilienthal gone to the Atomic Energy

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Commission by this time though?

CHAPMAN: I think he had; I think he had moved, but he was still carrying this fight.

HESS: He was still opposed to the Columbia Valley Administration?

CHAPMAN: That's right, he was still opposed to it.

HESS: What was the basis for his opposition?

CHAPMAN: He was opposed to it as...

HESS: He was an old TVA man.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: What did he have against CVA up in the Northwest?

CHAPMAN: Well, actually when you got right down to hard conferencing with him about it, his opposition I didn't think, was solid enough. It was only a temporary expediency that he was fighting, but not a permanent long-range develop-

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ment. Our position was so much sounder from the point of view of a long-range development. But Lilienthal was such a well-known conservationist per se that nobody would believe any of the stories that was written about him back east in the eastern papers.

HESS: Did he think that the establishment of a CVA out in the Northwest would somehow weaken TVA?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did.

HESS: I see no connection.

CHAPMAN: Well, he thought that they both would be put under the Secretary of the Interior.

HESS: Oh, I see.

CHAPMAN: He thought that when we accomplished one, that we would go after the other, and we would.

HESS: And you would?

CHAPMAN: Yes. That's what we were going to do.

HESS: So that was the basis for his opposition?

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CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: One reason why I brought this up was that Mr. Truman had a special message in 1949, I think it was in February of 1949, just after the election, calling for the establishment of the Columbia Valley Administration.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: He had even mentioned it I believe in his State of the Union address in 1949. In other words, what I am saying is it was well-known that Mr. Truman wanted to establish the Columbia Valley Administration. There are those who say that people in Government dragged their feet.

CHAPMAN: Well, a lot of them did. A lot of them did.

HESS: In other words, they couldn't come out in open opposition to Mr. Truman and say...

CHAPMAN: No.

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HESS: ..."Okay, you want a CVA but I don't," but when Mr. Truman would make his pronouncement that he wanted a CVA, there were a number of people in high positions in Government who worked under cover to see that it was defeated, is that right?

CHAPMAN: That is perfectly right. Remember Anderson was Secretary of Agriculture for awhile and he was opposed to it, and he was close to Truman at that time, and he was I know...

HESS: What was the basis of his opposition; was he afraid that he would lose the Department of Agriculture's...

CHAPMAN: Forest Service.

HESS: ...Forest Service?

CHAPMAN: He'd lost it in the total overall picture; he would lose a lot of things that would go into this CVA.

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HESS: Were all of the Government organizations operating in that one area going to go into that one unit?

CHAPMAN: Not all, but most of them.

HESS: Well, that was Michael Straus' attitude over at Reclamation; he didn't want to go under CVA either.

CHAPMAN: He didn't want it; he didn't want it, and he was cutting it everywhere he could.

HESS: Now he didn't work so much under cover did he?

CHAPMAN: No, he didn't.

HESS: He just said what he believed?

CHAPMAN: You know there's one thing he always liked about Mike.

HESS: Even if you disagreed with him he was open about it.

CHAPMAN: That's right. He was open about it. He never

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tried to go behind your back and he would tell you that you're wrong. I think that this is right; I'm going to stick to my position, and you can't oppose a man that does that. You've got to give him credit for being an honorable man in his approach to basic principles.

You see these fellows think that they have accomplished a lot if they have gone around the head of the Government (in this case the President), because we had gotten the President's support for this thing. We had really gone after it and I always give Jebby great credit for that because Jebby did--he did a very fine job of promoting that.

HESS: He made a lot of speeches in the Northwest didn't he?

CHAPMAN: He did. He made a lot of speeches in the Northwest; he talked to a lot of officials about this, and he did a lot. And he did a fine job in promoting a wonderful project that would

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have been a great asset to the country in the future. It was a sound approach for another hundred years. You were putting together your resources of this area, and congealing them. You've got to find some mechanism for it to operate on, and this was the only thing that we could find that would do it really adequately. It would be something on this principle.

HESS: What's the main reason that it was not established?

CHAPMAN: Well, just that so many people were opposed to it; that's why they wouldn't do it. They were not opposed to Truman about it.

HESS: Weren't the power companies in the area bringing pressure on their Congressmen and Senators?

CHAPMAN: Oh yes. Oh yes, that was one of the...

HESS: I believe every Governor was opposed, every one in the Northwest.

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CHAPMAN: They were all opposed to it.

HESS: The Governors of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Nevada.

CHAPMAN: Well, I always give Jebby credit for a great deal of nerve of going out in that area and discussing it publicly. I thought, and he knew the Governors were opposed in that area.

HESS: And many of the Representatives.

CHAPMAN: Oh yes, many of the Congressmen were opposed to it.

HESS: And I believe Harry Cain, a leading Representative from that area, was opposed to it.

CHAPMAN: Yes, you're right.

HESS: Did Mr. Davidson's tendency to spend a great deal of time in the Northwest and his tendency to give a good many speeches, cause you difficulty at any time?

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CHAPMAN: Not especially.

HESS: What were your views on iris method of operation?

CHAPMAN: Well, I felt that he was losing a good deal of the value of his work by the fact that he was concentrating and centering himself in the Northwest and establishing another Secretary of Interior in the Northwest.

HESS: Did you feel that he was trying to do that?

CHAPMAN: Oh, I don't think that he was trying to do it; it just shows up that way on paper when you say it.

HESS: It just looks that way.

CHAPMAN: It just--it really just looks that way. I don't think he would really try to do it. I think he was honestly trying to establish this principle. He wanted to get it done, not that he got himself built up a great deal along with it. As far as he was concerned it was all

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right; he didn't care, he didn't mind that.

HESS: It was a secondary benefit:

CHAPMAN: Yes, I say he didn't mind that. But on the other hand, Jebby--Jebby's technique of approach was different from mine.

HESS: How would you characterize his technique of approach?

CHAPMAN: Mature and individual actions that he would take, and he would be doing one thing and he ought to have been working on the other one, because you had to keep the horse before the cart here. To move anything in Government as major as this is, requires a brilliant and physically active man that understands his subject matter basically. Jebby understood it; he had that quality. He understood it and he knew what he was trying to do, but he did not--in my mind, he used the wrong technique of approach to get his case sold to the public.

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HESS: Do you think that he would have liked to have been Under Secretary of the Interior at the time you became Secretary of the Interior?

CHAPMAN: No, he wanted to be Secretary.

HESS: He didn't want the second job; he wanted the top job, is that right?

CHAPMAN: And I'll tell you this; I'd never be Under Secretary again to any Secretary in any department of Government.

HESS: You wouldn't want to be Under Secretary of...

CHAPMAN: Of any department.

HESS: Of any department?

CHAPMAN: Not again,

HESS: Is that the man who does most of the work?

CHAPMAN: That's the man that is being shot at from both ways; always has to take the responsibility; he's surreptitious by the nature of the

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office. The Under Secretary gets criticism. There are people below who think he's trying to get the Secretary's job. He wants to be Secretary next, and being Under Secretary all he has to do is just get one man out of the way. Now that's what a lot of folks will believe; they'll believe that you are trying that. I had an awful time fighting that kind of a thing all of the time. Unfortunately Krug didn't want to stay in the office in the first place. He didn't want to stay there; he wanted to travel. Well, the public didn't know that. They thought that I was staying there running the office because I wanted to run it. I didn't want to do all of that work. I wanted him to take part of it, but he just wouldn't do it. There wasn't anything I could do.

HESS: At the time Krug resigned, there was an article in the *Oregon Journal*, dated November the 11th, the day you got your phone call from the White

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House. The article was by Forrest Finely. I'll just read the first paragraph:

For this key Cabinet post, five names have been thrust forward: Former Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, Governor Mon Wallgren, Senator Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming, present Under Secretary Oscar Chapman, and the present Assistant Secretary of the Department, C. Girard Davidson of Portland.

So Davidson was named as one of the five possibilities. Did you think that it was possible that Ickes could be brought back in '49, as Finely thought?

CHAPMAN: No, that wasn't in the picture at all.

HESS: What about Mon Wallgren?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He was a friend of the President.

CHAPMAN: He was a personal friend, but Truman knew him; he wouldn't have put him in that job anyway. You see, Truman had put him in what job?

HESS: Well, he had nominated him for a job had he not?

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CHAPMAN: Named him to something, some Federal job.

HESS: Wasn't it to the National Security Resources Board?

CHAPMAN: Yes,

HESS: And I don't think the nomination went through.

CHAPMAN: It wasn't approved or something about that.

HESS: A little difficulty about getting his name approved in Congress I believe.

CHAPMAN: I think there was some problem there.

HESS: But you don't think that he was considered seriously at this time?

CHAPMAN: No, I didn't take him seriously.

HESS: What about Senator Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming?

CHAPMAN: He would have been a serious man at any time. A President could have appointed him at any time. There were no obstacles in his way

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from any source. He could have taken it without any question. It was just a question of losing the chairman of our Interior Committee in the Senate, and we always want to have him with us if we can, but we had O'Mahoney and he supported Truman, and he was a good supporter of Truman's.

HESS: Finely's next statement is: "Of the five, Chapman's is the brightest, at least at the present." So the writer of this article--he didn't know that on that same day you were going to get that telephone call from the White House--thought your chances were the brightest.

Now, back to Mr. Davidson just for a moment. Was there no understanding that he might become Under Secretary?

CHAPMAN: None.

HESS: Now there was a period of time...

CHAPMAN: There was no understanding between Davidson

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and the President if that's who you mean now. I don't know who he may have had an understanding with; the President's the only one who could appoint that man, so there is no one that he could have an understanding with but the President, and I know he didn't have one with the President. And that's the way I was appointed Secretary of the Interior, as I told you about him calling me up and telling me.

I want to clarify if I can, and I have no way of doing it unless the President would wish to clarify it with a little memo for the record. I don't understand, and I didn't understand it when I left his office on that Wednesday morning, when he had answered Ickes' letter that was an insult to him, that had been sent to the President on Saturday afternoon, and said, in effect, "If I don't have an answer to this letter by Wednesday at 11 o'clock I'm going to call a press conference and live this letter out. If I don't have an answer from you."

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Well, that's an invitation for a President to fire you; that's all it is. I knew Truman wasn't going to take that. I didn't see that letter. I didn't know it was being written until almost that Wednesday morning; that's when I learned of it. I went in to see Ickes and I said, "Mr. Secretary, I understand that you wrote a very, very caustic and unpleasant letter to the President." I said, "I don't think your situation with the President is in that kind of a state, and I don't believe it justifies that." I said, "You haven't got an issue you can draw on as Secretary of Interior and to resign on that and become a great crusader as the man who saved the world from Truman." I said, "You're not going to get away with that. You might do it, and I'm terribly sorry that you sent that letter. Had I known it I certainly would have advised you not to have sent it, but to take the chance, go in and sit down and talk with Truman. I think you can work things out without

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any question." I thought they could have. Truman is always big hearted if you go half way, if you will make an effort to show your integrity and your honesty to him. Now the difference between the President and Secretary was based on nothing but a personnel problem, nothing else. Ickes was trying to make an issue out of Ed Pauley's appointment as Secretary of the Navy, or Under Secretary, I've forgot.

HESS: Under Secretary.

CHAPMAN: Under Secretary I believe, and Ickes fought his nomination very bitterly upon the Hill. He fought his nomination hard.

Now, they finally withdrew Ed Pauley's name, who was the man involved. Now I didn't think that was sufficient enough grounds; there was not enough of any unfavorable things that you could have brought into this, that justified him challenging the President's position publicly at that time and place. Now there is a time and

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place that you can do anything more effective than you can in other times and places. He certainly was not in good timing on his position with the President and I told him so. I said, "The President will get the best of this without opening his mouth; he doesn't have to say a thing. He'll have enough press against you, enough Senators against you on the Hill, they won't support you."

And I was very fond of Ickes for his position on liberal things like conservation, public power, and things of that kind. I was very fond of him; he supported me on everything in that. He supported me very well on that, and he had quite a regard for Girard Davidson, and he liked him. But I think he felt--this is Ickes now--but I think Ickes felt Davidson might be moving a little too fast and not necessarily for the benefit of the program, but for the benefit of Davidson becoming Secretary of the Interior. Now I know he was--I feel confident he was suspicious of

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that, a feeling Davidson was making these speeches rather free handed out there and not coordinated necessarily with the Secretary.

HESS: What did Krug think about Davidson's speeches?

CHAPMAN: He didn't like them, but he didn't say anything. Krug didn't say anything, but he didn't like them.

HESS: I believe that there was a time that he debated an FBI man, wasn't that right?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Did that cause any difficulty?

CHAPMAN: Well, to this extent--no; Davidson was right in his speech, but he was certainly wrong on his man and his time. You don't pick the lies when he's on top of the hill, when you're throwing rocks at him; you wait until you get him to the bottom of the hill.

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HESS: Did you ever talk to J. Edgar Hoover about that?

CHAPMAN: I did. I had a nice talk with him.

HESS: Did he ask you to drop over to his office?

CHAPMAN: No. No, nothing at all. I called him to see him about some Puerto Rican matters, on which he was extremely helpful to me.

I want to say this for Hoover; he began to let his people annoy our employees a lot by investigating them all the time under the Joe McCarthy regime and influence. I went to see Hoover about that myself and said to him that it was causing a great deal of loss of time and conflict with our other programs. And I said, "I can give you my word that any man or woman that you want to see, any employee you want to talk to about anything in this world, if you call me I'll give you a little room close to my office that you can come up and sit in there and have a conference as long as you want.

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Nobody will bother you at all, and that room is not bugged." I said, "It would help me to keep the suspicion from spreading in the Department that you are investigating the Department of Interior about something. You really are not investigating the Department of Interior about any wrongdoing, I know that. You're not, because there just isn't anything."

He said, "No, you're right. I haven't, and I'm not investigating for that." He said, "I am investigating some people over there on account of this Communist influence that we seem to think--some of the people seem to think--that is too close, some of the Communists."

"Well, Mr. Hoover," I said, "perhaps you would investigate those people very carefully and talk with them by themselves, not in their office where other people are coming in and going out. The rumor then goes out that an FBI man is investigating John Smith down in the Bureau of Mines." I said, "Immediately that becomes a sensitive area and it

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immediately flashes that you're investigating the Department. It gets them all confused and gets them terribly concerned about what is happening to their own situation."

But Hoover dealt with me in as fine and gentlemanly way as I have ever had a man work with me. He was most helpful to me in giving me information that I needed on the Puerto Rican situation, and he gave me that in the form of a memorandum. I said, "You use not names or titles; you use the phrase 'unidentified, but responsible informant,' all the time, but you never have used the name of anybody."

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Tenth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., September 11, 1972
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, let's discuss tidelands oil and I'll read just a few excerpts from the book, *The Tidelands Oil Controversy* by Ernest R. Bartley. And on page 139 he has this paragraph:

So far, the Ickes-Pauley feud had no outward bearing on the question at issue. Ickes saw fit, however, to appear twice before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee in February, 1946, and there gave testimony to the effect that Pauley was unfit to be confirmed to the post to which he had been nominated by President Truman. It was the contention of Ickes that on 6 September 1944 he had had a conversation with Pauley concerning the difficulty of raising campaign funds for the 1944 presidential campaign. At this meeting, Ickes alleged, Pauley promised to raise three hundred thousand dollars for a Democratic war chest if in turn Ickes would see that the federal government no longer pushed its claims to the submerged lands. Ickes now fought Pauley's nomination with every means at his disposal. He traced the background of Pauley's operations in California oil. He aired the dirty linen of the Navy in regards to methods used in the naval reserves at Elk Hills, showing the incompetence of the Navy and insinuating that the Navy was unable to take care of those reserves over which it already had control.

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What do you recall about the tidelands oil matter and the Ickes-Pauley disagreement?

CHAPMAN: At first I was not in all of the conferences between Mr. Pauley and Secretary Ickes. I was in some and participated in some discussion of it, and there were quite a few memoranda that were written in the Department for the Secretary, giving factual information about matters that we were enhancing in relation to the tidelands oil.

Remember the tidelands oil issue had been brewing for many years; it wasn't something that came up just new overnight. It had been discussed back and forth by two different groups of people throughout the country. Let me say your intellectuals, and educated people, your educators, pretty generally understood the problem involved, the principle involved, in the tidelands issue, and then there were some very good articles written by one or two men that were very helpful in clarifying that issue. This is not an easy issue to clarify in

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any one conference because that issue was of such a long standing. That fight had been going on so long that it would take a person considerable time to clarify and really do a research job on that specific subject. It would take time because there were so many people who had worked on that.

HESS: Wasn't it understood for a long time that the state did have ownership rights to the mineral contents of the submerged land from low tide to three miles out?

CHAPMAN: Well, generally it was done with the Government people. The State Department, in dealing with another country, would generally use the language of a three mile limit, but actually that had never been officially established one way or another. It had been used, and had been accepted as one of the principles in the discussion of this, that the state had at one time had some jurisdiction, but they had never obtained any

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affirmative rights to the minerals under the sea. They had never established it. Texas was the only state that had a real sound legal base for justifying their claim to their right to their own lands under the whole state, because when they came into the Union, there was a condition in the legislation that they kept all their public land; they kept all of their land. They didn't give any to the Federal Government; they kept it all.

HESS: That's right, there are no public lands in Texas.

CHAPMAN: In Texas, no, never has been. It never has been...

HESS: Didn't they join the rest of the states by treaty?

CHAPMAN: Yes, they came into the Union really through a treaty arrangement. That was the process that they used to come in and at their request, and then at our consent, they were taken into the

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Union by negotiations. Many points like this one were clarified in that, and that's something that should be read to see the basis for that clarification--to see why they were concerned about it. By they, I mean the oil operators who were operating on the coast line, and they were having to use very expensive materials to get these wells drilled and produced under the water. They discovered it was obviously a more expensive operation than just straight dry land drilling up on high land. And that was an expensive problem that developed into this submerged water land, and when the cost of it was discovered, that slowed down the pressure for a while, of many people wanting to get these leases, because they didn't think they could afford to finance them in most cases. But then pretty soon the major companies worked out the problems. The

engineering problems especially were so expensive, but they worked that out pretty soon and got that straight.

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Now you come back to the question. Mr. Pauley was one of many who had applications for leases on the submerged lands that he had filed with the states. He also held what is known as land script. We used to refer to them, and we do now in the language of the bill and the language of all the memos and so on that went into this, as "land script." That was land that had been given to some individual, or to some corporations in a few cases, because of contributions that they had made. It gave certain individuals a lease to that land because of some great contribution he had made in the Civil War.

HESS: That's right; a good deal of land script was given out to survivors of the Civil War.

CHAPMAN: That's right, and you see a lot of people who made contributions to the war effort on the Federal side, who got a lot of land script leases. He'd be given 50,000 acres on

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such and such a coast line, and be identified that way and he'd be given so many acres--and it was free; it didn't cost him anything. It was a free gift, outright, and they began to sell that script to different individuals. They began to trade it sort of like they would stock on the market.

HESS: Mr. Bartley mentions on page 245 of his book that one of the people who did this was Mr. E. L. Cord. He identifies him as the "onetime manufacturer of the fabulous front-wheel drive Cord automobile." He and ten associates managed to find and buy a goodly amount of script reportedly exceeding one million dollars in the process. So Cord was one of the men who did this too. Now this was down...

CHAPMAN: Now he was one of the men that was taking a leading part in buying up all the script he could buy from different private citizens who had some grants given to them, and they'd sell that script

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to Cord or his group; they'd buy it for a little of nothing as a rule.

HESS: Bartley said that Cord's group filed applications in the Gulf of Mexico and California offshore lands in the extent of 4,138 acres. So, when the Government gave the land script they thought it was to be used for land out West, but Cord and his associates were taking it and trying to obtain offshore submerged oil leases, right?

CHAPMAN: That was principally what they got off on. They wanted the submerged land to drill under when they discovered that it was so perfected in certain places, and those wells are rather productive when they do hit them.

HESS: You get your money back, don't you?

CHAPMAN: You do, and you can get it back and you get it back rather fast; and with this write-off that they have on their tax situation, they get that written off very fast. Of course, remember in

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most cases they bought those leases for very little or nothing. Cord bought up for himself and this group; he bought up a lot of land I've forgotten how many acres it was, but it was a very large amount.

HESS: Well, it says here 4,138.

CHAPMAN: Well, that's about right; that's about what my memory is, that...

HESS: They went down to the Gulf of Mexico and positioned themselves around where he thought oil might be found; 1,932 acres he filed applications on, of submerged lands in the Gulf of Mexico. Bartley said that he tried to bunch some of the script in one acre parcels around 34 producing wells. So, he would go out where there was a producing well and then lay claim to submerged lands around it.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: It says on November the 21st of 1951, you refused

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to exchange the land for the land script on the grounds that the tracts were not public lands.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

I stuck to the principle that those lands were really not public lands, that the Federal Government had not made a final decision on that point. The court had never determined the issuing of those leases to those private citizens, whether they were constitutional or not. And second, I felt that there had to be some basis, legal basis, for giving away public land, or selling it or doing anything with it; you had to have some legal base that would hold up. And I stuck to the principle that I always had about that, that this was not really public land. It never had been, and was never intended to be in the sense that it was becoming to be used. And when we saw the vice that was being developed on this, we started in to fight it to try to get some legislation through to kill the whole thing; all

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the activity on the submerged lands, and we wanted to get some affirmative legislation and get the bill to say just what we had repeated, that this was not public land and, therefore, it was not subject to public land use.

They never did get that through Congress. They never could get it through Congress, but I was convinced we could beat them in the Supreme Court if we ever got the case before the Supreme Court.

HESS: It mentions in the note here that Mastin G. White, who was a solicitor to the Department of Interior, had the opinion that those lands were not public land and could not be exchanged for script, because script could only be exchanged for surveyed land or lands subject to survey.

CHAPMAN: That is right, and Mastin White is one of the best lawyers that we ever had in that department as solicitor. He is now one of the examiners over at the Court of Appeals and he is a brilliant lawyer.

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HESS: So, I don't believe that any of those land script claims were ever honored, were they not?

CHAPMAN: None.

HESS: I don't think so.

CHAPMAN: Ickes never honored any, and I never honored any.

HESS: Well, there's one point I want to bring up about Bartley's contention that the mineral rights should be--he's a pro-states man, I should add.

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes.

HESS: You mentioned last week when we discussed this book that you know this man, is that right?

CHAPMAN: I don't know him, I looked him up to see but he's not the same guy.

HESS: He's not the man:

CHAPMAN: No, not the man. I thought it was, but it's not.

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HESS: Now one of the points that he brings up in the book; of course, he takes it state by state and the three states that he gives most of his time to are California, Texas and Louisiana, but he also mentions a good deal about Florida.

One of the things that he mentions as to why he thinks the states should have the right to these lands is that he thinks they have the duty and the responsibility for the submerged lands in so many other areas, such as in fishing. The states give fishing rights; the state is obligated to license boats that sail in this three mile area. He also mentioned the problem of the sponges off of Florida where there was a court case as to who is supposed to take care of, or who was supposed to administer the sponges on the seabed, and the court said that Florida was supposed to do this, not the national government; but the state was supposed to do this. In other words, it's his contention that in so many areas, boating, fishing, sponges, that the states

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have been told, "This three mile limit is your responsibility to administer." But when they found that beneath the seabed of this area was such a vast amount of oil, then it's his contention that the Government changed their mind, and said, "We want the oil; it shouldn't go to the states." What do you think about that?

CHAPMAN: Well, that principle was argued rather effectively. Let me say he had all the mileage out of that point he could, and...

HESS: He wrote almost a whole book on it.

CHAPMAN: Yes. I could go with him so far as to say that Florida had a different claim to the rights of the minerals and everything under the water than the other states, because Florida proceeded exactly the way the Constitution tells you you have to, to acquire an addition to a state. You can't increase the size of your state without an act of Congress correlated with an act of the state of Florida let us say, by vote of the people

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of Florida and on application to the Congress of the United States to apply to it. Then a Supreme Court decision to declare it constitutional must occur.

They had followed every requirement in the process of perfecting their rights to their claim, and it was the only state in the Union that had.

Now Texas was even in a stronger position to have made a case, and I so stated that technically, probably Texas could make a claim for technical reasons because she had never been a public land state. She was an independent republic, and upon the request of the people of Texas they asked us to take them in as a state to the Union and negotiated a treaty.

So they sat down and negotiated the treaty which kept all Gulf lands in the hands of the state, you see. So, whatever rights anybody had under the water or anywhere else, would apply in Texas where it wouldn't apply anywhere

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else, like California--none of them. They had no legal claims at all that could stand up. Texas could have. Texas could have fought this case alone, and not let that bunch of politicians and bunch of--I would say very unscrupulous people, some of them were--try to make out a claim for a state that really and truly had no claim whatsoever.

The other states were not in the same position as Texas. But the situation was turned around, and the California and Louisiana cases were tried first.

HESS: California was first.

CHAPMAN: I think California was first. And they did not have a good case, based in law, to justify saying that the rights to minerals and to all of that property belonged to the Federal Government. There were no statutes, no law; there was nothing for them to base such a request on, and in lieu of that request the Constitution leaves it in the hands of the Federal Government. So you're left with that divided opinion, where laws pertaining

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to the land in the State of Texas are based upon entirely a different act of Congress than any of the rest of them.

HESS: One thing that the lawyers tried to do, and Bartley gives a pretty good outline in his book, was to trade statements by Government officials on the ownership of the land. As he mentioned, in 1933 Secretary Ickes had stated that the ownership of the tidelands lay with the state, but he said that in the later thirties and early forties he encouraged the filing of suits to test the validity of the state's claims. In other words, his own views were changing. Do you recall that?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think he had some change of thoughts about that and I think that originally he probably thought the states may have had the right. I'm not too certain of this.

HESS: Bartley does not cite, as far as I can understand; he does not cite where he takes Ickes'

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views from.

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He just says Ickes had made those statements.

CHAPMAN: But he doesn't quote him there.

HESS: No, he doesn't quote it or cite where he took his information,

CHAPMAN: I'd try to research that. I couldn't find where Ickes had even said that. Now so while I can't just blankly say a man's mind had never been in this direction, that he had never had his mind made up on either side of the issue. I would assume from my talks with him in the early part, that he was not in favor of the states having jurisdiction. In my talks with him I had assumed that his own convictions were being firmed.

HESS: About what year was that?

CHAPMAN: That was in '35 and '37 and '38, along the last of the first term, Roosevelt's first term.

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It began to surface about then. And then it began to come to the full brunt of the issue; it became a public issue and he just did a lot to make it a public issue. I think he felt that the people would feel that if they knew the truth about this that they wouldn't allow this to stand as giving away the public lands, the way they did, even though it was for some services this man had given to the Federal Government that was beyond the call of duty on him as a citizen. I can't recall what some of those things are, but they were different. Generals had been given...

HESS: The higher you were in rank, the more land script you received, I understand.

One question on Mr. Ickes' claim that Mr. Pauley had promised to come up with 30,000 dollars if the submerged lands case were dropped. Did you ever hear Mr. Ickes comment on that before he testified before Congress?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he had said that Mr. Pauley had made

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such a statement to him in the presence of these people; I don't have the names of those people. Ickes had had a conference with Mr. Pauley who set up an appointment for him to come over, and I don't know who was in the conference. I was not. I had gone down to the Secretary's office, but I had not been invited to the conference. You don't go into a conference unless you are invited. So I went on back to my office, and he had this conference.

I talked with him the next day, or shortly after this conference, at which he made these very strong statements about Mr. Pauley making this statement that he had said he could get at least 300,000 dollars from Pauley if they would agree to drop the...

HESS: This is what he told you a day or two after that?

CHAPMAN: He made the comment to me, Ickes did,

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that Pauley had said that to him.

HESS: Let me read one further paragraph from Bartley's book. This is on page 140:

As nearly as can be determined, Ickes never mentioned the affair to either Roosevelt or Truman. Even Abe Fortas, Under Secretary of the Department of Interior and Ickes' right-hand man and confidant, could not recall on the witness stand that Ickes ever told him of such an occurrence. Pauley admitted that he had had a talk with Ickes and that campaign funds had been discussed, even a 300 thousand dollar figure. Pauley contended, however, that this sum represented a hoped-for contribution from the District of Columbia and not from Pauley interests.

So, according to Bartley, Fortas didn't know anything about it. Do you recall anything on that?

CHAPMAN: Well, Ickes just made some comments to me in our conversation about Pauley's efforts to...

HESS: But he did say it was as sort of in exchange, 300 thousand dollars for the dropping of the submerged lands case?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: He did say that?

CHAPMAN: He said it to me about two or three days after the conference. I can't remember whether it was two days or three days. But it was one or two days right after the conference that he mentioned to me and he was very much perturbed about it. He was disturbed.

HESS: This all came up when Mr. Pauley was being nominated as Under Secretary of the Navy.

CHAPMAN: That is right.

HESS: And I understand that Mr. Ickes threatened to resign first and then did resign at this time, in other words, hoping that the President would withdraw Pauley's nomination which the President did not. Did you think that Mr. Truman was backing the wrong man? There was a dispute between two members of the Administration, Ickes and Pauley, and it looked like Mr. Truman was backing Pauley.

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CHAPMAN: The real story back of this is that Truman hadn't been convinced by anything that anybody told him. This had been an offer to raise money from a lot of people to get these leases.

He didn't take it that way; at least I'm sure he didn't, just general conversations about it I interpreted to mean that.

Now I don't know, I thought Mr. Fortas was in that conference. I don't remember who was in that conference with Ickes that morning. You see Mr. Fortas was Ickes' closest confidant at that time.

HESS: He was Under Secretary then.

CHAPMAN: You stayed in good graces with Ickes for about 30 days and then you are off about 30 days and then he'd see you and tend to business with you regularly, but then you'd be in the dark for a while.

HESS: This was just an established pattern with him?

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CHAPMAN: Just a pattern with him, and I soon learned that's what he did and he tested your own loyalties a good deal by whether you stood for certain things.

HESS: So, this was during a period of time when Fortas was in a state of grace more or less, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: In good graces.

CHAPMAN: Yes, a short time after that.

HESS: What was your, own situation at this time?

CHAPMAN: I was in good.

HESS: You were in good graces.

CHAPMAN: I was in good operating graces with him at that time.

HESS: While we're on that point, what were a few of the things that you might have done during

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the many years that you worked for him that caused a falling out with him? When your 30 day period would come around what would bring it about, anything in particular?

CHAPMAN: Bring what about?

HESS: Well, you mentioned that you would be in good graces for about 30 days and then out for 30 days.

CHAPMAN: Oh, I see. Oh, he'd disagree with me over something that I--a memorandum that I put in the file.

HESS: That he disagreed with. Anything in general, just...

CHAPMAN: Just be anything; it might be the fees that he wanted to put on the Park Service on the Washington Monument. And I said, "That's the one place in America that we ought to leave free to the people so that if they want to walk 555 steps up, let them do it."

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HESS: If they want to walk up, let them walk up.

CHAPMAN: Let them walk up free.

HESS: And he didn't think so?

CHAPMAN: And he didn't think so. He'd get enough out of that to pay the cost of operating it.

HESS: What do they charge for it anyway, a quarter?

CHAPMAN: Ten cents.

HESS: Ten cents.

CHAPMAN: I think it may have gone to a quarter. I think it has.

HESS: It's been a long time since I was there.

CHAPMAN: Anyway he put the ten cents on.

HESS: We can see the Monument by looking out the window, I walked down twice, but I've never walked up yet.

CHAPMAN: Don't try it! Don't try it! I tried it

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once and I quit, got back on where I could.

HESS: Yes, that's quite a walk.

Well, anyway, on the Ickes-Pauley dispute, do you think Mr. Truman was backing the wrong man?

CHAPMAN: No, not necessarily. Not necessarily. I think this: I think Mr. Truman and Secretary Ickes were both on the wrong issue. One was fighting on a personality, and that was Pauley and Ickes, and Ickes didn't like him; and Truman was fighting on the principle that the public lands ought to be kept under the Federal Government. He was more or less sympathetic towards that position with me; in talking with me he was. And I told him, I did tell him before I was appointed.

HESS: All right, Mr. Bartley on page 211 has the following:

In furtherance of his authority, Oscar L. Chapman, Secretary of the Interior, on

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11 December 1950 issued a notice covering oil and gas operations in the submerged coastal lands off the Gulf of Mexico. This notice declared that the United States 'has paramount rights in, full dominion and power over, and ownership of,' these lands. One might inquire as to where, in the face of the numerous actions of the court, Chapman drew his authority to declare ownership.

CHAPMAN: That's a very good question to have clarified and it's a very technical one, and that's the one I relied upon. I did personally a very careful research on this issue and there isn't a better man in Washington to clarify an issue of this kind than Mastin White, Solicitor of the Department. And I had him to make a thorough clarification of that one point. Did the Government, the Federal Government, have the basic authority in its own hands for the disposition or use and control of the public lands under the water? After considerable time--he took several weeks on it, and he devoted a lot of time to it, and he studied it, and he researched it. And he did it himself and he researched it and he came in to

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see me. He said, "I don't know how you want this, but he says I can tell you first I've come to the conclusion that the Federal Government did have basic legal authority for the control and ownership of the public lands under the sea." He called them public lands under the sea. I wouldn't call them public lands under the sea, but I would simply refer to them in a layman's way and not being too technical at this point, but being political in my expression here. I was saying that the Government had the authority to manage and control all the lands under the sea, and it was not necessarily limited to three miles. I went further in that statement in that order.

HESS: How far out did you go?

CHAPMAN: I didn't limit it, because I said, "Congress has to limit that. Congress has to limit that some day some where." Now they have worked in this twelve mile zone.

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HESS: Do you think that it should be further than that?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I think it's going to be.

HESS: In the last few days Iceland has moved their fishing rights out 50 miles and right today they are having disputes. They haven't started shooting yet, between the Iceland gunboats and the British fishing vessels, but Iceland has moved out to a 50 mile limit. What do Ecuador and Peru have; don't they have 200 mile limits?

CHAPMAN: They have 200 miles. Now this is what you are faced with, you as a country in this hemisphere we'll say, particularly in that case, where they have extended their boundaries 200 miles out to sea. They have done it without any agreement or consultation with our government.

HESS: Unilaterally, is that right?

CHAPMAN: It's a unilateral...

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HESS: Just make a statement,

CHAPMAN: They just make a statement and the President signed it. This is what it is; he called it a decree, and...

HESS: But it isn't an agreement between nations.

CHAPMAN: No agreement involved whatever and there were no conferences on it. In the State Department they may have had some conferences, I really don't know, but they never reached the stage of public discussion.

HESS: How far out do you think that countries should own and control the ocean surrounding them?

CHAPMAN: I think you've got to do this: I think you've got to try to find the economic base of a given piece of land. It may be an island or it may be a peninsula, or whatever the area is; you've got to find the economic base for the support of a population. Now where that given population should be, what amount, I don't know;

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that's something you should study. You should study that and we should study the whole economic support of that country's economy. Where does it come from and so on, because there are some countries that are small countries that practically get more than 50 percent of their

income and revenues off fish. And I don't know; I'm saying that, not being exact, because I'm not certain of the exact amount, but several countries have an income that I know is more than 50 percent of their revenues otherwise.

HESS: The territorial limits then might vary on the need of the area.

CHAPMAN: Exactly, exactly. You should determine these boundaries according to the needs of the human beings. Now you've got to tie those two things together and settle them together. Now, you can't just sit down in a conference room with a group of Senators and hope that you could just come to an agreement. You've got to have a good

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senatorial hearing with a good study made by the Senate. It would be preferable for the Senate to start a hearing on the whole subject of this boundary business. This should absolutely be done by the Senate now, in cooperation with the present administration. Then, the Senate should come up with a report. Now they can appoint another committee, to include an economics professor. Look at Harvard. What's our good friend's name up there?

HESS: J. Kenneth Galbraith.

CHAPMAN: Yes, a man of that type would be a good man to be on a committee. I wouldn't necessarily make him chairman, but he would be a good type of a man to have on the committee. There's another type of businessman that I'd like to see on a committee of that kind, a good type of businessman who can speak more than one language and can sit in on a conference and talk their

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language. That ought to be done, and he should be carefully selected on that basis. Appoint your committee of about seven or eight, but don't make it too big which would make it useless. You do ruin them if you make them too big, but let the Senate select what they want. They want a big committee; all right, but I wouldn't think they could ever have a very successful investigative report made. This is not for the purpose of investigating any department or the Administration. It's all for the purpose of determining a fair and equitable base that you will present to the states, to the Latin-American states...

HESS: Organization of American States?

CHAPMAN: Organization of American States. You want to present it to them and have conferences; invite them to a conference let's say. Now there's no one who can sit down that's got all the brains that you need. There is no

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one man who can draw the line on another and say this is what we ought to do, and do this. I don't know of any one man that's got that much knowledge, that he could do all that. He needs some group study, group discussion about this.

HESS: That would be a good thing.

CHAPMAN: I would like to close about this point and for us to have another session right quickly before you get away.

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Eleventh Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., September 22, 1972.

By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Did you want to start off with clarifying a few of the points about the June trip, today?

CHAPMAN: I think I should review a couple of records that I have, and I believe that they are available in copy forms here in my office, before I proceed into the discussion of the June trip. I want to get thoroughly identified as to the dates and the exact timing of that trip. There has been some confusion about the dates of that trip and some dates have differed from others on that trip, and I find that mine is not the only one. I think somebody else has another date on the June trip, and he had it set back in May--more or less coincided with my dates that I had on it. I want to clarify that before we make this a permanent part of our record here. So, if you will permit me to, I will take this part of the record and I'm going to go through some

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files here at the office. I'll have one of the secretaries to do that, to search through my files here to find that piece of record that I want; two, three sheets of paper that's got some data on it that I think will clarify very definitely, convince me of my position either one way or the other, because I made a notation of that trip in that particular part; I made a memorandum.

Now, I want to point out and clarify it if I can. Some parts of it confused me considerably the other day when we were talking. I didn't have any records with me to take a tape recording down. I think that if you will permit me to, we'll shut this interview at this point and let me pick it up here at a later date.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, to conclude what we want to say about tidelands oil, let me give a further quote from the book, *The Tidelands Oil Controversy*, by Ernest R. Bartley; this is a quote from pages 257 and 258:

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Truman added further fuel to the fire with his Executive Order 10426, which was issued 16 January 1953. This order created the continental shelf as a naval petroleum reserve and placed the area under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Navy. While the order apparently was a sweeping one, in reality the status quo was not substantially disturbed.

The order was issued for political purposes. As a measure designed to gain time for the proponents of national control and as a tactic for harassing the incoming Eisenhower administration, the action was masterfully conceived and executed. The timing was most adroit. True, the action evoked criticism from many persons who felt that it was not in the American spirit of 'fair play.' Yet as a political maneuver, the order may have served to delay quit-claim legislation at least a short time, while the resulting legal snarl was unraveled.

Was that a political maneuver?

CHAPMAN: You will find, Mr. Hess, that there are many people who are very well-acquainted with the history of this case from the very beginning of the time the order was discussed with the staff, both at the White House and my own staff, and there was a wide difference of opinion among a lot of people. I made a real effort to bring them together with an understanding of the value of that order irrespective

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of any political implications whatsoever. You couldn't possibly support that order and not have a lot of people disagree with you and think that it was for political purposes, because there wasn't any question about it; there was no way that you could remove the political implications. It did have some political implications, and a decided benefit to Truman's campaign. It was helpful, but I would have supported this order entirely without any respect whatsoever to the campaign, because it could stand on its own feet, on the merits of economics of managing public lands.

Now, you see, we had pretty general control of most public lands, as such, public lands broken into several divisions, some parts managed by the Agriculture Department, such as the Forest Service; some naval lands were under Navy control already that we had given them for management purposes.

Now, having to examine that from an economic

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point of view without any regard to politics whatsoever, I think any reasonable man would have come to about the same conclusion I did--that you couldn't avoid seeing that there were some definite benefits in that order for the public generally, and that was mostly for the little man to get a chance at these oil leases that we located. I studied that case very hard, briefed it very cautiously, and I came to my own conclusion that there was no question in the world but that this was a piece of administrative action that definitely was an advantage to the little man at dealing in these oil leases and gas leases in the continental shelf.

Now, there had been no oil issue previous to this time, regarding the management, power, and control of this area of public domain that is under the water, because there had never been a Supreme Court decision clarifying the control of that.

Now, this order gave us a chance so we got it in a judicial forum to get a hearing. I was

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looking at the next step; if we issued the order this month, what would we be doing with it next month.

Well, obviously, I was looking at it from the point of view of the President, who had talked to me so much about how you ought to really try to help him find a way to give more benefits, an easier and simple way of operation. And that is what this did. It simplified the operations a great deal, by managing it this way under this order. The Navy was naturally very pleased about it, to have it, because they had a Naval Reserve in California, a very good one as a matter of fact, which Ickes had signed for. You see, under the law, the Secretary could sign an order affecting the regulations and the matter of managing this land 12 miles under the low water mark, and could affect the management in a very simple way, but could become a very dangerous thing if you handled it wrong. That's an area in which a Secretary can get into most serious difficulty with

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the management people or the company per se when they are managing this thing for the purpose of making a profit, and you are helping manage it from the point of view of helping save some of their profit for the public good, and the oil would go to the oil people.

And so, I can say to you that irrespective of whether the effect of that order was a political benefit to the campaign for Truman, it was a benefit to the American people.

Now, I measured this case on that basis first and decided in my own mind that this was the right thing to do for good management; and I took it up on that basis first to study the management of this bill and whether the method of how he was handling it and who he had handling it there in the Department, would determine the good or bad affects of this executive order. I was strongly for this order and I think it took Clark a little while before he was thoroughly convinced that it also had an overriding effect politically.

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Well, it did have; I wouldn't use the word overriding, but I think he did feel that he would be accused, and the President would be accused of having an order issued that was so overriding in its implications of the campaign that he'd be accused of that. Well, my point was, he's going to be accused of that whenever he does it.

HESS: Is that Mr. Clifford?

CHAPMAN: No, not Clifford. Clifford was...

HESS: He had left.

CHAPMAN: He had left, I think, by that time. I think he had left, but I don't think he was...

HESS: He was not involved--was he involved in this at all?

CHAPMAN: He was some; he was really personally advising the President and talking to him.

HESS: Even though he had left the staff?

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CHAPMAN: Yes, the President would call him down and he'd stop by the next morning and go in and see him.

HESS: I believe at this time, too, there was some discussion of taking a part of the profit of the oil drilled from the submerged lands and spending that on education in all of the states. Is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes. That was a strong argument. For several months in these conferences, discussions went on concerning what to do with that money. Should it go to the general treasury, and come back through the appropriation method? That, of course, was what Congress wanted. But, while we had it in this position, we wanted to put into this order, that the money be set aside for the purpose of education--strictly an educational bill. The proceeds from this bill would be built up in the Treasury Department for the purpose of an educational fund to help boys or girls who

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were trying to make it through college and just didn't have money to go on.

HESS: I believe that that provision made it into the final order, did it not?

CHAPMAN: It didn't get in. It took; oh, we spent two months on it, and...

HESS: That was one that fell by the wayside?

CHAPMAN: That was one I lost. I found I lose one and I win one, so you come out all right, sometimes; and in this case I lost my argument, and I wasn't able to convince my colleagues that that was a good, fair way to handle it and it would not hurt us politically if it was done at all. And they all laughed and said, "That'll be your campaign for another term."

"Well," I said, "I need a little bit more help on the campaign anyway," and then we laughed and I said, "I'd be for this bill whether it was helping the President for reelection or not; I'd

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be for it." But I said, "The President is not going to turn this public land over to a free grab, to the states, or to Congress anymore than he could avoid it."

HESS: Now, of course, at the time that that order was signed, that was four days before Eisenhower took over.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So, now the election was over and the Republicans were on their way...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...four days later.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So, Mr. Bartley thinks that it was a time bomb, more or less, that had been left for the Republicans to contend with, something to put quitclaim legislation off, to muddy the waters for a period of time, and delay legislation.

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CHAPMAN: Now, that is not quite true. In the first place, any political effect on the administration was already accrued on election day. Whatever we were going to get out of it we got out of that election day, period. I'll say whatever we lost, we lost it in that period. So, the fact that he signed it just four days before he went out of office had really no effect politically upon the picture whatsoever.

You know, Mr. Hess, that our Department of Interior in its makeup of the authority and the management of the Department as such, is assigned by the Secretary of the Interior to the various assistant secretaries, and they are given a certain number of bureaus to work. The Secretary always tried to equalize the burden and divide up the work among the bureaus to the assistant

secretaries. He generally tried to assign the bureaus that a man showed some special interest in. Well, he soon found out that I had a special interest in the minority problems, the human rights

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issue, and basic principles of that; that I was very much interested in it.

Therefore, when I first went to the Department of the Interior, the Office of Education was in the Department of the Interior. Howard University, which is a Negro university, was assigned to me. The whole question of the territories was under me then, because the Virgin Islands had some 22,000 black people and about 1,100 white citizens; of course, that has changed considerably since I first came to the Department in 1933 on May 4th. I was sworn in as Assistant Secretary on that date. And now its population has shifted a great deal since then. But in the meantime, that was one of the human rights issues that surfaced in the Virgin Islands with regard to the rights of the black people, and the Secretary--and I want to say Secretary Ickes supported me 100 percent in these issues dealing with the rights of minority people. He was very generous in his feelings of trying to help those people, and he

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did do it. His biggest problem that he had was usually brought on by his own--let's use the expression that they always use that "a man is his own worst enemy." He was sometimes his own worst enemy in getting bad publicity about some individual that he would have a personal vendetta with, some individual he'd appointed. It doesn't matter whether it was his appointment, or John Smith's appointment, anybody's; he would soon have a fight going with that fellow, and it was one of the things that he had about him controlling himself to get a better understanding of the man's point of view--and what he was trying to do, of the assignments that were given him.

Now, the assignments regarding the human rights were left with me and in my hands practically all the time; they practically never changed. They usually would change them every two years and sometimes longer. There was no given time to control that. That was in the Secretary's hand; he could do it whenever he pleased.

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And then, the next thing comparable to that was the question of oil. I'd come from a state, Colorado, that was just beginning to produce some oil, but it was not an oil state in a sense of any real material value, but they had found oil. They had been producing some oil, and they had been making some money for the State of Colorado.

Now, the problem that the Secretary was faced with was, first, his problem in having disagreements with the administration of the oil companies, we'll say, the administrative side; he had many differences of opinion with the oil management, particularly the major oil companies. But in most of those cases, they were cases going back to when I first went there in May 4, 1933, and he left in...

HESS: In '46.

CHAPMAN: '46.

HESS: In February, I think.

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CHAPMAN: Yes, February of '46, I think, was when he left. Now, when he left, he left on the basis that he was quite certain in his own mind that he was going to develop a public vendetta with the President on the basis of an issue of the tidelands oil, and he thought he could make an issue out of that against Truman.

Well, the truth of it was, after he had written this very, should I say unfortunate, letter he wrote to the President, he kept trying to build a case in the public mind against the President on oil, and to leave an impression that he didn't want to leave the oil management and control under Truman. He thought the President was too close to Pauley and to several other oil men, but particularly to Pauley. But, now, for awhile he worked very closely with Pauley. He didn't have any fight with him for a little while, but when Pauley's nomination came up for confirmation to be appointed to the Navy Department, I believe that was as--was that an Assistant...

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HESS: Under Secretary.

CHAPMAN: Under Secretary of Navy, was what it was. Ickes took it on himself to write that letter, use this excuse of writing the President that kind of a letter, which was not the kind of a letter a man should write the President of the United States at any time. You just don't do those things. He had no real grounds from which he could establish and maintain this issue with the President, with regard to the Pauley appointment. It was a personnel matter that he had a personal vendetta going with Pauley as an oil man and he was opposing him for anything that Pauley wanted; it didn't make any difference what it was, he was opposed to it. He carried that fight on, and then the climax of his letter to the President was reached at that stage, you see.

HESS: Was most of his opposition to Mr. Pauley over the offer that had been made to raise money?

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CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What was the basis of their difficulty?

CHAPMAN: Pauley wanted an opinion of the Department that Ickes wouldn't give.

HESS: As favorable to Pauley's oil interest?

CHAPMAN: Yes, as favorable to Pauley's interests, and Pauley was trying to get a decision out of the Secretary that would have been favorable to his interests, and he wouldn't do it; he wouldn't give it to him.

Now, Pauley had a lot of money caught in this kind of a play, he had a lot of money. Now, he was trying his best to get this thing worked out if he could and for him to get out of the way without bothering anyone. Now, that turned out just as I thought it would; he blocked Pauley's nomination deviously, his supplying Senator--what's that New Hampshire fellow's name?

HESS: Green?

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CHAPMAN: No, that's Burns. You know, that tall, grey-haired fellow, he was a Republican, fairly liberal fellow, and, of course, he didn't like Pauley. They were trying to see if they--Ickes and his friends--were trying to block Pauley's appointment. He thought if he blocked that appointment it would strengthen his position in his fight against the President. Normally that's true; it does have an effect, but it doesn't have enough of an effect to effectively accomplish what they wanted. You see, they were trying to get the President into a position where he would have to come to them for support or get him to drop this animosity if he could.

Well, he didn't do it. Truman had his mind made up on this gas bill; he had talked with me about it, and I knew what he was going to do, and he was not faulty in terms of error or anything, anymore than Ickes was. He happened to be a friend of Pauley, but that friendliness was one

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of pure friendly relations to a man, but not to give him anything of the public lands. Truman wasn't about to give that to anybody, and he didn't. A strange part of all this, and I'll show you his [Ickes] personality and how he was handling this. I was with him about 15 years, I guess, pretty close, 4th of May of '33...

HESS: '33 to '46.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Thirteen years.

CHAPMAN: Thirteen years. Out of all of that time, he never changed the oil management of the Department of the Interior; he kept it under me. Now why? Well, I knew he distrusted me at times. It wasn't a question that he distrusted me, it was a question that he was jealous of me or something.

HESS: Why, did you ever figure it out?

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CHAPMAN: I could never figure it out except this way, I was a single man at the time. My first wife had died, and I didn't get married until, oh, seven, eight years after she died. I got married in 1940, and I had a most fortunate and happy marriage. I must say that to you as a friend; I was happily married and spoke of the good luck of a man that had two fine characters that did accept me at face value, until I proved myself as being worthy of being their husband.

Now, I had the good fortune--I was not married when I came here; my first wife had died in January of '31, and I came here in November of '32, after the elections were all over. I came here at Senator and Mrs. Costigan's request, and they were more like my parents than they were any political friends. He was just like a father to me and she was, too, as a mother. They just couldn't be any better. They were just like my parents, and he was a wonderful man, a man that I just worshipped almost. Senator Costigan was

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one of the brainiest men I have ever worked with in my lifetime, and of all of the public officials I have worked with, none of them could match him with their brilliance, and real brains. He was one of the most brilliant men and one of the finest men in his feelings and relationships toward his fellow man. And he would fight, this man who was cut out to be the underdog. He could have been a millionaire easily if he had wanted to be, because he could have gotten into any corporation anywhere in the world. But he wouldn't take a case. He wouldn't take a corporate case or any case.

HESS: Was Mr. Ickes jealous of you because you were a bachelor at that time?

CHAPMAN: That leads up to the fact that Mrs. Roosevelt had a habit of inviting a group of us fellows (I was 36 then) over to the White House,

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usually for those Sunday night scrambled egg dinners that she would fix herself. A chafing dish, she would handle those scrambled egg dinners, eight or ten young men; sometimes there would be some women, not many. But I think he got a little jealous of my going to the White House.

HESS: When he was not invited?

CHAPMAN: Yes. You see, I didn't catch that at first; it took me a little while to get onto what this was all about, and I finally decided that that was what it was. It was that I'd be in the doghouse this week, because I would remember that I had gone to the White House for dinner with a group of 10 or 12 people, and it would usually be the same group or it would be a bunch interested in a special subject. Well, now, Secretary Ickes got very much perturbed about my going to the White House so much, and he told me about it one day.

I said, "Mr. Secretary, I've enjoyed working

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for you from the point of your handling the public issues; it couldn't be done better, from my thinking. I think it's wonderful. You have always supported my position on civil rights matters and you have supported me on everything that I have done; now," I said, "I don't know why you feel this way, because what could I do to hurt you with the President? Do you think for one minute that I would go to the White House and try to undercut you by making comments to the President or to somebody on his staff, trying to hurt you? I have done other things, where I would invite friends to my apartment for dinner and I'd talk with them. We couldn't have a misunderstanding of a very serious nature, one in which I hate to see you waste a good life that you are making for yourself, the good name you are making for yourself, you are making and..." Well, he left the oil matters that were so vital to him; it was one of the top fighting issues in the Department all the time. He never changed that from

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my assignment all the time he was Secretary; he left this oil assignment with me.

HESS: Did he watch that closely; did you and he have conversations about handling of oil matters?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. We had a lot of talks about it. Now when [Abe] Fortas was in there, and he was in there just a short time; let's see didn't he leave before Ickes, I've forgotten whether he did or not.

HESS: I think so, but we can check.

CHAPMAN: I think he left before Secretary Ickes did. Well, he did give Fortas authority that he already had as a review matter, being Under Secretary of the Interior, he could review anything that I was sending on to the Secretary that would go over his desk on the way to the Secretary. So he had that. I want to correct my statement that much, because from that may appear that he changed an order, but it was not a change;

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he simply--that was his normal assignment--all Assistant Secretary stuff would go over the Under Secretary's desk going to Ickes; so he had had that force in effect. But I couldn't ever understand why he left that oil thing with me knowing that he and I disagreed on one or two points. We had no serious differences; we were pretty much together on the oil matter. I had done everything I could to interrupt Mr. Pauley's operation, because I thought he was getting too much of a share of what was going on in the oil end of the thing there, and that's one of the things that Jebby Davidson always felt that I didn't fight Ickes enough about that. He thought that I gave in too easily to Ickes on this kind of a fight. Several, I did. You have to adopt a strategy on making your fight. I tried to pick my grounds and my timing myself, and I found that

I came out much better when I'm using my own judgment; pick the timing for the fight. I developed if I could--you can't always do that,

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and I really--Fortas joined me in most of that fight. It's hard to sit here and tell a man something and to interpret the man's thinking of what his mind is on a given subject in dealing with human beings. Yet, there are two people, both Fortas and Ickes, who are so much alike in many respects, and in many others they were not alike at all, that's all.

HESS: How were they alike and how did they differ?

CHAPMAN: Fortas played a shrewd, carefully planned fight all the time, regardless of who it was or what it was that he was fighting about or who he was fighting for, but he would do this in a natural sense. Ickes on the other hand worked like a meat axe on you and he didn't try to be the world's champion diplomat. He didn't try to be; and, consequently, that led him into many side issues or differences with many people, when in actual fact, he wasn't nearly so much against the issues as it appeared to be. I felt that Ickes on

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liberal things would generally be honest about it and was quite liberal. Now, that was not true in a lot of other things, but when it came to liberal principles I'd stand by Ickes.

HESS: What other assignments did you have?

CHAPMAN: I had the Park Service, the Land Office, which gave you public land law...

HESS: Grazing.

CHAPMAN: Grazing. I set up the Grazing Office, or I tried to, and I never was happy with that.

HESS: Why weren't you? What went wrong?

CHAPMAN: Well, the trouble about the Grazing Service was that you were representing a constituency there that was very hard to please. They were a very selfish type of people and they were people that wanted everything they could get off of the public land, or the Federal Government, for nothing. And they would have a fight with

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Ickes about every other day, and then they would try to put on a campaign against the Secretary in order to get better control of the Grazing Service, through these volunteer...

HESS: Advisory boards.

CHAPMAN: These advisory boards; they would try to insist on the advisory boards having the power; now, this was where we all differed--not any of us were together on this. Ickes would not, and did not want to approve the creation of an advisory board, but the law had been amended and here's a copy of it.

I have here in my hand at this moment a letter that I received from Ferry Carpenter who was the first director of the Grazing Service, and I got him promoted.

HESS: He was appointed the first Director of Grazing on September the 7th, 1934.

CHAPMAN: 1934, that's right.

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HESS: And served to '38, I believe.

CHAPMAN: That's right. And Ickes tried to fire him, but...

HESS: What didn't he like about him?

CHAPMAN: Oh, Secretary Ickes didn't like him because he said Carpenter went up on the Hill and talked to Congressmen and Senators around him, without telling him, before Carpenter went up there, what he was going for, and the Secretary didn't like that.

HESS: Mr. Carpenter was appointed with your recommendations, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Now, this is just a quote from a book, *Politics and Grass: The Administrating of Grazing on the Public Domain*, by Phillip O. Foss; and in here it mentions that Mr. Carpenter said that "He, Ickes, wanted a combination lawyer and stockman to

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administer the Act, and in reading over the proceedings ran into my [meaning Carpenter's] testimony and asked Oscar Chapman (Assistant Secretary of Interior) about me as he was also from Colorado. As a result, I was appointed for an interview with Ickes in which I told him of three reasons why I should not be appointed: 1. I was a Republican; 2. I was a cowman who was identified with being anti-sheep; 3. I was not interested in building up a Federal reserve."

How come this man was appointed when he--well, you know, he was a Republican. That's not so important, but he was a cowman who was anti-sheep, and he was not interested in building a Federal reserve. He admitted to these three things, but he was still appointed.

CHAPMAN: You have this fact to consider. In the first place, it was almost parallel to the same problem with a far-out advisory board. They had an advisory committee of the petroleum industry, in which 100 members were appointed to the national

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board here in Washington, and we met every month. These people had almost identically the same feelings and the same ideas about private enterprise, or running the public domain, and everything else that was in it. Now, I--in respect to his being a Republican, I knew he was a Republican, but to me that was an asset because I did not want this bureau to start being built up around a political...

HESS: You wanted it kept out of politics?

CHAPMAN: I was trying to keep it out of politics by appointing a Republican against the wishes of my Democratic friends, who didn't like it, but I thought this was better administration than the other method, and I adopted this approach.

HESS: Okay, you said he was anti-sheep.

CHAPMAN: He was to a certain extent; every sheepman and every cowman dislike each other.

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HESS: That was nothing new, was it? If you were a cattleman you were anti-sheep and if you're a sheepman you're anti-cattle.

CHAPMAN: I don't care who you'd appointed, you'd have had that same issue, because the issue between the cattle people and your sheep people had gone so deep and vicious in the Department, that it was almost impossible for them to work together on a harmonious basis. I didn't pay any attention to that because you couldn't have appointed a man that wasn't either a sheepman or a cowman; because, in the first place, they wouldn't have accepted if they'd opposed it. They'd have fought it viciously if you had, and they'd have all fought for it. Another thing that he raises a question about there...

HESS: Not building up a Federal reserve.

CHAPMAN: He was opposed to building up a Federal

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reserve, where the power for the Senate is in the Secretary of the Interior. He didn't want any further leaning towards the principle of public control of public lands. He wanted the states to control those public lands in every respect, and...

HESS: That was the prevailing view of the cattlemen, was it not?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes, I think that's the prevailing view of cattlemen, and the sheepmen pretty much, too. They were pretty much together on that issue, and...

HESS: Now, if the land had been administered as public domain would they have grazed free?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. They would have grazed free, if they had been left with the control, if the power was in the hands of the advisory boards; they wouldn't set a fee upon themselves.

HESS: Now, wasn't there a good deal of overgrazing

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in the Western lands at this time?

CHAPMAN: Of course, that's what brought on the bill to start with.

HESS: Fine, now let's mention that. Now, that's the Taylor Grazing Act, in 1934.

CHAPMAN: Taylor Grazing Act.

HESS: And he was also from Colorado.

CHAPMAN: From Colorado.

HESS: Edward T. Taylor...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...who had been in Congress since 1909, and I'll throw out just a couple of figures here that I've taken from the book. The total acquisition of public domain of the entire United States had been 1,442,200,320 acres, and in 1934 approximately 170 million acres remained. I think it was 173 million acres remained, but

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just what was the condition of the western range at this time that made it necessary for the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act?

CHAPMAN: Now that's the crux of the whole issue here. To do what they wanted to do, the cattle and sheep people, they wanted to select an advisory board of seven, I think, seven or nine, of a certain Grazing district. Those districts would be organized by them according to the more or less geographical outlay of the land; how many cattle could be grazed on a given area where there was more or less a natural boundary line where they could graze on this valley, and on this hillside. All of that was broken down into the details of where these people would definitely be running the Grazing Service entirely for the cattle and sheep people. You couldn't get the cattle

and sheep people to agree on any one man hardly; as a matter of fact, Carpenter was the only man I could get them to agree on,

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and Foss was a very good man who turned it down.

HESS: The man who wrote the book here?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He wasn't a bad fellow; but he wrote the book promoting and advocating his own theory of management of public land, which, of course, he gets off on just like they do today. These people would talk and discuss, tell you that they are for law and order, but they never start off by saying, "I'm for justice and order;" they always leave out the justice. You can get an awful lot of unhappy people misjudged, mistreated, in that category of being mistreated in this country under the old cliché of law and order, and "I believe in law and order;" if we get that law and order, everything will be all right, there won't be any problem.

HESS: Law for you and order for me.

CHAPMAN: That's right. And we'll try you by the law and we passed all the laws, so they get you.

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Now, that really was a theme that ran through the whole thing of the cattle and sheep people. Those are the two best organized economic groups in America. They were two of the best organized and managed groups in the whole world.

HESS: In your opinion, were the cattlemen overgrazing and exploiting the land?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. I started to tell you. They forced this thing on the public land themselves. The question was, could they be allowed to continue to graze without some regulations and some legitimate control, where somebody could say, "Stop and don't put any more cattle on this range this next year, and you mustn't run any more, you're running too many, cut your head down by fifty head of cattle or an "X" number of cattle, cut it down next year." They didn't want that; they wanted to be able to cut it down or raise it themselves.

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Now, it was their policy to raise every cow they could on land even if it turned the place into a dust bowl, and that's what they did. They agitated and did so much work on the public land with the sheep and cattle, but sheep, in particular, destroys the public land. You see, those little sharp feet, those two claws, they're very sharp and they walk little short steps, but they are just heavy enough to cut through that grass root.

HESS: They kill the roots.

CHAPMAN: Kills the grass definitely, at least for the next year, and if it doesn't rain pretty consistently, which you don't have regularly there, it'll kill off the grass in that part and the forage just simply disappears and you have nothing for the cattle to graze on. In the first place they'll starve to death; the stockmen have to feed them. Then they'll start buying up feed grain and stuff

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like that to feed the cattle on, and--but they have to do it to keep them alive and fat enough to sell them.

Now, Carpenter was a very capable man; he was a very fine man.

HESS: What caused this falling out?

CHAPMAN: Oh, as I said, that was a case again that he just didn't take Ickes' abusive approach in talking to him, things like that; he just wouldn't take it. That was what really caused the whole thing, the falling out. Carpenter was a very fine person, but he was quite conservative when it came to the question of the use of public lands. He wasn't as liberal as I thought he was going to be; he ran a beautiful ranch up there.

HESS: Did he try to get the cattlemen to cut down on the number of cattle that they were putting out on the range?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, he did that. He did a good deal of

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that. This is the way he would do it. He was a clever fellow; he had two degrees from Princeton, and was a smart lawyer, and he was really very smart and he was a good economist.

HESS: A cowman from Princeton?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was from Princeton, and he brought his fortune with him on out there to Colorado, and he just settled on this land and took it for nothing. That is when you could get it for nothing. See, that law was changed afterwards, but he, at that time, could get his for nothing; so, he got I don't know how many thousands of acres, and he's got a beautiful ranch up there. He has developed a special breed, a herd of cattle that's now a special breed that's adapted to the hillsides of the mountains of the Rockies and they are as beautiful cattle as you ever saw. They've done very well; he's a scientific man from that point of view.

HESS: To help our typist let's say that that's

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Farrington R. Carpenter...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...of Hayden, Colorado.

CHAPMAN: Hayden, Colorado, and that's right up just next to Steamboat Springs, about ten miles.

HESS: Skiing country, isn't it?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, there's a nice ski ride up there, but the better ski rides are down toward...

HESS: Aspen.

CHAPMAN: In Aspen are better ski layouts, natural ones, than they are up there. Although there are some good ones up there.

HESS: And he was replaced by Richard H. Rutledge.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And he was Director until 1944. How was he chosen and what type of a Director did he make?

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CHAPMAN: Fairly good. He made a fairly good Director. In Carpenter's fight with Ickes, sometimes I supported Carpenter, other times I didn't, because I felt that there were times when his policies were leading us really into the wrong place.

HESS: What policies--give me an example, what policy would you not support?

CHAPMAN: I wouldn't support his policy of giving the power to the grazing advisory boards. Now I did not believe that a Secretary should as a policy, have authority to give away his right to make final decisions on the control and management of a grazing district.

HESS: Now, that is one point that Mr. Foss makes quite plain in his book, that many of the advisory boards wanted the power to set the grazing quotas and they thought that the grazer sent from the Government was just there really to carry out their dictates...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: ...and not the other way around, not for the grazer to have the authority to tell them how many animal units should go out.

CHAPMAN: That's exactly right.

HESS: Sort of a running battle that just kept on going, just kept on running,

CHAPMAN: That was the issue that was always in the forefront, because that's an issue for a man like myself who had been pretty much associated and worked with the cattle people of the West a good deal. But I was usually working on the little man's problems of giving him a right, giving the little man a right, to run a certain number of cattle as a minimum economic unit, and not to force him down to where his unit isn't sufficiently strong enough to be of economic value.

HESS: And also, I understand the cattlemen wanted priorities for the number of years they had been

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there. In other words, who came first and who...

CHAPMAN: They wanted priority given them according to the number of years they had been using the public range, even though they had been using it as a rule for nothing most of the time. Now, the inside fight going on all the time with that, was that the cattle and sheep people never agreed on the location of these districts. They always disagreed with each other as to where the districts should be drawn. On a given map, sheep people were going to run them further up on the mountains, and the cattle people wanted them down in the valley. And you'd get the damndest fights with those people on this thing.

Now, Carpenter was a very good man in many ways. He was more conservative in his point of view on this than I realized he was and I reprimanded him. I didn't think he was quite as conservative as some of my friends had told me about him, but so many of my good friends in Colorado were liberals on this range fight and

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I'd been with them publicly out there so long I never thought there was any question about it that anybody admired him about that. I just thought Carpenter was more or less a good middle-of-the-road man that didn't really believe that Government ought to give final control and power to the hands of the district grazers or advisory boards, but he did more than I could support later, when I discovered how strong he was going in it.

Now he's writing this book and he's trying to get me to verify something and he's only half right, and it takes a hell of a lot of my time to keep these things straight. He writes a letter that's self-serving, you see. And he writes me this long letter, puts it in longhand; you can't read it. He's smart as a whip; and he writes me this long letter; here's a copy.

HESS: What's the point he wants verified?

CHAPMAN: Oh, he is trying to get me in this to make

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some verification of some statement that Ickes had said. Well, I didn't hear it said. I don't know. I'm not going to verify something was gossip, in part because..."

HESS: It would be wrong to verify it if you didn't hear it made.

CHAPMAN: I can get the Department in a mess fooling around with things like that and I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't involve people in something that they couldn't verify.

HESS: Is he trying to justify some position that he took...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...when he was...

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's what he is really trying to do; he is head of...

HESS: Head of Grazing.

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CHAPMAN: This is a funny thing. He's trying to justify his successful fight in getting the grazing committees appointed. You see, at first they weren't going to have any grazing committees at all...

HESS: These advisory boards?

CHAPMAN: Yes, they weren't going to have any at all; they just talked of them, but planned to drop it and not do anything. But when the grazing people found that out that shocked them and they went home.

HESS: They wanted a voice in policy matters, too, is that right?

CHAPMAN: They wanted a voice in the policy matters and the actual administration. They wanted to say to me when Oscar Chapman files his application for running 400 head of cattle this year, we want to cut him to three, and they all write out their little reasons for it, usually very brief. Then,

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on the other hand, the sheep people are the same way, so there's no difference. The fight joins right there and they didn't fight anybody else right then; they stayed after each other. But he took on terrific battles with some of the cattle people, Carpenter did. He was a real courageous fellow and he took on the cattle...

HESS: Battling the cattlemen?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He had a big fight with them. And he won his fight. However, he paid too much of a price for it. I didn't think he'd won much, and he thought he'd won a lot of leverage in his arguments with the cattle people, but I didn't think he had. I didn't think he had won as much as he thought he had, but he was a pretty darn good maneuverer among that group. He asks me here, "Can you add information that will show how Congress was so willing to amend their law although it wasn't Ickes' wish. I will send you our manuscript before it is published, at least

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all that mentions your name and as many more as you may wish to read."

I'll have to write to him rather quickly on this letter, in a hurry, because I don't know how he is using my name in that, you see.

HESS: Well, you want to find that out.

CHAPMAN: Well, you see these fellows here write these darned books and I never get a chance to read all of them. They're sitting back there drawing the dividends off of that cattle, off of public land, and they are writing of something I was supposed to have said or done twenty years ago. Well, no man can remember those things in detail to save your life.

HESS: Well, the Grazing Service was established in 1939. They took over from the old Division of Grazing.

CHAPMAN: Well, we had a Grazing Division in the land office.

HESS: That's right, up until that time, and then the Grazing Service...

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CHAPMAN: We got it finally organized.

HESS: And in August of 1941 the Grazing Service headquarters was moved to Salt Lake City. Why was that move made?

CHAPMAN: It was a very bad move.

HESS: I wondered if you wouldn't say that, because a few years later it was moved back, and I have found records in the National Archives where you were a proponent of moving it back to town.

Right?

CHAPMAN: I was.

HESS: All right, why was it a bad move to move it to Salt Lake City?

CHAPMAN: Well, with the type of people you were dealing with, and knowing their policies, you were setting yourself right out there in the middle of your opponents and they were harassing many of the Grazing people to death, since you were

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setting them right out there among them. They just harassed them to death; but if you set it up here in Washington they couldn't get here so often, get down here so much, and management would have a better opportunity to study that stuff in writing than they could by just a quick conversation running over something.

HESS: Out in Salt Lake City.

CHAPMAN: Yes, exactly. And I've just felt, with all the things that I've seen happen like that, you've got to protect the administrator a little bit, because he's left out on a limb with everybody who wants to pick on him; anything like that, so you've got to protect him.

HESS: In May of '44 a new man came in, C. L. Forsling.

CHAPMAN: He was a good man. Forsling was a very good man and was one of the best. I'll tell you how to describe him. I would say he was a good forest man; he was a Forest Service man.

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HESS: He had come from the Forest Service, had he?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he came from the Forest Service and I recommended his appointment because he was very familiar with the cattle problem and the sheep problem out there, very familiar with it; and, therefore, I thought he'd make a good man from the management end. He was a man with a good education and you had to have a damn good education to run that thing, because to your surprise, nearly every one of these are second generation men and their fathers and mothers had homesteaded this land and got it for nothing you see. Therefore, they wanted to continue pushing for the stronger management, stronger control for the advisory boards that they wanted to name. Well, we finally allowed them to elect their advisory boards. You can't elect a

man and get him on one of those boards if he wasn't a cattleman or a sheepman; he couldn't be elected anyway.

HESS: And usually if they were going to elect three

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they'd have the three strongest proponents, would they not?

CHAPMAN: That's right. Oh yes.

HESS: According to Mr. Foss in his book that's about the way it went.

CHAPMAN: That's the way it went. What kind of a reaction did you get of that total book? Is he in the end supporting the policy of the Grazing Service or is he trying to take the side of the cattle people?

HESS: I did not come away from this book with a strong opinion one way or the other. It was more of an objective history of the Grazing Service. Now, the book on tidelands oil by Bartley is completely biased.

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: ...towards the states having the right to the oil. But, really, in Foss' book, now he does

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have a summary here. I'm not sure right now; it's been a couple of weeks since I've read it, but I came away from this book more--it was just full of facts and figures and a more objective history.

CHAPMAN: It's more of a recording, historical operation, than anything else.

HESS: But he does say one thing in here that's very interesting that I wanted to bring up now. Senator Pat [Patrick A.] McCarran of Nevada had an investigation of the Grazing Service and that lasted from May of '41 to the fall of 1947, and Mr. Foss says: "During 1946 Senator McCarran and others were able to reduce the Grazing Service to a 'paper' organization," almost do away with it. He says, "This story will be told in more detail in a later chapter. At this point we need only note that the Grazing Service was abolished as a separate organization on July 16th, 1946, and consolidated with the old

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General Land Office to form the present Bureau of Land Management. By this time Harold Ickes had been replaced by Julius A. Krug as Secretary of the Interior and C. L. Forsling had resigned. Total personnel were reduced by 79 percent; some of the old people discharged had

over twenty years of Government service. Four regional offices and many field offices were closed." This gives an indication that he thought that Pat McCarran and the advisory boards were winning out over the administration--a strong administration from Washington.

CHAPMAN: There wasn't any question about it that Pat McCarran got into the fight to help the cattle people lead their fight against the Department of Interior as a whole.

HESS: He wanted to hold down the fees that the ranchers paid, which I gather was one of his main things.

CHAPMAN: He wanted to cut it down to half of what it had been.

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HESS: Which was practically nothing.

CHAPMAN: Well, I think they were only paying a quarter or something, 25 cents a head.

HESS: Do you think it's fair to say that the Grazing Service was cut back to a paper organization, and it was, therefore, rendered ineffective?

CHAPMAN: It wasn't totally ineffective, but they kept so well organized among themselves because of the experience they had had working with some of the Grazing people, administration people in Washington. They had learned how to work together as a group.

HESS: The advisory boards?

CHAPMAN: No, the cattle people and the boards.

HESS: Well, that's what I mean. Yes, that's what I meant.

CHAPMAN: The cattle people.

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HESS: The industry.

CHAPMAN: Yes, the industry; they began to learn how to work together and they could get almost anything they wanted. They could just override you and Pat McCarran would see to the fight on the Hill, and he hated my guts; he disliked me so much.

HESS: He threatened to get you impeached a couple of times, did he not?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was going to get me impeached a couple of times, once because I wouldn't give him a right to an Indian reservation lease. He didn't have any rights and I wasn't going to give them to him. He didn't have a cockeyed thing to show that he had any rights to those Indian

lands, and he was using their water and their land. Now when you use their water up, you're using their lifeblood and they can't survive without it. You get them down to the death row and then you go in and buy them out for ten cents an acre.

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HESS: That's what he had in mind?

CHAPMAN: That's what he did do on several cases. He violated the law to start with, because he had no legal right to get water in our land. Our own man violated the law out there by selling it to him. I made him give them up; that was when he was going to have me impeached. I made him pay the difference to these Indians from 10 cents--I think it was 10 cents; now on these figures I'm not certain, but whatever the figure was that he paid them, I made him double that to pay them for the use of their water and their range for those years between--for four or five years. He took the land, used it, used their water, and the minute he got their water, his dry land became valuable over here on this hillside and down this valley. This land became extremely valuable land the minute you got the water rights. That land isn't worth two cents an acre as it is, but when you establish the water rights for that land, you can get the water for it, and we had a good river

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running through there, right through the Indian reservation. McCarran had cut in on that river just above the Indian line and deployed their water around their reservation and had it to run down through his valley and he'd pay them a little bit. I've never seen a man with such a craven desire to take everything he could see and not pay for it. He didn't want to pay them anything, and he...

HESS: And he got away with it, it looks like.

CHAPMAN: He did get away with it. He did get away with it and he...

HESS: What could they--let's talk about this relegating the Grazing Service to a paper organization at this time. Is this an example of the Department of the Interior and the Truman administration not properly regulating an industry?

CHAPMAN: I think in my last years in there they had not adequately managed and controlled the Grazing

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Service. I didn't think we had and I...

HESS: What went wrong, what could have been done about this?

CHAPMAN: Well, you were blocked on the Hill by enough Western Senators...

HESS: McCarran and his friends?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, and he was chairman of an appropriation committee remember, and he'd knock out their appropriations on that.

HESS: So they just had the power in the Senate...

CHAPMAN: That's right. They had the power, and we had the responsibility and no power for doing it; couldn't do anything about it.

HESS: They take your money away from you; you can't do it.

CHAPMAN: Well, they took the money away from us and I refused to concede to him on these basic issues.

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I conceded as far as I felt I could and hold up my head, and I refused to concede anything to him any more than I had to. I had to concede a few things, which I did, but then I cut him back pretty hard on the last round. Now, I won it; it was good for three months, because after that they appointed a new man and they put one of their cattle people in charge of the thing. McCarran was running the Grazing Service; he was practically running it, he was doing it. I am not proud of the Grazing Service's record, and it was all because, partly, not all, but partly because I couldn't win a fight against McCarran's position on the Hill when he had so many Western Senators lined up. He had so many Western Senators he had lined up, that he couldn't lose a fight on that debate on the thing.

HESS: The Grazing Service then was abolished and went into the Bureau of Land Management. The first Director there was Fred Johnson. He had been Director of the General Land Office from '33 to

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'46. He stayed two more years; he stayed until '48, and then Marion Clawson, who lives out here in Silver Spring or someplace around, from '48 until '55 was Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

CHAPMAN: Well, Marion, frankly, was a very good man. He didn't have good judgment on following a certain direction of policy. He was potentially a good administrator, but he would lose it--he would lose his values in his method of doing these things and he'd lose all that he had gained by his--what I thought were his good policies. He had some--he was very good on the policies. I tried to help him out on two or three things, and he got the impression that I was trying to kick him out, but, frankly, I could have moved him anytime I wanted to.

What those boys don't learn is after they get stuck with it, they learn that the Secretary of the Interior can move you regardless of what

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that regulation says. You can move them if you have a basic--follow your regulations very carefully, and then follow those regulations to the end and you can transfer him up to Alaska, that we always called Alaska and the Pribilof Islands and outer Siberia.

HESS: Butte, Montana, I believe the FBI uses. Isn't that right, isn't that what you read in the paper lately? If you did something that J. Edgar Hoover didn't like when he was living.

CHAPMAN: You'd get sent to Butte.

HESS: You'd end up in Butte, Montana.

CHAPMAN: Well, we used the Pribilof Islands up there; but, I will say the Park Service Director, Drury, oh, he got very mad at me because in the end I fired him; he didn't think I could do it. But here's what he did to hurt the Service and to hurt me. I was holding a hearing in the Department of the Interior for all the--it's a public

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hearing--all the people that are interested in the building of this dam at the Dinosaur National Park out in Utah, the Green River location; and he had signed an agreement with Mike Straus, the Commissioner of Reclamation. Newton Drury, Director of the Park Service, had signed an agreement with Straus whereby Drury did agree in this memorandum to support the Reclamation Commission position on the building of the Dinosaur National Monument dam, if Straus would--well, he wouldn't do anything to amount to anything, it was just an excuse. I forget what it was he wanted Straus to do, but Straus would do that in a minute because he wasn't interested in that subject; he didn't even care.

I can't remember what that basic agreement was, but Drury agreed with the Commission of Reclamation that he would support the building of that dam in Dinosaur National Monument, when he knew I was opposed to it. He knew I was opposed to it. Well, now

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that doesn't mean that fellows in there had to all agree with me. There was no such thing as that. I had an entirely different theory on all of that kind of stuff.

HESS: You didn't want to run it in a dictatorial manner?

CHAPMAN: Well, I didn't want to try to utilize my powers just to see if I could. I wasn't playing games in that. I was deeply interested in the success of the Service and seeing this thing done. I was opposed to seeing that dam built in that park. That was within the Dinosaur

National Park, and I didn't want to see them build a dam in there because I was convinced by the report of the engineers that said the dam could serve us just as well if built 50 miles down the river. And that way it would not interfere with the Park Service; it wouldn't interfere with our forest in any way. Therefore, I would

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support that one, but I would not support the one they wanted to build in the Dinosaur National Monument. Now, that fight went on for quite a while. The different groups of people that decided to scrap with me, or held a difference of opinion with me, sometimes had some pretty strong feelings against me for wanting to do these things the right way. Some of those things have been on the books for years and you want to get them straightened up. This was one of them that had been on the books for a long time and I wanted to get the thing done--get it picked up and take the ball and carry it.

HESS: I think we're about to run off here.

CHAPMAN: I think that's enough.

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Twelfth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., October 4, 1972.
By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, to begin this morning, Mr. Chapman, let's discuss the New Deal and I want to get your views on whether or not the Fair Deal of Mr. Truman's was a continuation of the New Deal, or whether or not Mr. Truman made what you might consider too many changes in the New Deal, did not follow it through adequately. And to get into that, let me read a statement from the *Journal of American History*. This is an article by Lon Hamby, "The Liberals: Truman and FDR," this will tie two subjects together, the New Deal and the 1946 off-year congressional election.

In 1946 as disillusion with Truman deepened in the liberal movement and the liberal movement suffered repeated defeat, many liberals felt that the memory of FDR presented the best hope for the revival of their cause. John L. Nichols, a transportation consultant with an interest in democratic politics proposed an elaborate system of National Roosevelt Clubs in order to resurrect the spirit of the New Deal and identify it with the Democratic Party. Some important liberal politicians, Claude Pepper, Chester

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Bowles and Oscar Chapman planned a national pressure group tentatively called the Roosevelt Forum. Those schemes proceeded from the assumption that Truman had rejected the New Deal. A memo outlining the ambitious plans for

the Roosevelt Forum asserted that popular dissatisfaction with the Truman administration stemmed from 'the fact that the leadership of the Democratic Party has turned away from the Roosevelt program and politics.' Neither plan reached fruition because of the hostile Democratic National Committee and the intense activity underway on other fronts to rebuild the liberal movement.

CHAPMAN: I'm delighted to hear you quote Mr. Hamby on this article and what he has to say about it, but it gives you again a perfect example of what happens to what is originally said and then what is translated into another article by the interpretation of a third person of what he said that someone had said. You go from one to the second to the third.

Now what he did there, I'm quite sure--there was a lot of talk at that time by a lot of liberals about whether Truman was following the Roosevelt program strong enough, or whether he had initiated enough new programs. My honest belief is he did

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exactly what the times and events called for; it's all he could do. Mr. Hanby was interpreting our basic memorandum that we had prepared discussing the full problem of the New Deal and what directions it was taking, what success we were having. We decided that we would try to have a conference with the President and discuss it with him. We wanted to be of some help to him and not be critical of him, leave him out on a limb with his own people. So, we were very cautious to move on that, because when we began to discuss it we found an awful lot of liberals that were not taking a part, but not even making much effort to help us in the last period of time, after Truman.

It isn't a question of whether Truman was following Roosevelt's policies, or whether he was carrying out his policies, as already laid down through major programs, or whether he was establishing some new programs. Well, you have to look at the times that we were going through;

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what was our national posture at that time? You've got to remember when something in history that happens once in a century, such as the Republicans had succeeded in putting through that constitutional amendment to keep a President from running the third time. Now, President Truman took that to mean that he shouldn't run three times, that he should run only twice. He considered that after having served practically all of Roosevelt's fourth term, for all practical purposes, and the spirit of the Constitution as it was written, he had a full term there, practically, lacking 30-some days, lacking from January 20th to...

HESS: April the 12th.

CHAPMAN: ...April 12th.

HESS: Even though he personally was exempted from the provision of the amendment...

CHAPMAN: Yes. That provision did not technically tie

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him to it and it did not apply to him.

HESS: That's right because it so stated that it did not apply to the President who was in the Presidency at...

CHAPMAN: At the time.

HESS: ...at the time it was signed, at the time that the bill went into effect.

CHAPMAN: Now reviewing that, you will see that Truman had in mind far deeper thinking than a lot of these fellows were having at the time about two things. First is how much could we accomplish and get put on the books in the form of a law, or initiate new programs at that time, or whether we could just go along and pick out the major emphasis of the Roosevelt program that was popular and had strength to it. Truman picked that up and carried forward as he went along.

Now Truman did do that to a great extent.

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He took the Roosevelt program and just continued it without any interference. He also had his friends in the administration, his little friends, like myself and others. We soon began to see where we might be on the wrong track of this thing from timing purposes, and you had to think of the next election.

Now, what we were going to do, in painting this picture, was to set up a peephole to look at the next election. You had to clarify the Roosevelt program, and to explain or make clear to the people where the Truman program followed the Roosevelt program. And if there were some points that were rather obvious or otherwise, Truman would have a chance and the time to clarify them in his speeches and in his campaign that was coming up.

HESS: Do you recall if you pointed out any programs where Mr. Truman may not have been following the Roosevelt model closely enough? Any particular programs?

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CHAPMAN: You go by what a lot of people think. Now you have a difference of opinion among our own liberals on that, and our liberals were divided pretty much on the effectiveness of what the President was doing in regard to following all of Roosevelt's programs. There were quite a few programs that were considered by the liberals not to have been solid enough in

President Truman's mind and, going forward with this, in trying to project it to the people strong enough, and...

HESS: Could you give a couple of examples; did you think he was falling behind for instance in civil rights?

CHAPMAN: They did at first, but what they did not understand about this man was, and I told them from the very beginning--one of the most serious things about the Truman administration was that we did not and couldn't get across to the American people the type of man we had, the good qualities

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he had. The solid, solid qualities of this man were so clear and so definite as time went on,

Those of us who first thought about the possibility of assisting him with some kind of an auxiliary help, some committees, or something, to give help to him, we soon saw that Truman was following the President's program pretty close.

Now, let me take the department that I was most acquainted with. Harold Ickes was Secretary at the time, and I was his assistant, and I worked very closely in that program. I believed in it. That program carried with it the big Roosevelt spending program of money, where we did spend a good deal of money. However, when you look at the money that the present President is spending on his little war game he is carrying on over there at the mercy of the American people, that didn't look like much money to us now, but then 3, 4 and 5 billion dollars looked like a lot of money, and it was a lot of

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money. But when he stepped out to put on what the money was asked for, they screamed to high heaven. And Truman asked for more money for the Public Works Administration.

Truman was an unusual fellow, as I told you; he kept strictly to his obligations and to the law, what he had to do, and he tried to push some liberal things in the direction that he believed in, and he was most helpful. I had been all my life a liberal in the sense that I was a crusading liberal on certain issues of the day. For instance, I did not have worked out in my mind a long-range liberal program to be followed. I had only gone as far as my time--I was young--as my time and experience gave me the opportunity. I began working on the immediate liberal program that was before me at the moment and before the public, such as the civil rights program. I was very much intrigued with the civil rights program and the timing was right.

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I told Mr. Truman, "If we start on this thing you must go all the way; you can't go halfway, because you'll leave them to sink on their own accord if you don't help them before you get them all the way across this great chasm between the so-called 'civil rights people,' who believe in

civil rights, and those who did not. And I'm sorry to say that there are people who still today don't believe in civil rights and they don't support the civil rights program any more than they have to, just to get by with the outward appearance of it in their community. Which they do; they do that in the form of making an appearance of a civil rights supporter when in reality it was an opportunist type of approach.

Now, in talking to Claude Pepper and...

HESS: Chester Bowles.

CHAPMAN: ...Chester Bowles and myself, we had had quite a few little meetings, some evenings.

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I was not married at that time. I used to have them at my house, and I had a maid that took care of dinner and everything, and they'd come over and spend the evening and we'd talk, discuss these...

HESS: This was before your marriage in 1940, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes. This was before my marriage in '40. You see, we began to get very concerned in '38, '39. We were caught between what we knew was a serious situation with our foreign policy, which was the Hitler followers in Germany, which was upsetting everything, everywhere. Roosevelt had to be ready for it, and so he, Roosevelt, had said to me; he said, "Well, if anything should happen to me I'll have this program at least far enough along that the other poor fellow will have to just try to pull the two groups together as much as he can and not let them separate any more than they are." And he said, "He's got a hard job ahead

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of him." Roosevelt said that to me after he came back from Yalta.

HESS: Shortly before his death.

CHAPMAN: Yes. I had a visit with him one afternoon, a straight visit. I called him, went in to see him, and I wanted to give him a briefing on this project which he had asked me to do; and I gave him an honest review of the Department, how the work was going and how things were developing. And you know, I always gave the old man--the old man Harold--a good plug whenever I talked to Roosevelt about him. So, I knew that it was only a question of time.

HESS: You could tell that his health had been going down...

CHAPMAN: I could tell that his health...

HESS: ...and deteriorated.

CHAPMAN: Two things deteriorated; two things were

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happening at the same time. Roosevelt's health was definitely going down. I could see that. The other thing was Ickes' relationship with Roosevelt was going down; it was not good. Those last years of Ickes, and...

HESS: What were the main problems there, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: Well, the truth of it is the President was so busy trying to keep up with all of the military ends, with his checkerboard, with men all over the world, militarily located...

HESS: And all of his maps on the wall of the Map Room.

CHAPMAN: That's right. And he was so well-acquainted with that, that nobody could tell him anything, any of those things he didn't know. He knew what they were doing and he had the most minute detailed information in his mind of any man I can ever think of could possibly have as he was

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going forward with his determined fight to keep Hitler from dominating Europe. Then, we expected him then, to try to come here, over here as he dominated Europe.

Now, Roosevelt thought we could stop Hitler right there in Europe if we moved quickly enough, fast enough, but if we lost too much time in arguing about it over here, we'd create a bad psychology in this country to start with and wouldn't get the job done that we ought to do.

I noticed his health going down a little bit, and I noticed Ickes' reactions, and Roosevelt's too; I could tell that they were not quite as friendly as they had been.

HESS: Did Ickes seem to feel that Mr. Roosevelt was not paying enough attention to domestic considerations?

CHAPMAN: No. No, it wasn't that. Mr. Ickes didn't--he made no comment to any group at any time I was ever in, in which he was critical of Roosevelt,

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what he was doing, or how he was doing it. He simply was joining with a lot of us as we were getting concerned that a few of these programs were being left behind. The timing was before Roosevelt's death, you see, and he was beginning to feel that. There was a lot of the New Deal program established in the Department of the Interior because--two reasons for it--the type of

personnel that we had at the top in the Department who was interested in that kind of a program to start with...

HESS: You had to pass on a lot of the PWA projects, did you not?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. We had a board for quite a while. Then we disbanded the board, leaving the Secretary as the administrator. That made it easy for the President not to have to waste time with other Cabinet members or at least that time to

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come over to a meeting, and the Secretary was the only one that had time to look at these projects and to have them studied. I don't know how he did it. He worked extremely hard, Ickes did, in trying to keep the public works program caught up, and in properly proportioning his time so as to keep it all going in an orderly fashion and to see that there was no dishonesty in the operations. He spent a great deal of time on that to see that it would work.

Now, because Roosevelt was so tied up with this war issue up until the time he died, Ickes' last two or three years under Roosevelt was a period of shifting just by the nature of the situation that had developed. War problems had shifted so heavily onto the President that he didn't have the time that he used to spend on those liberal programs and things of that kind; he couldn't spend as much time on that now as he

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could in the beginning. He had to shift his feet a little in that direction and divert his energies as much as possible to widen the war effort. And to be of some help himself in the war effort, Vice President Truman was keeping himself informed and up-to-date as much as he possibly could. Being a Vice President and not a President, you don't get to sit in the same seat; you don't get the same briefings, and it makes quite a difference.

Now, I think there were several people that talked about Roosevelt resigning, and letting Truman come on in to be President. That subject was discussed some, but it was an impractical thing.

HESS: Was this following Yalta? Was this just before his death?

CHAPMAN: Just before Yalta.

HESS: Just before Yalta?

CHAPMAN: Yes, there was some talk before Yalta about

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whether Roosevelt should retire or not.

HESS: This was just after the inauguration, is that right? He was inaugurated on January the 20th.

CHAPMAN: Yes, January 20th; it was right in that period.

HESS: And who was doing the talking and how serious was that?

CHAPMAN: It didn't get serious. It didn't get serious, but it could have been serious.

HESS: Who was doing the talking?

CHAPMAN: Strangely enough it was coming from some of the liberals who were unhappy because of the proportioning of his workload. They thought that an unequal share of his time was being spent on the domestic programs, as compared to the military part of the program. Among the others, you could divide them

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up quickly about this thing. The southern conservatives were already mad at him because of the fine liberal program that he had already gotten through Congress. He had gotten Congress to pass so many bills establishing and giving solid legal footing to his bills.

I saw in my mind; I interpreted what I thought was happening. They were not together; they were totally separate people; they were not working together.

HESS: Were you in any of the discussions?

CHAPMAN: Not in the southern group, I wasn't. I was in some of the others.

HESS: Who were a few of the other participants?

CHAPMAN: Well, it was usually a liberal group that was trying to find a new approach to this thing, a new face to put on our program to the public with a better program appearance than we had.

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You couldn't do anything that was going to interfere with Roosevelt's time, or the President of the United States' time; regardless of who he was, taking his time away from his war problems and to give that time over to the development of some new domestic programs. And then in all of the...

HESS: Didn't they see at that time that the war was pretty well winding down?

CHAPMAN: That's what they were thinking. It focused the issue; the fact that the war was closing down, and they thought that President Roosevelt's health was not good. They were very

concerned about that, and they were hoping that he could help us and agree with us and support a program on something, get it set up this way.

HESS: And turn the administration over to Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Well, some people mentioned that. I never took it seriously. It was mentioned; but that was

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impractical thing for a man like me to consider that I didn't pay any attention to it because you were simply--you were swapping away something you had for something that was totally unknown. And the kind of a fight that you have to go through to get this kind of a thing done, it would be totally disruptive of anything. If you disrupt the war effort in finishing it up, you were disrupting a chance of getting any more new programs at all. And I shut off the discussion on it as much as I could wherever I hit it; when I would hear it I had a pretty strong feeling about it, and they knew that I had a pretty strong feeling about that and as far as I was concerned I wasn't going to fool with it.

HESS: Let's move on to 1946 and the tentative establishment of the Roosevelt Forum. Can you tell me about the meetings that were held by Claude Pepper, Chester Bowles, and yourself and were there others?

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CHAPMAN: Sometimes there were others.

HESS: Who?

CHAPMAN: Well, sometimes there was Clark Clifford and...

HESS: He was also interested in setting up a Roosevelt forum?

CHAPMAN: No, no, no, he wasn't interested. He was a kind of a guidepost for us in that, to tell you the truth; he was a leveling-off factor in that and a guidepost for us that kept some of them from going kind of wide.

HESS: Why did they feel that it was necessary to have a Roosevelt program, a Roosevelt forum at this time? Was it felt that Mr. Truman's influence would lose votes in the off-year election?

CHAPMAN: They were not concerned so much with whether he would lose votes on this particular type of

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a format in going forward as they were concerned about the loss of public support for these programs. Some of them were speaking in an uncertain note as to what Truman would or would not do.

You know, that was one of the places that I felt a great respect for Clark Clifford. He would take a group of these, what I would call liberals, and he'd pick a dozen of them and we'd get into a discussion. He would pretty much come up with the united thought behind something that he felt was good for Truman and we worked together on it. Even in that group we did some of that. Now, this did not take as much time as--this discussion here may be giving the wrong impression that we spent an awful lot of time on it, when we didn't. We didn't spend much time on it. We spent a great deal of time in discussing programs to be followed on through during this period and...

HESS: What particular programs?

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CHAPMAN: Well, we were discussing what programs could be picked up and fitted into the then going programs, like public works, and then relate that to the number of unemployed and with what we still had, even with the war going on. That would be related to the overall picture that you could get out of this as you sat by and wisely watch it unfold, as we have more or less done again this morning in a small way.

You must understand that you are getting one man's interpretation of what these other fellows set as their interpretation. So again you're getting a third man's interpretation of the other fellow's talk, and whether you interpret them exactly right or not, that's always a questionable thing, and to some degree a historian has to be extremely careful concerning these comments about various persons, like myself, and about what the other fellows were saying and discussing. It's very difficult to be extremely accurate in the sense of keeping your timing straight and

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keeping the time and events in sequence as much as possible to tell this story, which I would like to continue to do until I get more of it put together, just like we're doing this morning. I like the approach this morning better than I have some of our first ones, and it takes quite a while to get started on these, to really get them done. I'm trying to give you as much time as I could possibly spare here and run my office, which I had to do because I still have to make a living, and I had to open my office, fight for it.

I always go back to Clark Clifford as, in my mind, one of the rich possibilities in Truman's immediate family, his official family. I felt that Clark had great potential in this picture. Now that doesn't mean that a man can always go forward with that possible potential and develop it through himself, or set certain events in motion that they would produce that success that's point-

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ing towards him as the man that he is. He was a good man, and I speak of him in such high regard because I worked with Clark pretty closely. We never had to take but a very little time to get our position together, because we were thinking in the same direction and so on. Clark could relay it and discuss it, relay it to an audience so much better than I could. He became our spokesman for almost any group we wanted him to work with and contact, or talk with. He was practically always on any group--he didn't just work with one group here--he worked with every group that came along, and was really interested in it all.

HESS: On the subject of the New Deal and whether or not Mr. Truman carried it on or not, I wonder if we could get some specifics...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...as to what programs you think should have been carried further, what programs were

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unsuccessful in the Truman administration. As you know, a housing bill was passed later in the Truman administration; there was an expansion of the Social Security Act, and the coverage was broadened, more people were brought in under the provisions. But that's expansion of Social Security and that's housing; now those were two that were passed, but the Fair Employment Practices Act was never implemented. There was an Executive order one time, but they could never get it through Congress; they couldn't get a bill. But what would you have liked to have seen done that was not done? What were the minuses on Mr. Truman's liberal programs, public health programs, public power programs? He couldn't get the Columbia Valley through. Was welfare a minus? He tried to get, I believe, welfare broadened. So, we've mentioned civil rights, public health, public power, and welfare. What are some of the things that did not go right?

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CHAPMAN: Well, now, when you speak of all those headings like the Columbia Valley, power, area authority, all of those things, a great deal of responsibility for those kinds of things being pushed forward farther than they were, really lies heavily in the hands of the Cabinet officers. The potential of succeeding with it or not succeeding with it was their responsibility, a great deal, and not the President's. However, there's never been a President since Roosevelt as liberal and as positive in his support of his Cabinet officers in supporting public power, for instance. Truman supported public power with all the might he had; he couldn't have done more if he had tried, and you've got to remember he did not have a friendly Congress all the time.

HESS: Was that the main hurdle?

CHAPMAN: The main hurdle was that they cut

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short his programs here and here and here, wherever they could chip off anything.

HESS: The conservative Midwesterners?

CHAPMAN: That was backed by two basic philosophies; one was that of the Southerners who are normally conservative generally. Irrespective of civil rights they were our conservative group. They would join with any of these other groups. Sometimes some of the liberals who got a little nervous about some of these things would get their support in some cases, and the Southerners would cut down in his money for nearly everything pertaining to welfare. The conservatives also cut down a good deal on the liberals' power program, but not so much, because we had done the footwork--I think adequate footwork--in the Department as laborers in the field, selling this program and getting it understood in the area in which it was to be built. That made it easier for Truman to get that program through and that's why I speak with some

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feeling. I feel there's some responsibility on the Cabinet officer to put these programs in such a shape and handle them in such a way that he sells them to the people and makes it easier for the President to sell them. And he has to do that, and I can't honestly say that I could look at Truman's program and look at our situation in the world of that moment and in the United States, what our atmosphere was, our thinking, our concern in the war picture. I honestly can't see where Truman neglected any part of the liberal program of the Roosevelt program. He couldn't carry out all the things that Roosevelt had started, but he put through some things that Roosevelt could not have gotten through anyhow.

That first hundred days of Truman's was extremely successful. He got through a lot of pieces of legislation, firming up and rounding out the program with the legal base under it, and he got a lot of support in that respect there.

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Now, as time went on, that Congress got tighter and tighter and made it more difficult as time went on to accomplish anything very much, to get many things done.

Now, that's what you're faced with. You're faced with a hostile Congress divided on a social issue. Your Social Security program itself had been pushed through by great maneuvering, and hard work, working with these various Congressmen and Senators. To get that program through, we had to individually talk to each Congressman and Senator that we could talk to personally, all of them, and try to personally sell them on these programs, and we did. I don't know of a single program--there may be some I'm sure--but I don't know of a single program of Roosevelt's that Truman didn't either carry through completely and expand it, or work on it to its fullest extent. Sometimes the interference cut it down.

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HESS: Did you ever speak with Mr. Truman about your participation in the establishment of the Roosevelt forum in 1946? Did he ever comment on that?

CHAPMAN: Yes. We talked about it in the sense of not just the Roosevelt forum; we talked about it in the overall picture of what could we do to firm up better support for him throughout the country. Well, what could we do? This was not any secret meeting or anything at all; this was nothing in the world but a lot of us were talking about different things that we could, if possible, develop for Truman now, and see whether we could come up with something that could be of assistance to him. We tried that and as I said, this was not a secret program or anything,

HESS: For our discussion now, Secretary Chapman, let's discuss the role of the Cabinet itself. In your opinion what did President Truman regard as the proper role of his Cabinet? Were they his principal advisers?

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CHAPMAN: Well, I never considered that the Cabinet themselves were solely his principal advisers. True, you might use the word "principal" advisers; I suppose they would be the principal advisers...

HESS: In their field.

CHAPMAN: In their field, that's exactly right. In dealing with their particular field, they would be the principal advisers on it, and Roosevelt and Truman both used them in that way.

Now, a President can raise havoc with a Department if he attempts to try to run it from the side with somebody. They can cause a lot of trouble if he attempts to try to run a department on the sidelines with some of his side friends trying to run it from the outside.

HESS: Could we give an example?

CHAPMAN: Yes, sometimes a lot of us felt that as fine a man as he was, a man that we all had a great respect for, that Barney Baruch and men like

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that had an awful lot of influence on both Roosevelt and Truman--influence beyond their capacity in some particular fields. That was not true in all cases, but in some cases they were not qualified to go beyond a certain point on certain subjects.

HESS: Were there times when recommendations that may have been made by Mr. Baruch to Mr. Truman caused you difficulty?

CHAPMAN: Not in my case; I want to say in my case not a single problem of that kind ever came up.

HESS: Were there other departments in the Truman administration that might have received difficulty through Mr. Baruch's influence?

CHAPMAN: Now some of your independent agencies, commissions, things of that kind got more attention from Baruch than some of the departments did sometimes. He'd have a special interest in certain things, and he was dedicated to helping the TVA; he was always giving help to them

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wherever he could, and he spoke out for these various individuals and their agencies to give them help.

Now you look at the Cabinet list and it's like a flowing creek, kind of brook; it rolls on and on. You have a change of a Cabinet officer every so often, but the turnover wasn't any greater than others had been. But if you have much turnover at all in this kind of a Cabinet, the size we have--and of course, Mr. Nixon has named several Cabinets for everything now. A Cabinet post for about everything he wanted, and...

HESS: And then sends Mr. Kissinger around to do it, while Mr. Rogers sits here in Washington.

CHAPMAN: Rogers sitting over there in the chair; it's very embarrassing really to Rogers and his friends.

Now, Mr. Truman tried to use his Cabinet officers in a very effective way. He tried to

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use them for what they were appointed for and he really had a strong feeling for a person.

Looking through here I see some of the old-timers; Secretary Stimson, he was just passing out of the picture when Truman came in, and Kenneth Royall who tried those seven Germans we caught. They had gotten off a submarine apparently, that seems to have been the mode, that they had gotten off a submarine there on the Atlantic coast somewhere.

HESS: As you will notice, while you are going through that list, in the first year or two of the Truman administration there was quite a changeover.

CHAPMAN: Well, there was; there was quite a change.

HESS: What effect did that have? This also ties in with what we have been discussing previously about Mr. Truman's policies, whether or not it was a continuation of the Roosevelt policy or whether or not he tried to establish his own method of operation; but what effect did this

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fairly rapid turnover in the Cabinet in the first year or two have on policy?

CHAPMAN: Well, you could understand that where there was a dramatic change come about through this kind of an incident of a man being assassinated, and a Vice President being sworn in immediately to succeed the President, there's bound to be a rather strong...

HESS: Of course, Roosevelt just died.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he just died...

HESS: Wasn't assassinated,

CHAPMAN: He wasn't assassinated, but I think everybody around him close to him anticipated the health there, not Truman to speak of. I don't mean that he anticipated Roosevelt's, maybe, and I have no feeling on the part of Truman except a Rock of Gibraltar, you think of him, and...

HESS: And still getting along fine today.

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CHAPMAN: Well there you are...

HESS: Periodic trips to the hospital, but he gets along fine.

CHAPMAN: This is 1972, and he was sworn in in April of...

HESS: '45.

CHAPMAN: ...'45.

HESS: April the 12th of '45.

CHAPMAN: Well, now that gave him quite a nice little run there.

HESS: One thing I want to discuss with you is liberal and conservative advisers to the President in the Cabinet. Who would fit into the category we might call liberal? Who would fit into the category we might call conservative; who might be called middle-of-the-roaders? Perhaps to get into that we should discuss your views. What would be a thumbnail description of a liberal or

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a liberal policy, and what would be your thumbnail description of a conservative or a follower of a conservative policy?

CHAPMAN: Well, now, Mr. Hess, you've got to remember that going back over the history you will find that some man has gotten himself established in the minds of the people as a great liberal because he was fighting on one particular issue so long, and was a leader in a very

important issue, and just usually a good one and usually a good sign, and it didn't bear across the board as a lifetime liberal like you and I are thinking of.

HESS: He was liberal on one issue, but not so liberal on some of the others.

CHAPMAN: That's right. He was not a general, liberal person from the whole point of view. Like Norris; Norris was a liberal man on practically everything that had a liberal point of view about it, but I needed a good liberal to help me all the time. And I know that Norris made that comment to

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me once when I complimented him for carrying that fight on the Muscle Shoals, the basic program for the beginning of the Tennessee Valley, and I complimented him for being tenacious about it, and carrying it so long and being licked so many times and then finally winning it.

When Roosevelt came in he had some help; he got it done, but he said to me, he said, "You know, I have to have some boys that think somewhat along the line that I do as much as I can in order to help me to define my position on things; and when I make speeches I have to have some of these boys, these young fellows who will give them experiences and opportunity to train yourself and know the experienced man, for a liberal place in the Government when he comes in."

HESS: All right, now, that's very good. Now, Senator Norris is a good example of the liberal.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: Who would you put forward as an example of a conservative and what would be the attributes, what would be his program, his policy, that would define him as a conservative?

CHAPMAN: Well, I go back to the State of Virginia sometimes, because I was born in Virginia.

HESS: That's very natural to.

CHAPMAN: That's natural so I turn back to the State of Virginia and look at its leadership. Its leadership has been conservative consistently. They broke through just a little bit this last two or three years on some statewide votes; they broke through to the liberal side on one or two issues, and they had one or two fellows that were carrying the fight on that. They are changing in Virginia.

HESS: As I understand, most of the changes are in the urban areas though, isn't that right?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: Norfolk

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Newport News, some of the larger cities, but rural Virginia is just about as conservative as ever, isn't it?

CHAPMAN: This county that I was born in, Halifax County down there, is probably the most conservative county in the whole United States. I couldn't find one for my folks to have me born in any more conservative than that. In your early days when you're a boy, anywhere from seven years old and twelve or thirteen, a man has a lot of influence on you, if he takes a little time. There was one of them down there in my community that I got extremely intrigued with because he stopped and explained to me why the school board expelled me from school, didn't let me graduate with my class.

HESS: Was that the time that you brought the Abraham

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Lincoln picture in?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's the time I brought the picture. And he said, "I'm going to see that you are reinstated, because,"--he was not at the meeting. He said, "I am going to see that you are reinstated, because I'll file suit against the other two members," and he says, "we'll scare the daylights out of them because I'll sue them for their farm, everything they've got." He says, "That'll scare them out of doing these things."

Well, he was a decent sort of a man that wanted to be a liberal and he was a Republican on the, shall I say, on the higher level of fiscal planning and thinking, that kind, than anything else.

HESS: He was conservative.

CHAPMAN: No, he was more liberal...

HESS: On that.

CHAPMAN: ...than usual, but he was conservative and

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didn't take any leadership in any of these individual civil rights things, you see; he took no leadership, he stayed away from them. Now, when I say he was a conservative on the fiscal side of all these things, practically every leader in the State of Virginia followed pretty much the same,

HESS: Well, the name that comes most readily to mind, of course, was Harry Flood Byrd, Sr.

CHAPMAN: Yes, Harry Byrd, Sr. And you go back further than that, now you go back to Senator Carter Glass; and Carter Glass made, I think, a substantial contribution to good government. He really worked on this thing.

HESS: He worked on the Federal Reserve System, did he not?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he really...

HESS: The father of the Federal Reserve System.

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CHAPMAN: He really was the brains of that. He really helped get that set up. And didn't he help set up the tax structure?

HESS: I think so.

CHAPMAN: He did; he was the father, or the leader of the tax thing.

HESS: Here are two good men. Now we're going to check off why we would call these men conservatives, say Carter Glass and Harry Byrd; just why would we call these men conservatives?

CHAPMAN: Because you can think of some one thing that will hit you immediately, that Byrd was an extremely conservative man on fiscal matters, very conservative. You can argue about a lot of different things on the civil rights issues as to whether he was liberal or whether he was not; you could argue about that, and nowhere do I find anything in his record that indicates that he was ever a liberal on rights. He was conserva-

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tive on the fiscal side of Government and he devoted a lot of time to being a leader in that group; he was really a leader.

Now he could corral more votes from the Republicans on a bill that he might introduce than anybody else on the Republican side. I was talking to Senator Townsend one day; he was getting along in years, too. He had served right along that time in the Senate and he said to me one day when I visited with him, "Well," he said, "you boys, you liberals, always feel that you have to categorize these people; put them in a catalog so to speak."

HESS: Put everybody in a slot.

CHAPMAN: "And then you start to picking a slot to put them in." He said, "You picked Harry Byrd for a conservative," and he says, "you just put him in for everything. You don't stop to break down anything that he was liberal on."

And I said, "Senator, were there any

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liberal spots we could put him in at all?"

"Well," he says, "I could think of some issues that he'd support."

HESS: Did you ask him what issues?

CHAPMAN: Counting back to it Byrd was the man who got this Shenandoah Park up here for us; he got all that land for us.

HESS: He did like the out of doors, did he not?

CHAPMAN: He did; he liked the out of doors, and he was good on conservation, on most things in conservation, as between...

HESS: He used to climb one of those mountains down there, Old Rag, on his birthday every year.

CHAPMAN: Old Rag; he would take a hike up Old Rag, and go up every year and have a good time with his memories out there.

Now, he would do that and Townsend was very interested with me; he was laughing at how

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we all picked our man and found a slot for him in it. And so Senator Byrd was rather liberal on a lot of conservation things, not everything; he is not liberal on everything in conservation.

HESS: Did you work closely with him, at the time that you were Secretary of the Interior, on conservation matters?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I worked very well with him. I had a very good talk with him. And do you know what our principal talk was with him?

HESS: What's that?

CHAPMAN: He came to my office to see me, to get me to cancel the order that I had issued to the concessionaires that had concessions in these parks that they had to run them on strictly a

nonsegregated basis, and they could not be turned down for a room at the lodge if they had one at all.

HESS: What did he say?

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CHAPMAN: He came to see me and he started off; he says, "Oscar, now you know those folks down there, there isn't a man in the county of Halifax that would take that concession, would they?"

I said, "No, they wouldn't, I don't think I know of a man who would," But I said, "In following my course that I have to follow, because of the laws you voted for, and you voted for these laws, I checked your record and you voted for every one. When we establish a national park, we've got that phrase in every one of them where the law says there shall be no segregation of people because of race, color or nationality."

HESS: Well, what did he say when you had pointed out to him that he himself had voted for that provision?

CHAPMAN: "Well," he said, "that's different because locally the people up there wanted that park.

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They all wanted it, except those dozen or so people up in the hollow, as they call it, and you move them all out and they're very unhappy."

HESS: The people who had to be moved off of the specific ground.

CHAPMAN: We had built them a brand new house, and a good house, and they had been living in squalor and I mean squalor of the worst kind.

HESS: Is that quite often the problem when you want to go in and take over land for a national park, that is, moving the people who happen to be living on the land at that time who do not want to leave there?

CHAPMAN: That is a problem in every park.

HESS: That's what I mean, not just in Virginia, but in every park.

CHAPMAN: That's a problem in every park. And do you realize that it took us twenty years to get

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the National Teton Park created? And do you know how I finally got it? Roosevelt through their Snake River Development Corporation had bought up all the land, 33,000 acres on the Snake River that runs through that valley, and right through the Teton Valley there. And there's this gorgeous monument of a rock sticking straight up out of the ground just like the Washington Monument. That is, if you stand far enough back it looks like the Washington Monument. It's that size and pretty much that shape, made straight up; it's not a rugged mountain.

HESS: Were people living in that area?

CHAPMAN: Oh, people all over the place. There was a lot of people living around there, and a lot of people who owned their properties. But there was also a lot of cattle people that had established a squatter's right on public land and...

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HESS: Grazing their cattle on public land...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...without permission.

CHAPMAN: And paying no fee for the use of the land, paying no taxes on the land; they pay nothing. They were just using the public land. Now, of course, Rockefeller was ready to give us the land at any time Ickes would accept it, with a reverter clause in it, to say that when it ceased to be used for the purpose in which the grantor is granting this property it shall return to its original owner.

HESS: Rockefeller owned most of that, did he?

CHAPMAN: He owned it all.

HESS: Owned it all.

CHAPMAN: Rockefeller on a portion of it had built a beautiful house, dining room and large rooms up there and everything in the park now.

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HESS: What size was that, in acres?

CHAPMAN: Oh, in acres it was about...

HESS: One thousand?

CHAPMAN: Oh, no, about 40 thousand acres.

HESS: Forty thousand.

CHAPMAN: About 40 thousand acres I would estimate. That's a guess, but I think it's about that.

HESS: How did you settle the issue of the interlopers who were on there grazing their cattle?

CHAPMAN: Well, it finally ended up with about 14 families; got down to that many, and I got all of the information about how many families, how many children were involved, their ages and so on. And I figured out that children, why, would be another 50 years in which that issued settle itself, and second that many cattle running on that part of the range look pretty. It looks kind of natural to the area, and doesn't

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look bad at all and it's nothing like becoming an overgrazed, destroyed property situation that you had in some areas, where public land was so overgrazed because there was no development at all and no controls. The Park Service never allowed any grazing in the park. And they didn't want to do this, but I said, "Look, the major thing here is to get that law passed to create a national park, and eventually that title will clear itself up because the time will run on it." Congress never would vote us a park. Now, you must understand that you can create a national monument by Executive order, but you can't create a park by Executive order.

HESS: That has to go through Congress.

CHAPMAN: That's right, you have to take it to Congress and make your findings with your historical committee, and they must make their recommendations to it and you've got a very powerful historical

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committee scanning these parks to see whether there is any basis for historical reasons for keeping it, or some unusual thing in that area.

Well, that being the case, when I became Secretary, I issued an order declaring it a national monument. The only way they could beat me on that thing was they always put a rider on my appropriation bill and I couldn't spend a nickel on managing it.

HESS: You could have it, but you couldn't manage it.

CHAPMAN: I couldn't manage it. I said, "All right, I'll hold it; sit still, these folks are not going to live forever, and I'm going to do it on the base of a lifetime anyhow."

And so I made a stake; I worked out a scheme that I had been somewhat interested in for a long time, and I wanted to try it out. I wanted, for instance, to give to a state--in this case I set 25 cents on the dollar--it

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could have been 50 or it could have been any other figure, if you wanted to figure up what is more economical and what is equitable as between the Federal Government and the State government. I, in my own way, came to my own conclusion that 25 cents out of every dollar would go back to their county that we took out of the county. Well, that meant the state didn't get anything out of the state, but a county got it.

HESS: The funds went directly to the county government?

CHAPMAN: That's right, right to the county government, and then they--this was the largest individual holding in the whole valley; thirty-three thousand acres, incidentally, was in the Rockefeller grant--and then as soon as that bill became a law, that is, we got the bill through, created the park, I got Rockefeller to come down and bring us his deed and I accepted it with a reservation in it. My reasoning, as to why I did it, no Secretary of

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the Interior following me will ever change that law and change that land back to anything else. You won't dare turn it over for use as an airfield or anything else, because the minute you do it will go back to the Rockefellers. We have accepted it with that clause so that I'll always be sure that that land is protected. It can't be used for...

HESS: That was when it was turned into a monument, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Park.

HESS: A park.

CHAPMAN: I made a monument first by Executive order, and when I got it through Congress, they let me have appropriations then to manage the park.

HESS: Are those 14 families still living there?

CHAPMAN: No, there are only about seven now. Look how fast they're going down.

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HESS: Yes.

CHAPMAN: Now, we gave a life tenure to all the families, every member of the family that wanted to live there. He couldn't sell it, and he couldn't rent it; he couldn't do a thing, but stay there and run some cattle.

Now, with that, that meant the younger fellows, the younger members of that family, when one of them grew up and wanted to develop a cattle ranch, he could get some more land from the other 14 people, and put it with his and he could work out a scheme to handle some of that land and to develop a good-sized cattle range and to run it for quite a few years and get the benefit of the forage on that. That's unusually good forage in the Snake River Valley there; it's unusually good. It's very high grass that grows for 10 or 12 miles away from the Teton Mountain, as compared with the rest of the land that makes the scenery for the park. You see, you've got this very flat scenery from the Teton Monument up

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there to as far as you can go on it; then, looking way out over the range where it is so dry and clear an atmosphere, you can see so clearly.

HESS: Well, building on this background, I think this is excellent; this gives us an example of a liberal in Senator Norris, and an example of a conservative in Senator Byrd, and even though you have been cautioned not to place people in pigeon holes, let's do that right now, anyway. So, taking the list of Mr. Truman's Cabinet members, who would you classify as liberal; who would you classify as conservative? I think there were twenty-some men that...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...overall through the almost eight years of the Truman administration, who served as Cabinet members. So if you will just start there at the beginning, who would you classify as--or how would you classify

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them, may be the best way to put it? Now starting with the State Department.

CHAPMAN: Let's start with the State Department; Stettinius was a conservative.

HESS: Let's see, he wasn't there very long; he stayed through the signing of the U.N. Charter in San Francisco.

CHAPMAN: That's all, he was there only for ceremonial purposes for a short period of time.

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: And finish up the program.

Byrnes, who definitely was an activist, an active worker; Byrnes was a conservative.

HESS: Why do you think he had been asked to serve as Secretary of State?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think that the President felt that that was becoming, and going to become, one of

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hardest areas on the Hill to deal with. I think he felt that's one of the hard places he had to deal with, and if he could get a good strong man, that had a strong relationship with Congress, that he could help get that by and that was a very good judgment to do that.

Now, you can't anticipate everything a man will do or say after you appoint him. Byrnes, when I say he's a conservative, I won't go any further to comment on what he did, or didn't do. He wanted to be President so bad he couldn't hardly look at Truman; he was so burned up about that 1944 convention that he didn't get the Vice Presidential nomination.

HESS: We've already discussed that, of course, that Mr. Byrnes had phoned Senator Truman in Independence...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...before the Chicago convention and asked

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Senator Truman to place his name in nomination. President Truman says in his *Memoirs* that he is of the opinion that Byrnes knew at the time of the call that he, Senator Truman's name, was also being...

CHAPMAN: Being considered.

HESS: ...being considered, and that this was a way to cut the ground out from a rival.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: But we have mentioned that.

Also there is some speculation by some historians that when President Truman appointed Justice Byrnes as Secretary of State, that it was sort of in the nature of a consolation prize, if you will; that President Truman knew that had Mr. Byrnes been successful in Chicago and received the vice-presidential nomination that he would have been sitting in the top chair at that time.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So, as sort of a consolation prize he appointed him as Secretary of State. Do you think there is anything to that?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I think that had some basis, but I think the other thing had the practical basis.

HESS: Because he wanted a good man on the Hill.

CHAPMAN: Right. He wanted a good man that had strong ties on the Hill. Well, it was that group and his element on the Hill that was always in opposition to Truman anyway.

HESS: The South, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: The conservative southerners?

CHAPMAN: Pretty much the southern conservatives; and the other part of the story, I am convinced that's true. I had no way of knowing, of course. Now, you take...

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HESS: Give me an example of why you would classify him as a conservative.

CHAPMAN: Well, because I don't know of anything he did as a liberal. I can't think of a single liberal thing he did. He was opposed to any civil rights thing. He was opposed to that and rather openly about it, and...

HESS: I believe that even after he went back to South Carolina and ran and became Governor...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...his statements on the civil rights were still quite conservative. Is that right?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, he was a conservative man on practically everything that I can think of, and I can't find anything in which he was liberal. Everything that I have checked that was directly his accomplishment was based on a conservative...

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HESS: How would you evaluate his handling of the State Department? What I'm driving at here is--as you know--when he left, one of the reasons his resignation was requested was because he was coming back from a Foreign Minister's meeting and he had made the announcement that he was going to have an announcement to the American people, even before he checked in at the White House, even before he saw the President. He was coming back and announcing what I am going to do.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: There are those who say they think he was operating the State Department without checking with the President.

CHAPMAN: Well, he considered the White House as one of his bureaus, and he was running the State Department as the main Government and he was shifting the whole responsibility of the thing around.

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HESS: Well, didn't he know that President Truman would not like to be treated in that manner?

CHAPMAN: That's like I told Secretary Ickes when I saw the letter, which I did not know about until after...

HESS: His letter of resignation?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I did not know about that letter until after it had been received at the White House. Ickes showed me the letter, the day that it was answered by the President on Wednesday, and I said, "Mr. Secretary, don't you know that that letter is an open invitation for you, challenging the President's authority and his right to do what he pleased insofar as naming a Cabinet officer? Now," I said, "if you're trying to quit and create a moral issue from which you quit on, you don't have one. You haven't got an issue to quit on, with the idea that you are quitting because of some great moral issue--that you differ with the President on that moral issue." I said, "You haven't

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gotten anything like that on this point." I said, "You just can't make anybody believe it if you told it in that way." And sure enough I was right, you don't pay any more attention--what he was writing in that column for about six months didn't mean a thing. People didn't pay a bit of attention to it.

HESS: You think Justice Byrnes or Secretary of State Byrnes had the same view that he, too, was just going to operate his department in the way that he wanted to without the President's okay?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, no question about it. That's what he was intending to do. He was going to milk it for all it was worth to set Byrnes up for the next fight with the idea that the President would not run for a third term, you see, and he was so certain of that; he got himself ready. He got himself in a position to run, and if a man's going to give a public statement that he would not run for Vice President, or a third...

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HESS: In 1940, that's right.

CHAPMAN: In 1940 on the third term. One might have said, "It's a violation of our Constitution and I won't do it." It's not a violation of our Constitution, it's just a...

HESS: Just a violation of tradition at that time.

CHAPMAN: Violation of tradition was all it was. Well, if you don't violate tradition somewhere you'll never move; you'll never get anywhere. You have to do that, and Truman had to do some of these things.

HESS: What do you recall about Secretary of State Byrnes' resignation?

CHAPMAN: I thought it was very badly handled. Byrnes fouled it up all he could to make it look as bad as he could. Byrnes tried to make it look bad on the President, but it didn't get over; the public had already seen through Byrnes. He

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didn't realize it, but he had burned his bridges behind him and the public was not trying to follow that river with him, and they wouldn't. They were not trying to follow him.

HESS: All right, now, the next man is General Marshall.

CHAPMAN: General Marshall. General Marshall could not, in any true sense, I don't think he classified as an absolute conservative. I think he was as much a professional man as it was possible to be and...

HESS: Professional soldier.

CHAPMAN: Professional soldier, and he was thoroughly loyal to the President to the nth degree.

HESS: Why do you think he was selected as Secretary of State?

CHAPMAN: Because the President could get along with him so easily. He was an easy man to work with.

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He wasn't like my friend Louis Johnson that started his fall and intrigue as soon as he was appointed--he started working on that side of the fence as soon as he got in.

Marshall, I couldn't classify him categorically as a conservative, and I couldn't say he is a liberal, because he is as much a liberal as I've known any of them to be on any of the things he had to make decisions on.

HESS: One of the things that Mr. Truman will be known for is the plan that had General Marshall's name, the Marshall plan.

CHAPMAN: That's right. And that was a pretty liberal thing in itself. That was basically a strong liberal movement at the time. Never before in any war had any country ever done this; turned around and after we completely annihilate our enemies in battle we turn around and finance the redevelopment of their industry, so that they can start making a living again, and that's—

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and we've got a pretty darn good record on that due to the President having the courage to do this, because that took a lot of courage. A lot of people was still feeling the effects of having spent some time fighting Hitler.

HESS: Now, in 1947 to find out how adequately we would be prepared to carry on a program of this nature, of the Marshall plan, President Truman appointed two committees--three committees actually. He appointed Secretary Krug to make an investigation into our natural resources to see how much of our natural resources could be cut out of our economy and safely transferred, how much money we could spend on this; and then he asked Dr. Edwin G. Nourse, who was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, to make a study on the economic side of the picture to see how it would effect our economy, and then both of those reports were turned over to a civilian, or a public committee, to evaluate them and to turn them in to the President.

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But I believe that in Mr. Krug's report he said that 20 billion dollars could be transferred, could be taken out of our natural resources and applied to those problems. Did you work on that report?

CHAPMAN: I didn't work on that at all.

HESS: I have checked it out of the National Archives Library but did not bring it this morning. It's a printed report, big long thing.

CHAPMAN: No, I didn't do any work on that at all. I read it as it was being developed, but I was not asked for anything at all and there was no discussion about it.

HESS: All right, then, moving on to the next Secretary of State, all right?

CHAPMAN: The next Secretary of State...

HESS: Dean Acheson.

CHAPMAN: ...I would say more of the professional

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type of a man prepared for his specialty.

HESS: He was a professional diplomat.

CHAPMAN: He was a professional diplomat, and trained himself, developed himself in that area of study and government. He had prepared himself to be a good diplomat in every sense.

HESS: Was he as well-prepared and as professional a diplomat as General Marshall was well, prepared and was a professional soldier?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Would that be a good comparison?

CHAPMAN: That's a good comparison and both on the same basis, I think. Dean was well-prepared for his job when he went in. He had enough experience in the Government in different places that he knew the inside workings of the job itself, and he had been in the Treasury, you know, under Roosevelt; I think he was Under

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Secretary of the Treasury for awhile and...

HESS: Assistant or Under Secretary, I'm not sure which.

CHAPMAN: He wasn't Secretary.

HESS: He wasn't Secretary...

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He was Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary.

CHAPMAN: I think he was Assistant Secretary. Well, whatever it was, he didn't get along with the Secretary and was in that time of...

HESS: Is that Morgenthau at the time?

CHAPMAN: Morgenthau I think was in there when Acheson had already been appointed. I believe that's correct in sequence, I'm not sure. And in any event, Morgenthau didn't want Acheson that close to the President. He felt that he was as close a personal friend as John Snyder was,

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which of course he was not. He was a close personal friend of Roosevelt's.

HESS: Morgenthau?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was a very close personal friend and Morgenthau would handle him exactly like he would his own boy. He was an old friend of his father's, a good friend of his father's. He would look out to help him where he could, give him a break, and he worked hard at his job.

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Thirteenth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C., November 3, 1972, By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, a subject of timeliness this morning I think would be to discuss the Indians that are here in town. And as you know, there are a number of Indians who have barricaded themselves in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building last night. And according to the paper, they represent .a coalition of 250 of the Nation's Indian tribes, and they are here in town protesting treatment of Indians over the years. And they call their operation the "Trail of Broken Treaties."

As I see it, their central contention is that the Indians have been neglected and unfairly treated ever since the white man landed on these shores. And as the man who headed the Department of Interior for a number years and had overall supervision of Indian affairs, what is your view of the Indian situation and how those matters have been handled over the years?

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CHAPMAN: If you look back over the history of the Indian Office itself, and the management of the Indian tribes as a group, you will begin to realize that progress that has been made in creating a proper atmosphere for the Indians. The white man has himself become more sympathetic in the last 20 years towards his fellow man, the Indians, than at any other time that I have known in history.

When I first began to work with the Indian office, they were at a very low relationship with the white people and I have noticed, and have been able to see, the improvement in their understanding and what is more important, the white people's understanding of the Indian. This is more noticeable today than it was when I first started to work in the Department, and I think it's continuing to improve.

HESS: What seemed to be the general attitude of the population towards the Indians say in May of 1933?

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CHAPMAN: Well, in the beginning along in May of '33, I started into the program with the Indians having many claims pending before the Department. Court did not look sympathetically upon several important cases that we had at that time, and it was not conducive to what the Indians thought was a fair dealing with them in these court decisions.

I think the present Secretary of Interior is doing as good a job as money is made available to him. I think he has a very definite sympathetic feeling towards the Indians and he's a humanitarian.

Now as he gets support from the public--and that's what I am trying to tell you this morning--they are getting support from the public generally, today, that they were never getting before. They are getting more support now than they were getting 10 years or 20 years ago. It is gradually improving.

Now, part of that is caught up in this general civil rights controversy and strides that were

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made in the civil rights minority group controversy, and in making that fight the Indians were all inclusive--when you talk about the civil rights of the minority people you invariably include the Indian now in that idea of thinking of what you do.

Now this is not something that will be done over night after 40 years, or more, of what I'd consider not so much mistreatment as it has been a lack of proper understanding and proper effort being made to include the Indians in the Federal programs to assist people who are not capable of helping themselves in some cases.

HESS: Let's discuss the historical aspects of the handling of the Indian situation just a bit. How was the Indian situation handled in the last century perhaps? At the time of the Indian wars?

CHAPMAN: Let's break it down in time period like this. You go back to the earlier days of my

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childhood and during that period, for say about 20 or 30 years there, there was a very decided neglect, or the lack of attention, to help the Indian or do anything for him very much. Unless

some Senator would get excited about a particular case, or piece of legislation, we never got the basic legislative programs through to put Indians on an overall level with other people. And I'm speaking of the economic situation more there than anything else. That's in the economic field. They were not given sufficient opportunity to protect their own holdings, their own properties.

You will remember back in those days--some of this is long before you were born--they would appoint the commissioner of Indian Affairs, some retired Army colonel or Navy captain, somebody of that nature that was retired. They naturally lived on a bare retirement salary that was very low at that time and they were looking to improve their own economic situation, the white man.

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Consequently, during that period the appearance was very bad. If you really sat back and looked at this and studied it very carefully you would feel very bad about it; you would see it.

HESS: There were charges of graft and corruption at that time. Were those charges founded on fact?

CHAPMAN: I would say that in 99 of 100 cases it would not be true, in fact. But there were some cases; there were quite a few cases where there was some graft and corruption going on from the operation of the program in the field. I know I did all I could to have personal contact with the tribes in the field, at their council meetings.

I would go to many of their council meetings, like the Hopi's, down next to the Navajos, and the Pueblos. There are four or five nice tribes in there and they are very fine people and they really are calm, stable type people; they have a very calm mental approach to their problem.

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Now, this outward appearance of some abnormal or rough treatment between themselves and the public last evening here was a very unusual thing. That's not a usual thing at all, because the Indians have been the most patient people on earth. I have never known a minority group, of any kind, that matches the Indian, in calmness and patience in which he has followed his downward path, as he has seen it go down.

HESS: Do you think their patience may be drawing to an end?

CHAPMAN: It is. It's drawing to an end because they are learning a lot. They are learning a lot because they see their other friends are now getting it that didn't get it 20 years ago, getting help.

HESS: Other minority groups?

CHAPMAN: Yes. There are other--well, for instance, they are entitled to go on Social Security if

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they qualify for it, and they need it. Now, that's a kind of a thing that I was talking about when I said the general legislation that's been passed in the last ten years has been legislation that was more--should I say it's stronger in its sympathy and understanding of the Indians because the people were beginning to support the Indian program more.

Now, a program will not succeed any further than the public will support. If it will support a program, you can help them and put it through. We have never had sufficient leadership and support for the Indians as we should have had all along. We haven't had the support they should have had, and...

HESS: What would be a proper program for the Indians? What I'm driving at, there are some Indians who say they do not want to be assimilated into our culture, that they have their own heritage; they want to live by their own heritage.

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CHAPMAN: Well, now, you've got a problem there, because they differ among themselves so strongly on that issue; it's very difficult for you to get unity of thought on that particular question itself. That's one question that I had most difficulty with, in trying to solidify the thinking of those people and working out a plan.

Now, what the Indian needs is some guidance and highly trained, technical help, people that could set up a plant of some kind for him and help him finance it. The Government's got to help him finance it, just like we do General Motors and all the rest of the big companies. We have financed every last one of those companies from one end to the other.

I don't criticize that; that was supporting your economy to make it thrive and grow, but you can't support just one segment of the economy and leave another large segment, as large as the Indian group, leave them behind and not look out for them. You have a responsibility, the Government

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has, to proceed to help the Indians, help them find a way to do certain things. You've got to help them until they get some experience. They need to have more experience in the business field, the economic field. They have to have that and that's what they need more than anything else today, that and education, of course. Education is far behind yet for the Indians, way far behind.

Now, the Government should set up a program on an economic basis and develop it. Well, give an example of the Navajo, or the Pueblo tribe, and make a careful study of what could be developed in that area, in which they could do the work, mostly themselves. The part they can't do, hire it, but let them run it. Let the Indian man run it himself. It'll take him time to gain experience, and you've got to have a well-trained man to step in to work with him, and a man with the kind of sympathy that he wants to help this Indian get this program going on his own, and for him to run it, and not you.

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Now the Bureau should not attempt to run these things any longer than necessary. You have to run them and supervise them for a while, even if you have a good program; even some of our best programs that have come in under this new phase of Social Security, that have met with many difficulties and haven't been a success in every respect. However, when you look at the mass operation that Social Security is under, and the money that's gone to that, it moved to its higher level financially so fast that no one expected it to move that fast. I know that.

HESS: I want to go back just a moment to my thought about assimilating the people who say they don't want to be assimilated. Is it necessary to have one plan that would fit over all the Indian tribes? Could it, or wouldn't it be feasible to have a plan where some people, some of the Indian tribes, who did not want to be assimilated into our white culture, could live their lives under their old culture? Couldn't that be done

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to let certain tribes live that way if they want to, and if another tribe wants a factory on their land you could go ahead and help them build their factory? If another one wanted to develop their oil, you could help them develop their oil, but if that first tribe wanted to live as aboriginal Indians just let them?

CHAPMAN: There would be no difficulty in the world of their not living that way if they want to. I see no obstruction in the way of that kind of a program being worked out where you are operating one kind of a program over here and another one over there. You've got to put the practical things that are already embedded in their minds, you've got to put it to work in the terms of what they know, and what they believe.

What the tribes in one area will think of in one way, the tribes in another area would think of in another way. That has made it very difficult for us because I think our people, the white people, have invariably tried to insist on

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a unification of all the tribes into one unit for one program. I don't think you'd ever find a program that's big enough to handle that kind of situation. You won't get enough support, enough help for it. You've got to hire a lot of experienced and skilled people to help you run the mechanical side of the job. The educational side of the program has to be carried in line with the other part of this program. That's got to be kept in pace with the other things that we are doing for the Indians.

HESS: One of the complaints that the Indians were making last night was that so much territory has been taken away from them. I think they are requesting, or they're demanding that over a million acres be returned to the Indian tribes. It's their contention that if land is worth anything,

or was worth anything, they were moved off of it. If any minerals are found in or under the land that they were moved on, then they don't get the benefit of even that; then the

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white people get the benefit of the minerals of the land that they were pushed off onto. Are they right in those complaints?

CHAPMAN: To some extent that is correct. That has some essence of truth in it. Where you had someone that did not have the interest of the Indian at heart but was more interested in the mechanical success of what he was trying to do so that he could make a showing to the public, "what I am doing, see," than he was in the Indian himself personally. Now, that is where we have missed out for a long time, of not doing enough for the Indians personally. There's some truth in what they say on that; it's not all true, but a lot of it is true. Enough is true to justify their complaint and justify arousing the sympathy and understanding of the white man to help him. Now is the time to help this man attain a standard of living and an understanding of how to acquire that standard of living and maintain it. Now that goes back to your economic

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culture, goes back to the economy of your country.

They came out very well in their latest effort in the court when they won that Alaskan case. That was a fabulous case to win. But what I was so puzzled about was that here the Government was on the side of the fellow who is trying to get this land for the white man and there were only a few white people; the rest of them were Eskimos and other tribal Alaskan people of Indian blood.

A major decision has been given, that has opened a way to clarify a lot of these complaints that they have been making about that particular point that you've just raised, where they complain about their being moved off of the good land and put into the bad land and sometimes are robbed of their inheritance, of their rights.

In those earlier days that was done as a matter of regular business and trade, when they had no experience in dealing with the Government. They were doing quite a bit of that in the earlier

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days; when I was a boy, that was just coming along. It was just coming on; in the last three decades it has shown progress, has taken root, and is improving.

Now that protest that they made last night was a very hopeful sign. To me it was a very fine thing, because they got together on one or two issues that they could get together on and fight for. They did arouse opinion, some public opinion about this. They'll have to arouse public opinion to a much greater degree than they have yet. They haven't done it sufficiently, and they've got to do that; they have to help guide it and support it and push it. And then some of our

white people that are friends of the Indians and are trying to help them must try to be patient and to understand them a little bit, too; because there are some very fine people in this country that have gone out of their way really to try to help the Indians. They have really wanted to help them and they have done everything they could to help them.

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You take my old friend, Morris Llewellyn Cooke; oh, he's been in and out of the Government as an adviser on something, and he was a man of some means; and he devoted a lot of time to this to help the Indians find an area, find some direction that they could go, and travel towards the end of some goal that they could get together on. He never quite succeeded during his time. He was getting along in years when I first knew him. I don't know whether Morris is still living or not and I don't know where he is, but he was a man who gave a great deal of money toward...

Now, I have something that I ought to show you this morning. You know that there are people who get interested in Indians for all kinds of reasons, not just straight business reasons, but it has a ring to it that arouses people strongly in certain things. And you know what one of them is? To my great surprise, to see how far this fellow carried this thing, he went out into the

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Black Hills and he wanted to honor the Indian with a sculpture cut from the mountains of the Black Hills up there. He went up there, oh, he went up there 12, 15 years ago. He didn't have a child when he went, out there and he's got 11 now.

HESS: The climate did him good, didn't it?

CHAPMAN: Yes. This man was a sculptor from the old country, from over there, and he's a real artist. He drew his maps and his sketches and he got an angel up in Connecticut that was very much interested in seeing the Indians get interested in sculpture, making things, and doing things with their hands. In the meantime, he had a two-edged sword with that; he wanted them to understand what these things were and what they stood for in terms of the recognition of the Indian. And that was a recognition of the Indians. He sculptured Crazy Horse, council chief of the--I can't think of that tribe right there at Rosebud

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in South Dakota. He drew up his sketches for this place, and--understand what I'm talking to you about is telling you a story of how one little thing can develop into so much for these people if one man will devote his time to it.

This man devoted his time to trying to raise a statue of the Indian in his own mind, for the first thing, and he did everything he could to create a better understanding of themselves, an appreciation of themselves. He was teaching them; he was teaching them sculpture work in a little class, a school sculpture class; he didn't have many students, but he had a few. And it got started and that man has gotten contributions enough that he could finish that sculpture in

another 10 years, about 10 years, 10 to 12 years. He's going to finish it. "This is my life's work; I intend to finish here." And he's got the whole thing laid out on his maps, drawn out, laid out on his maps; and Crazy Horse was the Indian selected by the Indians themselves, a man they wanted to honor.

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HESS: He does a good deal of that sculpting by blasting does he not?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: Drilling the holes and blast it off with dynamite.

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, he will blast off tons at a time and blast it down until he gets it down to the size that he has to work on, and always keeping the view in perspective.

HESS: Mr. Chapman, how closely did Mr. Truman watch Indian Affairs matters?

CHAPMAN: As I was talking to you and telling you about the public attitudes and public support becoming more and more helpful to the Indian program, this is a proper place to say to you that one of the things I had in mind, was having people like President Truman take the personal interest he did in the Indian programs. He helped me with--and did it personally--he helped

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me with so many cases in which he would help these people get their titles cleared to their lands. You'd say, "Well, how did he help?" He'd let me bring the tribal council in. One of the tribes out there in Oklahoma was having a lot of trouble and difficulty about their lands, because they had hit oil and the people were trying to get the titles to it by phony leases and I was trying to block it. I told the President what I wanted to do, that they should not sell that land; they shouldn't be encouraged to sell it. They should be encouraged to keep it and draw an income from it, and let the income be put into a trust fund with the council as the trustees. They are elected by the Indians, by the way, those council members; and when they are elected they automatically become a trustee of this fund. And that bunch of trustees would have to report every so often, I've forgot how often they reported, but they'd have to make an annual report to the whole tribe.

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They'd have a big party some place out there out on the range where someone was living; they'd have a big party and one of the trustees, usually the chairman, would give a report on what the status of their trust was, how much money they had in that trust, how much land they had in that trust, and what they were doing with it and what they were planning to do with it in order to improve the trust. They had to report, and did report that. They began to do it in really a business-like way.

Well, I'll tell you, one of the people who has done so much on this and he's never tried to get any credit for it at all, is Bill [W.W.] Keeler. Bill Keeler is a full-fledged Cherokee; he's a full-blooded Cherokee. His wife is a full-blooded Cherokee. They both speak Cherokee language. There's only about five tribes that

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have a language at all and the Cherokees are one of them; and the Choctaws have a little language. It's one they've developed over the years; it's expanded and expanded over the years and there are about five tribes altogether that have a decided language now.

Now, Mr. Truman would say to me, "Well, now, give me a memorandum that gives me the background of how and why these Indians got into this position."

Well, I had to do a lot of research, a lot of research, to go back to find out who was making the decisions during such and such a period. I'd take a period of time and research it, then take another period and research it, and sometimes I'd take a different area and have a research job done on it. And I could show him where the Indian was being cheated. I could show him how the Indian was absolutely being robbed. I said, "Mr. President, this Indian here has just come into his inheritance, his headrights." They've got what you call headrights, established by law. When they became members of a tribe and they were transferred to a given reservation they were established a headright, which means an equity part in the

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holdings of this tribe; depending on how much land they had, each Indian got his headright. It may be a valuable headright, or it may be a poor headright, depending upon the holdings; but all the Osage and most of the Cheyennes got valuable headrights, very valuable headrights. It helped them get money.

There is this board of trustees, which is the council. Twice in the last four years Bill Keeler has been elected as chairman of the trustees. He is the president of the council; the position is elective.

And who is Bill Keeler? Bill Keeler speaks Spanish as well as you speak English; and he has worked in the Department for us, as a dollar-a-year man a dozen times or more, helping us with a specific program. He is chairman of the board of the Phillips Petroleum Company; that's who he is.

HESS: A man who is quite well-off, well placed?

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CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, Bill had his full education. His mother and father were far enough along in the education field to appreciate the value of what it means to be an educated person, and what

it means to get his education. Well, he went straight on through until he got his geology training; he's a geologist, a complete...

HESS: Well, he could understand Indian matters.

CHAPMAN: He could understand Indian matters so well that...

HESS: Bartlesville is 40 miles from my home town and it's about 20 to 25 miles, I believe, from Pawhuska.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: It's straight east of Pawhuska, and of course, Pawhuska is the center of the Osage nation.

CHAPMAN: Well, Bill Keeler is the leader, quietly, and you'll never see his name in print about

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this. Now, if he was trying to gyp them or get something out of them, get their lands transferred and the titles, you'd never see his name anywhere anyhow; they would be very careful about it. But Bill, for totally modest reasons, had a sense of modesty about it that he would not try to get any publicity for his help that he gave us.

Now, he would come in and I'd get him into the White House to see Truman, let him talk to Truman. I fixed a little memorandum on Mr. Keeler once as to who he was, where he was born, his mother and father being Cherokees and full blood; and then I showed where he went to college, where he graduated and got his degree in geology. He had a full educational background with a college degree. He gave all the time he could to help.

And whenever I called on him and said, "Look Bill, I'm having so much trouble with these two tribes over there that I can't get them together and I can't get them to do anything together.

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They won't agree. Can you get them together or suggest a way that we can work out a program for them in which they can have some degree of control over their stuff and operate it? And I'm thinking of moving over now, Bill, from the old idea of the Indian office having to run everything they had from right in Washington, out to the tribal council as much as possible; move it out there as fast as we can get personnel that can manage this kind of a program that we have." We moved in the educational field first, and we got down among the Osage and the Navajos and the Pueblos, and then the whole five civilized tribes were in that category. Bill was the principal adviser to any of them on all their land. I would show him how much land this tribe had according to the books of the Government.

I'd have Bill go out and file a private suit. He'd never want to file it in his name because it would get his company involved in an unnecessary suit. So, what he would do, he would file it in

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the name of his father, or mother, when they were living, or some other good Indian friend that knew what he was doing, knew how to do it, and he would, in turn, help them get that thing started. He'd get a piece of land put together in a joint venture; there were so many hundred thousand acres of land, and in Oklahoma that's a very, very fine gamble that you would get something out of there; you'd hit somewhere. The point was that we didn't want one Indian to get real rich and the other one, because he had to make a squatter's right over here, two miles further, he didn't get any. And the man right across the creek over here would hit oil on his place. So, we set up the joint venture where everybody collected according to the number of acres they would own by the headright law. The headright would establish the number of acres they would really have, and that headright would come to them through their mother, or their father, or sometimes their brothers and sisters.

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I would add to that, the continuation of the discussion of the Indian problem.

HESS: All right. This will be the continuation of the discussion of the Indian problem.

CHAPMAN: Sort of carry the continuity.

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: The winning of this law suit in Alaska was primarily because public opinion had developed so strongly in favor of the Indians having a right to that land and not just a bunch of gold mining hunters who went up there looking for gold, and many of them lost their lives looking for it. They had this land; they could trace it so clearly that you couldn't dispute their word on it. They had a complete record of the ownership and what we call a clear title; so we'd have a title drawn, title developed, by a lawyer who knows what goes into the record and makes...

HESS: Knows how to search for land titles.

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CHAPMAN: That's right and how to search for the record and clarify it. They had some good lawyers to help them, and--oh, I want to say that at this point a young man by the name of Jebby Davidson shows up from Louisiana, and he was appointed Assistant Secretary by Ickes and to my great pleasant surprise--not surprise necessarily, because I knew something about him. But to my great pleasure I found that he had a decided interest in the human side of the Indian, and he set about to clarify the lands and titles and their wooded areas, timberland, for these Indians of the various tribes up in the northwest.

You see, you have wealth of one nature up in this area of the country, and down in the middle areas of the country you have another kind of wealth. You have oil down in Oklahoma; you had timber up in Oregon, and Washington and up through there.

Well, Mr. Davidson showed a deep sense of

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appreciation of the right of the individuals. He was very much devoted to that, and I give him credit for it. We may not have agreed on everything as we went, but I wanted to give him credit for it. The white people have to take a--not try to take over the Indians--the white people have to take an interest in their program, to help. That has been established pretty well now; it's fairly well established, and the Indians have many white people that are devoting their time to it.

HESS: One point on that, Mr. Davidson told me last summer when I spoke with him that he wanted to move the Bureau of Indian Affairs out of the Department of Interior into Health, Education and Welfare, because the Department of the Interior was land oriented and the Indians should be treated as a human problem, which would come more under the Health, Education and Welfare frame of reference. What would be your view on that?

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CHAPMAN: Well, he argued that view back and forth and he had, I thought, a considerable amount of credit due him for the effort of trying to do that. There was a question of whether the idea of getting the whites and all the Indians together more as a community could be better done by having the white people help them as much as possible and help through the economic field, and having a credit union set up, or a credit organization set up, to loan them money to pay for what they wanted to do. There's where you needed a good man like Bill Keeler to sit down with the tribe for a couple of evenings and tell them, "Now fellows, you don't know whether this land has oil or not, and if you haven't got money in your council sufficient to drill and test this area, you don't know what you've got. You may be giving away the greatest wealth of your lifetime. You may not, but the chances are you might be, because you've got to look at the facts in the case and say, 'Where's the closest well to

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this area of land; what is the geology of that area? And if oil comes we'll give it to you; they've surveyed it all, they know, and we can get that from them.'" And he could; he got that from the man who had it to give to them.

Now, the opposition to that position was that the Indian was land-oriented, too, more than he was anything else. He had a few horses; his number of horses was an indication of his wealth, and he was very strong on that. Most of the Indians are; even now they are. So, the Indian was so strongly oriented to the land that Jebby was right on that point, and I supported him strongly on that feeling that this ought to be dealt as just a plain human problem and deal in the office of education and welfare departments; that's two together now, those agencies were put together.

And during that transition period you had men like Paul McNutt being made the Administrator for what is now HEW--Health, Education and Welfare. Paul was playing

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that for political reasons since he thought he was going to run for the Presidency against Truman in the following year; so he was playing it for all it was worth. He thought that was a ten strike to him; that he would play that. So, Paul came forward with that Indian stuff, to give it some support and become a leader in this thing.

HESS: Oscar Ewing headed the Federal Security Agency also at this time.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: What was his view? You knew him quite well; what were his views? Did he think that the Bureau of Indian Affairs should come under the Federal Security Agency? Now we ought to add, the Federal Security Agency is what later became HEW, in part anyway.

CHAPMAN: Well, in part it did. The Security Administration was still more of a bond and banker business than it was a social aspect of--nevertheless,

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that would have been a ten strike had you got the two together. And then you would have had control of the very factors that I wanted under control.

HESS: Do you think that Mr. Ewing would have liked to have had the Bureau of Indian Affairs under him?

CHAPMAN: I think he would.

HESS: Did you ever talk to him about that?

CHAPMAN: I have discussed that with him; we talked about it years ago, and we talked then about the idea of putting the Indian office over in the Federal Security Agency, but we had to be very careful that Ickes didn't think that I was trying to get something taken away from Interior Department.

HESS: Mr. Ickes would not have liked that?

CHAPMAN: Oh, no. No, he wouldn't like anything that

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took a tree away from him, or a bush; he wanted that with the Interior Department at all times.

HESS: Do you think he could be described as an empire builder?

CHAPMAN: Well, he was an empire builder, but, frequently, he always tied that with the interest of the people that would be benefited by this empire. Now that's what saved him. That's what saved Ickes as much as anything else in the world. Now he...

HESS: His interest in an empire was what good it could do and not necessarily for self-glorification, is this...

CHAPMAN: Not at all. No, it wasn't that. Of course, he wanted a little glorification, too; he wanted a little of that. But he really did have the other; he worked on it, he worked on it. When I say he worked on it, he'd have meetings with four or five fellows, and we'd have dinner at his office at night there. We'd have dinner and

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go over some of these things at night.

Jebby was most helpful. Let me say he was the greatest help to me, as far as I was concerned, in the area of dealing with where the human interest came in, the human side came in. I could always count on his being on what I considered the right side of the, say the Indian in this case, but whether it was the Indian or a black man or anybody else.

HESS: Do you recall any plans or policies that Mr. Davidson might have liked to have implemented to forward the progress of the Indian?

CHAPMAN: I don't know of any particular one program; he had the overall idea that was overshadowing everything else, the drive to see if we couldn't get it moved over to the other department.

HESS: What plans should have been implemented in the Truman administration that were not? What could have been done in the Truman administration to improve the Indian's situation?

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CHAPMAN: Well, one thing that you have a problem with is getting the right personnel to manage your program. John Collier, rest his soul; he was one of the sweetest characters I ever knew in my life.

HESS: He was commissioner from '33 to '44.

CHAPMAN: That's right. He'd get into all kinds of trouble with his tribes; the tribes all loved him, and then they would fight with him.

HESS: What would they fight about? What was their problem?

CHAPMAN: For instance, like this; when the grazing bill came into effect we had to set up another unit in the Department of Interior, for the whole Department, to manage all of the public lands, you see. So we had to set up an organization with a director in charge of it, and that director would go around; he'd ferret out the whole picture as best he could and get some good assistants

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in there to help him. He was more a cattleman than he was an Indian man, or some other kind of a man, but he was a cattleman. That was his first interest. I worked with him and I recommended him for the job. We were very good friends, but he got in such a fight with Ickes so quickly that his value was lost because of his continuous argument with Ickes. And he was a very bright fellow; he fooled you, he looked like a farmer, just in off the farm.

HESS: You're speaking of Collier?

CHAPMAN: I'm speaking of [Farrington R.] Carpenter.

HESS: Carpenter. Was he head of the Grazing Service, Carpenter?

CHAPMAN: That was the Grazing Service and he helped set it up. Now, Carpenter came in there with two degrees from Princeton; after he had gotten his degree in landscape architecture, then he got his law degree.

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He fooled and surprised a lot of people who came in here to work with him, and Ickes and some of the people in the Department were quite surprised at him when they found out the fellow was quite bright. He had more than just his share of the marbles.

HESS: Now he served from 1938 to 1944.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: How did he and John Collier get along?

CHAPMAN: Not at all.

HESS: Too much of a conflict there...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...with Collier looking after the Indians on the land...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...and Carpenter being in the beef raiser's industry, he taking that view, is that right?

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CHAPMAN: That's right. Carpenter was what I meant when I said he was a cattleman.

HESS: That's right, he was the cattle industry man.

CHAPMAN: He was always plugging for them.

HESS: All right; now, you mentioned a while ago that one of the tough, one of the serious points with the Bureau of Indian Affairs was personnel.

CHAPMAN: Following up what we've just said about personnel, Collier was one of the great characters in this country, a great humanitarian. Sometimes they are not the best administrators; they are wonderful writers of theses on the subject of the Indian. He did some wonderful writing on the Indian Bureau and books on Indians.

HESS: Was he a poor administrator?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He was not a good administrator in the sense of being a good administrator. He didn't know how to even get the people to work together.

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Now, I'll tell you the brightest operator they had in the field was this woman Dr. [Sophie D.] Aberle.

HESS: What was her position?

CHAPMAN: She was Superintendent of these Southwest Pueblo tribes; all of the Pueblos came up under her and she had quite a few tribes, ten or fifteen, I imagine.

HESS: What was it about her that made her so outstanding?

CHAPMAN: First, she had a degree in medicine; she has a chair at Yale, and she is a very bright woman.

HESS: She was an Indian?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: No.

CHAPMAN: No, she was a very bright woman and very interested in what could be done for the Indians.

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She'd survey out this thing pretty carefully at first, solve it. They lacked coordination of management and she soon found that Mr. Collier was a wonderful fellow; she was just crazy about him, but she couldn't go along with him on some of his ideas that he had.

HESS: Do you recall what ideas?

CHAPMAN: Well, for instance, he would want to promote a health unit for the Indians, to be worked out. Instead of having a stationary clinic, we'd have a mobile clinic, and you'd have two or three trailers put together, staffed with sufficient number of nurses and doctors, and they'd staff each one and it'd cover certain areas in the Southwest, which was her area, for instance. And she would manage that; she handled that in such a fine way. She managed it like she was running a grocery store. She knew where every item was and what the cost was. She was a business woman along with it, and she was very good and just a very fine person.

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Well, John was fond of her and he promoted her very much, but he got discouraged with her, or differed with her, when she wanted to double these units instead of having them so small. The cost went up accordingly, you see.

HESS: The mobile units.

CHAPMAN: Yes. The mobile units; the smaller you had the mobile unit the cost went up in degree.

HESS: The larger the unit got.

CHAPMAN: Well, the unit would get more costly per person if you had a smaller unit, but if you build a big enough unit, have a big enough unit to, say, for instance, take the whole Southwest--I've done this by map from time to time with her--you take the whole Southwest and as near as you can get it, get to the center of the population, Indian population, put a permanent station there. That is, make it not a mobile unit, but a stationary unit. Then from that unit here, you would feed

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your supplies into your mobile units going out and they'd be coming in to here and going out; and she showed where she could cut down on the cost of getting the supplies, medicine of every kind, sent out to this lady way down here in this little remote place, for half what it would cost if she had to have the unit, say up at Albuquerque, way up here in the other section of the country. If she had to have four or five stationary units, they immediately become basically big operating units and you'd get yourself overcrowded with overhead expense and she couldn't keep it down by doing it that way, by running it too small.

So, she--I think Davidson supported her in this, I'm not sure, but I think he did--she fought hard for establishing these mobile units and setting them up just right.

And then we sent her down to Puerto Rico. She was a doctor and they had great respect for her, and we set up some mobile units there based on her experience out there in the Southwest;

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some of the climatic conditions were similar. She started in and set up three or four mobile units, with as much money as we could get. We should have had eight units, money enough to run about eight units, but we didn't get them.

Now, [Ernest H.] Gruening was a liberal that didn't give one damn about anybody's feelings one way or another. If he thought of something that he ought to have for this he'd go right to the top for it. He'd go over the top of Ickes and of course, that would be the end of that. He'd go over the top of Ickes, or try to, and Roosevelt--he used to go to Roosevelt regularly. Roosevelt liked him; he knew him. He knew him before he was appointed Director of Territories, Gruening and Roosevelt. So, Roosevelt worked very well with Gruening, just like that; no problem at all because Ickes just let him alone, didn't fool with him, and it was all right.

But Jebby had, too, in that period, a rather hot conversation sometimes, and our people had

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some warm conferences about what we ought to do and we couldn't do in regard to the type of a project that was going to be set up here or should be set up here for the Indians. Now, Davidson was very helpful there; I like to give a man credit where his services really justify, whether I agreed with him or not, that he was a man--Davidson had gotten some experience with the Bonneville Dam program. In that he set out to try to set up a TVA...

HESS: In the Northwest, which would have been the CVA.

CHAPMAN: Yes. I was shooting for that strong. I supported Davidson. He was taking the lead on that. I was giving him all the support I could on that. I thought it was a good thing, and I thought that eventually we would tie a grid, as we call it, for power; tie those lines together and you build a dam here and another one over there two or three hundred miles away, or five hundred miles away. The first thing you know you've got

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them just like playing chess. You've got these dams built in the most strategic places that you can build enough power that you could transport it over these wire lines at a cost that is not too prohibitive; then you can afford to sell it for the cost factor base. The little farmer then gets his co-op power. He sets up a co-op and he buys and sells his power and oil and other supplies that

he needs through that co-op, you see, and that co-op comes in under this management of the CVA development there.

HESS: Let's mention the four men who held the job of Commissioner of Bureau of Indian Affairs during the Truman administration. Of course Mr. Collier left in 1944...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...and then from '45 to '47 was William A. Brophy. In 1948 the Acting Commissioner was William R. Zimmerman; in 1949 the Commissioner was John R. Nichols and from '50 to '53 was

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Dillon S. Myer. Let's just start at the first with William A. Brophy. How closely did you work with Mr. Brophy?

CHAPMAN: Very closely with Brophy. I was...

HESS: How good a Commissioner was he?

CHAPMAN: He was very good; he was a very good Commissioner. He was not the kind of aggressive person that would be considered a man that gets into everybody else's way by pushing his program. But he did push his program pretty well with the help of this woman that I was telling you about, Dr. Aberle, and with her help he pushed those programs and helped develop them. She was pushing him hard, giving him support, furnishing him memoranda that he could handle, and people began to notice a difference of what was happening down there in the Pueblo areas that wasn't happening in other places. I was sitting where I could see what was happening to it.

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Then, Bill made a good Commissioner; as I said he was not an aggressive type of a man, not a Jebby Davidson type; but he was interested in nailing down the technical things that were the rights of the Indians. Being a lawyer, he was interested in seeing that they got their rights tied down under law; that's what he wanted to do, and he spent a lot of time on that kind of a thing.

HESS: Was that the main emphasis of his planned program?

CHAPMAN: That was the main emphasis of his program, to get their titles clarified for them so that in the future somebody couldn't come on after him and help take it away from them. Now, he did a good job on that; he didn't push too hard, but he did a good job.

HESS: What about Mr. William R. Zimmerman, who was acting commissioner in 1948?

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CHAPMAN: Well he was--I'd rather not comment on him.

HESS: Was he there for just a short time?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he wasn't in there very long.

HESS: Had he been in the Bureau of Indian Affairs for some time?

CHAPMAN: Well, I'll tell you what he had been in; he'd been an adviser to the Secretary on the Indian matters, you see.

HESS: Adviser to the Secretary of Interior on Indian Affairs.

CHAPMAN: Yes, that put him, in many ways, over the Indian Commissioner. In other ways he wasn't. That was a conflict of administrative action and law; that was the kind of thing that Ickes would do and get everybody mad.

HESS: You could cross up lines of role or administration?

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CHAPMAN: Yes. You cross up lines of the Indian crew whether you agreed with him or didn't.

HESS: Was this something that Mr. Ickes had instituted?

CHAPMAN: I wouldn't say that he instituted it necessarily, but he overused it a lot. He used it too much. You could write two books on Ickes, and they wouldn't be together; they wouldn't be the same book, and you wouldn't know that you were writing about the same man, and you could tell the truth absolutely in both of them. He was a man that was interested in the human side of the people he worked for and was responsible to and all that, and he was always interested in the human side. But before he'd get very far in the organization developing that particular program, he would have crossed lines with another overlapping organization that he set up, like he brought Bill Zimmerman in as an adviser, consultant. Bill, in his point of view, was all right. Bill was all right in his thinking and in his efforts to try

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to help the Indians, but he never did get out the--I didn't think he was well, now to tell the truth. I didn't think he was well, and therefore, I'm a little cautious about saying anything, because he didn't live many years after he left the service and he was not well and I knew it. I got quite close to him and I tried to get him away so he could get some rest and vacation time. When you're working under Ickes you are working under a triphammer, because he...

HESS: An awful lot of pressure.

CHAPMAN: Every minute. Every minute. He wants what he's asking for, he wants it yesterday and he just...

HESS: Just like working in a pressure cooker.

CHAPMAN: That's the way he was. He worked that way, too, and I'll say he did the same thing; he worked that way, he worked hard. But what he did--this is the thing that I always--I just

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have to say that he was just so wrong in. Ickes would waste more time writing up memoranda about these employees he got mad with, trying to build a record on them, and he spent more of his time, he wasted more of his time, in these so-called public fights. He would take on and create a fight; if he didn't have one he'd create one. Absolutely! He'd always pick on a Senator if he could; he'd pick out a good Senator and go to work on him.

HESS: Isn't that a little dangerous?

CHAPMAN: Yes, as dangerous as it could be.

HESS: Senators don't like that do they?

CHAPMAN: I'll say they don't. But the next day I'd have to go up and testify.

HESS: And you'd catch the fire that he would...

CHAPMAN: I'd get the fire that he started. And he did that...

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HESS: Wouldn't that work to the detriment of the Department?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we lost time and again, cases that we should have won our whole program on.

HESS: Did you ever try to explain to Ickes that his actions were not only causing you problems, but were causing the Department to lose cases that they would ordinarily have won?

CHAPMAN: I picked out two cases which I made it my business to clarify to him very carefully, to show him why we lost them.

HESS: This was a direct result of an action that he had taken.

CHAPMAN: Direct result of a stinking letter that he wrote to a Senator.

HESS: What did he say when you pointed that out? What was his reaction?

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CHAPMAN: Well, he said, "You can't let these folks run over you; you've got to run your department." Well, there's two ways to say that, to do it; you can do a thing the right way and the wrong way. He picked the wrong way every time.

Now, if he'd had good judgment on important matters, the thing that would explain it to you quicker than anything in the world, to show you how he would do a thing wrong, would be his break with President Truman. He didn't tell me what he was doing; I didn't know he was writing that letter.

HESS: When he wrote the letter about Mr. Pauley?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Now, I didn't know he was writing that letter.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, in 1949 John R. Nichols was the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; what particular plans and policies did he have?

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CHAPMAN: Well, he didn't really have any particular policies or anything promoting the welfare of the Indians. Should I say that he was not a crusader for the Indians like Collier was?

HESS: Why was he chosen then?

CHAPMAN: I don't know; I never could tell. I don't even know who recommended him.

HESS: At what time of the year did he come in? he was appointed probably by Krug, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Krug, yes.

HESS: See, you were sworn in on the first day of the last month of 1949...

CHAPMAN: Yes, that is right; that's right.

HESS: ... December the 1st of 1949; so Nichols was brought in by Krug, right?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And you don't know why he was appointed.

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CHAPMAN: Krug would have been the one that brought him in, I think.

HESS: And you don't know why he was brought in, is that right?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't, I never did know. What's the date of his appointment?

HESS: All I have is 1949.

CHAPMAN: Well, he was appointed...

HESS: So he probably came in before you became...

CHAPMAN: Probably Krug appointed him. If he didn't then, of course, Truman--I mean Ickes would have recommended him.

HESS: Well, Ickes was gone.

CHAPMAN: He was gone by that time.

HESS: In '46, he had left in '46.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was gone by then. Oh, yes, yes he

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was gone. Had Ickes gone by '46?

HESS: Yes, it was in February of '46 when the trouble over Pauley occurred. And that's when Krug came in.

CHAPMAN: You know, I want to tell you something before I quit today, while it is in my mind. I was coming back in on the train on one of my Western trips; I haven't yet got straightened in my mind whether we had two trips in May. I think we had one in May and June, both. I had a good chance to visit with Truman coming in on the train through Pennsylvania. That was a time that Clark and myself worked it very carefully through Matt Connelly, that Clark would see him first and then I'd be given a little briefing on that. Matt was to tell me what his reaction was on that; Clark was going to tell him, and this was about the state of Jerusalem. And I went in to see the President right after Clark

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left, just as he went out, and I was the last person to see him and I stayed all the way from Pennsylvania on in, another 40 minutes coming in.

Jerry, I would like to clarify a little further. The other two members that were commissioners of the Indian office. I did not know Mr.--who was that?

HESS: Nichols, John R. Nichols.

CHAPMAN: Mr. Nichols, very well at all. He wasn't there very long and I didn't get to know him very well. He was traveling a good deal and I didn't get to see him very much to talk with him. What was the other fellow's name?

HESS: Dillon S. Myer. Now, he was there from '50 to '53 and that was after the time that you became Secretary of the Interior.

CHAPMAN: That's right, I appointed him as commissioner.

HESS: Was he a very good commissioner?

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CHAPMAN: Let me say this; he was a better commissioner of the Indian office than he was of the Japanese relocation camps. You realize that the War Relocation camps were put in our Department.

HESS: And had he been in charge of those?

CHAPMAN: We put him in charge of those and he was transferred over to our department. All of that work was transferred to our department when he was the head of that. He was the head of it.

HESS: Had he handled those operations poorly or something?

CHAPMAN: This was what he and I differed about. He was handling them all right in many ways, but I wanted to close those camps...

HESS: You were just against them in principle?

CHAPMAN: In principle I was against them and I wanted to close them as fast as I could.

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HESS: Now, what time was this, what year?

CHAPMAN: Now, this was beginning right in '51. I started in to try to get them out of there, close them as fast as I could.

HESS: The Japanese relocation camps?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Did they still have those in 1951? Six years after the war?

CHAPMAN: Oh, no, no, no. Not six years afterwards.

HESS: The war was over in 1945. Weren't the relocation camps pretty well phased out right after the war?

CHAPMAN: Well, they came over to me; they were assigned to me. It's a funny way how I got them, too, how they were assigned to me. Ickes assigned me those things, that work. He commented about Myers; he said, "Now, he's a stubborn fellow and he sort of wants his own way, but," he said, "you had better

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stick to your guns if you're going to fight this out." I told him that I was going to try to close them down. I wanted to find a way to do it, with the least public expression about them, and try to get them closed as fast as I could. Now they were not closed in '52. They were still open in early '52.

HESS: That I didn't know; I thought they had been closed right after the war.

CHAPMAN: No, they were not; they were not closed immediately. Let's check that to double check it because they were closed; we had begun phasing them out. As soon as they came over to my department I started doubling up what they were doing, getting them out of there as fast as we could. Myers and myself had our differences because he didn't want them to go out unless he had a job for each one. Well, I didn't want to wait until they had to go through the rigamarole of trying to get a job for every one, because I know how

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long it takes the Government to get a job for a man, and I didn't want to wait that long. So, I said...

HESS: He wanted for everyone of the Japanese that was in there, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes, to have a job; when we released him he had to have a job to go to. Well, I knew you couldn't get one; it would take too long to do that; that would take a long time. It could be done, but it would just take too long. And so, I just ordered them closed, but finally when we got them down pretty close, I just closed the rest of them up. I signed the order.

HESS: How many Japanese were left in the camps at that time?

CHAPMAN: Not many. By that time there weren't very many, because I'd be pushing them out as fast as I could.

HESS: Now I understand that one of the...

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CHAPMAN: Now there is another thing that Jebby helped me about a great deal. Jebby helped me wonderfully on that. He was really good on that; he was right on the nail of that, our working together was really the--I give him credit, we succeeded where we couldn't have done it had we been not together on the thing.

HESS: I understand that one of the objectives was to relocate the Japanese in areas other than the West Coast.

CHAPMAN: Yes, they had that idea.

HESS: In other words, to try to see if they could have a small settlement or move some of them into Nebraska, and some into Arkansas, some into Texas, some to Kansas, instead of having such heavy concentrations along the California coast, is that correct?

CHAPMAN: There was some discussion of that, but I don't believe there were ever any orders

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written about it. But there was some discussion about that.

HESS: Okay, now, coming back to Mr. Myers as a commissioner of Bureau of Indian Affairs, we have discussed his handling of the Japanese relocation matter, but just in comparison of the way that he handled that job and the way that he handled the job of commissioner of Bureau of Indian Affairs, what plans and programs did he have to forward the life of the Indians?

CHAPMAN: I thought he did a very good job of running that bureau at the time. He was a hard working fellow, and he was stubborn, but he was conscientious and I got along with him. I could work with him, even though I could disagree with him; we could work together. He did a good job with the Indian Service, I thought, and when you say, what did he promote, he did more good, I thought, in promoting the health program and education programs that we were trying to get some money for. He kept

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working until we got some more money for it than we had been getting, and we got more money for it at that time due to his efforts. And he was entitled to the credit for that, and I thought he did a good job in that. That's one of the many things, see; he did many other things that were very good. He coordinated his actions and his work in the Indian Service so differently from--he was like a different man on that Japanese thing. He just didn't seem to have the same approach to them as he did the Indians. I had the same approach to them just as human beings. The war was over; let's turn them loose.

HESS: Did he seem to have a more humanitarian attitude towards the Indians than he did...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...the Japanese?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did.

HESS: All right, now you mentioned education; that's

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a very important point that we should cover this morning concerning the Indians.

CHAPMAN: Very important, and he did a very good job in trying to promote the educational field of the Indians, and he tried to push that health program of the Indian Service that Dr. Aberle had set up for him; and she set up a good program for him for the Indian Service.

HESS: What are some of the problems in education of the Indians? Now, so many of them are scattered, and I know that they take Indians from some of the reservations and they move them into a particular school. The one I have in mind is Haskell Indian Institute in Lawrence [Kansas].

CHAPMAN: Been there for years.

HESS: And it's been there, but this was a way that was used in the education of the Indians, to move Indians out of the reservations and bring them to a central point.

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CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Do you think that it would be better to have more of the schools on the reservations rather than schools such as Carlisle, which hasn't been an Indian school a long time, but there used to be one up there in Pennsylvania, the Carlisle School?

CHAPMAN: Carlisle School was...

HESS: That's right, and then Haskell Indian Institute. What is your opinion? What is the best way to educate them, to bring them to an Indian school or to have schools on the reservation?

CHAPMAN: I don't think you can give a real honest answer to that question unless you can have a survey made and have a better judgment about the location of the Indians, a survey of their location; how many Indians do you have that would come in this school district, and how many in this one. You see, get your...

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HESS: So many of them are so scattered that they would have to travel from miles and miles.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And they do need a boarding type of school.

CHAPMAN: You do need something like that because if you don't have that--we have one boarding school right there in Albuquerque, a very good school, very good. I thought that was a very good school. And again, Dr. Aberle was the person who was promoting and pushing that.

HESS: All right, now we have mentioned Mr. Truman's interest in Indian Affairs, and the principal thing that we had mentioned was his interest in clearing up of the land titles. What other points would you give to illustrate Mr. Truman's interest in Indian affairs? Anything else come to mind?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Truman felt that none of us had hit the right tone yet in our approach to the Indians

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in handling them. He didn't think we had hit quite the right tone, and that we should handle it with a different attitude and approach. And he caught that very fast. The thing that I was telling you...

HESS: Did you discuss that with him?

CHAPMAN: Well, what I've discussed with you in the first part of this conversation is what I've discussed with him at one time, almost give him every word of that, what I said; and he said, "Well, now, that's your job to clean that up and you stay with it and I'll back you."

Well, he did back me, I'll say this. Now, he backed me, and I may have hurt myself with Ickes doing that, because I talked to Truman when I was Assistant Secretary, and he talked with me and we discussed the Indian problem, and I said, "Let me give you a memorandum on it." Somewhere in my files there's a copy of that memorandum. I don't have it here, but I

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have put all of those in the files in there.

HESS: All right, now at the end of our first tape we were discussing a conversation that you had with Mr. Truman on board the train coming back from Pennsylvania. I don't think we finished that thought before we ran out, and we were mentioning that you were talking with him about the Israeli question...

CHAPMAN: Yes, that was the one I mentioned on the train.

HESS: And that Clark Clifford was speaking with the President and your visit with the President and Mr. Clifford's had been coordinated by Matthew Connelly.

CHAPMAN: Matt had told me pretty much; he didn't go into the details. He said, "Clark's done his job."

HESS: But this was in connection with the matter of the recognition of the State of Israel.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: That's right; now this we have covered. We have covered this in previous interviews...

CHAPMAN: Yes, we have covered that...

HESS: ...because I found a quote that said that Clark Clifford and Oscar Chapman were instrumental in changing Mr. Truman's views. In promoting this with Mr. Truman, and we've discussed that before.

CHAPMAN: Well, that was wrong, we...

HESS: That was a misstatement on my part.

CHAPMAN: Frankly I don't think Mr. Truman had ever had an idea not to really recognize these people when the time was right, and the only thing we did, I think we helped speed it up for him to be the first one to do it. And we got him to send his telegram off that night and Dean Acheson was out here on his farm and he got him over the phone and he told Dean what he wanted and he said, "Well,

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Mr. President, can't we send it off tomorrow?"

He said, "No, I want to be the first one to send it." He said, "Don't you come in just for that;" he said, "I'll get it written up right here."

HESS: I understand Mr. Acheson was opposed to that move, is that right?

CHAPMAN: He was; he was opposed.

HESS: Did you discuss that with him? Did you talk with him about that at a later date?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What did he have to say?

CHAPMAN: With Dean?

HESS: With Dean.

CHAPMAN: Yes, I talked with Dean just a bit about it. Dean was a very cautious diplomat; he wouldn't say much about anything of his position about anything.

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HESS: Why had he been against the recognition of Israel at that time?

CHAPMAN: He thought that we were going to involve ourselves and get us all involved with our allies, with the Arabs, and the whole group in there. There are four or five of those states he thought would turn against us, and be very damaging to us.

HESS: Did he mention the situation of the oil interests?

CHAPMAN: He just said they, of course--they would be devastated by this. That was all he said; Dean was not in the habit of saying very much about anything about his position. He's talking to you today, and you have lunch with him tomorrow; he wouldn't say anything about what I said yesterday. I believe in this or I opposed this. He won't tell you whether he opposed it yesterday or not.

HESS: Pretty good diplomat, wasn't he?

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CHAPMAN: I found that out to be a very smart thing. Don't quote what you said about your position to somebody. If you've told it, it's all right to tell it, but let it stay and don't say anything more about it. Then you keep it from becoming an argument.

HESS: Well, to wind up matters today, would you tell me your evaluation of the handling of Indian matters during the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: I thought the Indian matters were handled, under the circumstances of what we inherited, I thought they were handled very well. I was disappointed in not being able ever to accomplish what I wanted to try out with the Indians on two or three things, and some of those were things that Jebby was strong for and was very helpful.

HESS: Have we covered those?

CHAPMAN: Yes, we've covered those, but Jebby was most helpful in programs that I was interested

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in in Indian Affairs; he certainly supported them as far as I know. There's one other thing that I want to get in here some way or another. You know, the Secretary had a policy that he would assign a number of bureaus to each Assistant Secretary and he changed them every two years.

HESS: Is that right? That was the routine to make those changes every two years.

CHAPMAN: Yes. But the oil matters--he gave them to me the day I went in and he never changed them, anything dealing with the oil, having oil...

HESS: You kept that responsibility right on through.

CHAPMAN: Right on through, never changed the whole time.

HESS: Did you ever discuss with Mr. Ickes why he did not make that change every two years, why he just left that responsibility in your hands?

CHAPMAN: No, I never did. I never talked with him

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about it, because he had some reason for it and it was only up to me to do what I thought was right about this as it came along. Evidently, on the handling of the oil things, he learned that I was doing them the way he wanted them done. I guess that was about all I could tell; and I never asked him anything about it, one way or another. And that stayed as a matter of jurisdiction under me, petroleum matters; and that was the only thing that did. All of the other bureaus were changed. I had two or three bureaus and he changed those.

HESS: I believe that after you became Secretary of the Interior didn't you follow the same policy of rotating the assignments under your Assistant Secretaries?

CHAPMAN: Pretty much. Pretty much the same policy.

HESS: Did you find that to be an advantage to the Department to rotate the jobs of the Assistant Secretaries? To have one man in charge of public

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power, one man in charge of mineral resources for about two years and then to change them around?

CHAPMAN: I did. I found that that was some advantage in the administrative training and technique. You wanted to give that assistant secretary an opportunity to be acquainted with every part of the Department. Well, if he's just staying in this cubby hole here, just this area, all

together, why, he would never know very much about the Department; he'd only know just that area, nothing else.

So, I will close by saying that I was satisfied that we had done all that we could for the Indian office program, and we had some programs we were working on that were very helpful and forward looking and we were cut short, really, by the fight that Ickes had carried on all the time with the Congressmen on the Hill, and I couldn't get an appropriation for it.

HESS: Do you think you could have been more successful if you had had more money? Was money the problem?

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CHAPMAN: That is one; that isn't all. No, there is something more than just money. You've got to have the atmosphere around you more conducive and more active in behalf of your programs, or what you are interested in; that is among your Congressmen, particularly your committees. See, those committees in the House have around 20 or 25 members. You ought to get to know them, and you ought to get to know them and sell them your program. Well, I did that pretty much, all I could. You see, when Krug came in, I continued to do the thing--he asked me to continue doing what I was doing, not to change. So, I kept on running the Department and he didn't bother with it. He got tired of that afternoon mail that would come in there at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, stacked up on your desk, and you would have to try to sign them out that night.

HESS: What seemed to be the attitude of the Senators and Representatives from the Western States? Were they pro-Indian, were they anti-Indian, were they

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neutral, were they helpful?

CHAPMAN: They were pretty much pro-Indian as a whole; not all of them. You had two or three like Pat MacCarran and Jed Johnson that were sitting in strategic places up on the Hill that were opposed to anything we did for the Indians.

HESS: Their interest ran more to the business interests in their area, did it not, cattle and cattle interests?

CHAPMAN: Cattle and mining.

HESS: Mining.

CHAPMAN: Of course, that became a problem; the cattle people wanted all the grazing land, and they tried to get it. Then Carpenter came in as Director of the new division and he was...

HESS: He was an industry man?

CHAPMAN: He was an industry man; he started to help them.

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Now, as I said here awhile ago, I made a comment upon Ickes' choice of people, picking people. There's one that I made a mistake on. I recommended him.

HESS: Carpenter?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I recommended him, and he surprised me very much; I was quite surprised and disappointed in him. We were very good friends; we were social friends, but we were miles apart on him handling the grazing situation.

HESS: Before he came in you did not think that he would take the cattlemen and the beef industries' view, be on their side?

CHAPMAN: I didn't think he would; I thought he had made enough money that he could live on anyhow, whether he raised another steer or not, because he had made a lot of money, and I didn't think he was that interested in making more.

HESS: But it turned out that way?

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CHAPMAN: But it turned out so that he let his ideas go down the line of free enterprise. Free for the cattle people.

HESS: Overgrazing the land.

CHAPMAN: Overgrazing the area and then he got the--I managed to save one little part of that fight. We were in a major fight about whether we should give the advisory boards any authority.

Now, I saw that he had us licked on it, because every Congressman up there was for it. Just everyone I talked to was for it. Well, what I did, when I say that I was going to be licked on that, I got a friend of mine, who was chairman, Wayne Aspinall--he was chairman of the Public Lands Committee, the Interior Department's committee--and I got Wayne and I said, "Look, Wayne, if you can't support this idea of not giving any authority to the board, put the final authority in the Secretary of Interior and let him handle it. Let him take the headaches now."

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Well, that kind of caught Carpenter off base; he didn't expect that at all. I kept it very cautiously and didn't say anything. So, the day came for us to send the bill up on the Hill and endorse it. Krug wouldn't send up anything. Well, Ickes didn't either; he wouldn't send it--Ickes would never have made that. Ickes made the appointment on that, too. I recommended it. Ickes didn't bother about the thing at all. He just didn't get interested in that public land part of it. He was interested

in the fight the cattlemen were always having with the regular farmer in trying to take his land and all, but never was interested enough to take up the fight for him.

Now, I moved in on that at a crucial moment, and at the last minute--and Wayne was on the conference committee between the House and the Senate--I had gotten the Senate to agree to stick together and support me on it--sent it to conference--I had a difference of opinion between

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the two, so I got a conference on it--and I got Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House committee, to put himself on as chairman for the Interior Committee. He did, and he said, "Oscar, why don't we do this? Why don't we put [John Phillips] Saylor," who was a Republican from Pennsylvania, "why don't we put him on that?" He said, "He'd appreciate that as a little boost." And he said, "Some of my colleagues will jump on me a little about it, but I can take it, and put him on it. I'll put the authority in the Secretary's hands and just put a little phrase in there for the Secretary of Interior and that means it'll come back to me."

So, while Ickes was in there, I still got that through, got that piece of legislation through, and I thought I'd never get it, because Ickes was running a fight with Congressman Johnson every day, and I was having a rough time getting around the thing.

Incidentally, that was one of the cases that

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I got the President to personally talk to me about that. "How are these cattle people, what are they doing out here, are they eating up all the range?"

I said, "Yes, they are, Mr. President."

He said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

I said, "I'm going to stop it, because when their next year's application comes in for his permit for use of the range, he's going to have to give me the number of cattle he ran the last year and I'm going to make each member of his advisory board to sign that."

So, I'll have all of the advisory board, and there are usually 10 or 15 on these districts, and I said, "I'm going to have all of them sign it. I'll tie it up tight around their neck, and then they'll have to fight it out with their cattle people right out there on their home ground. Now, here's why I can do that. If this cattleman here, who's on that advisory board,

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finds out that John Smith over here, who's on that board, too, has made an application for 500 head of cattle this year and he only ran three last year, they're going to catch him trying to steal

200 head of cattle extra to run on the range. And that's going to be a violation of the rules, because we're going to say how many he can run."

HESS: Yes, the total number.

CHAPMAN: The total number. And then from that you divide it up equally among the people and there are only so many spaces, see. We caught them in a month. I got them in a fight; I got them in the damndest fight that you ever saw in your life, and it didn't bother me anymore. Never bothered me anymore.

I got them stewing about the thing; they were mad because they didn't have any authority, they had lost that. And then I found out this other thing was even more powerful than having the authority written in the bill. It didn't make any difference.

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They fought so hard. All they had to do was have one of my supervisors check these range headquarters every month. I had them check up on two or three on which I got some information. It was known that I wanted them to report it to me if they found anybody asking for more than they had last year. They didn't think it was going to amount to anything, so they assumed it didn't make much difference. They went on and did what I said. Instead of putting what they'd asked for last year, they'd add another hundred to it, another hundred head of cattle. I don't know why; that seemed to be a magic number. They would add another hundred to their run.

HESS: You can always go up another hundred.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Or at least by units anyway, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred.

CHAPMAN: Go up by units, and they would start in at a

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hundred. They'd add a hundred. The second year I found one fellow had run a hundred the year before and he put another hundred on this year. Well, we just caught him by the neck, because he was fined so many hundred dollars for the number of cattle he ran and then we cut back his head to run.

HESS: Shall we shut it off for the day?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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Fourteenth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C. January 12, 1973

By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: To begin this morning, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Truman has passed away since our last interview, his death occurring on December the 26th. And a week ago today at Washington Cathedral, you and I were both present at the memorial service held for him. Let's spend a few moments this morning with reminiscences. What went through your mind during Mr. Truman's last few days, and when you heard of his death, and perhaps what are your favorite memories of Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Naturally, when the news came to me of his death I was very shocked and very grieved, more so than for any public official I ever had the privilege of being associated with. Mr. Truman, as he has passed on, and the reminiscence by the news media and the press and the other publications have all, practically all, have given him a better setting in his place in history than anyone ever dreamed

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that he would have--at least his enemies certainly thought he would never have it. But there's never been a man in public life that has gained recognition so fast in the last couple of years of his life, and has gained such stature in the minds of the people of America and the people of the world. You combine the two together. I've never seen a man that had a public career so interlinked with his foreign policies. That was the continuing growth and strength of the man's work and his character and everything.

You could see it develop in your mind's eye as you sat there and listened to that sermon, to the comments by the dean. And I was naturally very touched by these things, because they brought to my memory many of the fine things that Mr. Truman did for which he never got credit at the time of the action that he took on certain subjects. And one particular one that I have to clarify in my thinking on this, is his help in pushing through the civil rights program that

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was so wide and extensive, so much greater than--people who were working on it didn't realize how far-reaching that program carried the whole principle of human rights, and the care and attention that he had given to that subject, and to which he had given so much thought. He knew the subject so well. The problems that were encompassed in this whole subject were so far greater than, really, many of his people who worked close with him realized. Some who worked close to him never did catch the significance of the far-reaching effect of what he had done. Most of them had, but there were a few who didn't quite catch the strong significance of his efforts, of what he was doing. They got it and they got it in a fine way; they got it through contact, of visiting with Mr. Truman, just as we are visiting here this morning, and talking.

Mr. Truman was a man that wasted no words. When he had a conference with you about something that he wanted to talk about, that he had

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on his mind, like the civil rights issue, of the whole human rights problem as we think of it today, he had so expanded that and studied it and had it so well briefed in his mind that he could talk with a man about it in the most minute detail, of where the injustices had begun, and where they continued, and where they were still continuing as of today.

To bring that point to a head, he was a man that when he made a decision he didn't worry about it. He had done the best he could to get the best information he could on the subject matter before he made his decision. There's where most people didn't understand him. He did that. He made a very cautious study of the subject matter before he made a decision on something that was very vital and important. Something comparable to the recognition of Israel as a state was so well thought out by him that he caught the reactions of the different ones of us who talked with him; he knew those who were brought to the forefront in this fight in many ways. Some came by way of—

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if I were putting it in religious terms, I would say by expression of faith and a new development of the relationship between ourselves. Putting it in the phraseology of the man on the street we would say that we learn to live together, and we had to learn to live together or we will not survive.

That is true, not only of the Jewish people, it's true in several other areas of the world; that's still ahead of us to be worked out. Mr. Truman was working on that phase of his problem, of that kind of a problem arising from another group of ethnic people, of how they lived, and how they worked with their fellow man.

The Jewish thing was close at hand to him; he knew the Jewish people so well, and he had worked closely with them. He had always been sympathetic to the fact that the Jewish people had been persecuted so many times during the course of history, that they had taken such a terrific abuse in their daily living, that he saw what they had gone through, and he had a

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very deep sympathy for them and the problems that they had faced.

Now, I try to bring this together to tell you that is one of the reasons why Truman was so recognized in his later years, differentiating from his early years while he was in active duty; and they didn't give him the recognition, the press, the other media for public communications, never gave him a proper place in history in their comments and in their thinking about Mr. Truman. And that is why they missed it. They missed this phase of Mr. Truman in their thinking about him, because Mr. Truman, as I said, wasted no words or time, or anything, but he would go straight to the point in his conference, whatever the subject was, and discuss the subject immediately from the heart and the core of the subject, and discuss it with you in a very quick manner like that; he'd do it in a very quick manner.

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Now, he's a man that had a very deep sympathy for people. That was not known generally to the public as a whole until in the latter years they began to recognize his greatness. I began to see that they were recognizing it in his latter years, his last two or three years in office. He was beginning to be recognized then as a man of great stature, as a man that made a decision, and that he had made it on such solid grounds. It was based upon solid information so he didn't have to change his position or make any changes in his position during the course of that time, because he had done so much more studying of this subject than people ever dreamed that he had done.

I know that you know these things, because of your fine relationship with the President's family, and I appreciate your knowledge of them that you would easily catch how what I'm saying is connected with the facts, life as it developed during those eight years, almost eight, that he had in office.

Another thing he did to go through and support

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his particular position that he was taking on a special issue--I'll use the Israel subject as an example that will bring us closer to the point. In that case there were many differences among people close to him; they didn't agree entirely with the question of how the Israel thing was handled. Some didn't think that we ought to recognize them. Those who didn't want to recognize them were not motivated by any prejudice against the Jewish people. Their feeling about it was thought out and based upon other reasons involving their desire to protect the interests of the United States and the American people.

HESS: In a recent interview we were discussing Dean Acheson; what was Mr. Acheson's views on this matter?

CHAPMAN: I'm just coming to that.

HESS: Good.

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CHAPMAN: I'm just coming to that now, because he was so important in this and being such a thoughtful man in return; he was a brilliant man, and when he gave you a position on something, a statement on an issue of this importance, he had given some careful study and thinking about what and how this ought to be done.

I never had a chance to discuss this very much with Mr. Acheson, for which I was very sorry. I wanted to and the opportunity just didn't get around to where we could spend some time on it. Mr. Acheson worked out in his own mind, and for his own reasons which he supported, why the United States should not recognize Israel at this time. First, he had an approach that I think was

a little bit unsound. From the long range point of view, it was a little unsound, where he really believed that we had had the habit of following the English people so much that we would be following them in this case instead of leading, and he felt we shouldn't appear to the world that we were following England

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because she was doing this; and that we ought to steer our own course, map our own course, and state it to the world as to our position, and not to recognize Israel per se as a state. And he felt very deeply about it--it wasn't just a casual passing with him--he felt rather deeply about it, I think, and I give him credit as being a man of deep sincerity and honesty. He felt this was wrong for the American people and its future to continue the course we had been apparently following. According to his thinking at least, we had been following the British policy trends for a long time. Certainly he was thinking it out in that direction far more than was actually true. I don't think it was actually as clear as that, or as factual as he put it, in those terms, to them. I don't think it ever met that test, that we followed the English in that sense.

HESS: Do you think that the fact that the oil producing lands in the area were mostly controlled and owned by the Arabs had any influence on Mr.

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Acheson's views on the non-recognition of the new State of Israel?

CHAPMAN: Well, now when you mention the oil you bring up another subject, that is so powerful in its influence of the American position in the Middle East, and what we did or did not do in that area. Dean felt, based upon his knowledge, that the supply of the oil to the world was so heavily bearing in the hands of the Arab people, that it could cause us unnecessary trouble in the future, and one that would be extremely damaging to us in our relationship with the rest of the Arab world, all the rest of it, and their friends.

I did not think that the oil situation had as much influence on the world picture as our oil boys over here thought, or as a lot of American people thought. I don't think it had the influence that they thought it had, because since that time we have made many discoveries that have brought in

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new oil fields that will help us for a hundred years or more.

HESS: We still rely quite heavily on the oil producing nations though, do we not, the Arab nations?

CHAPMAN: We do, but that's a very well thought out plan; let's use their oil first, as long as we can.

HESS: And then use our own resources.

CHAPMAN: And then use ours when we have to. You see...

HESS: Was that thought articulated during the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: Not too much, not too much. It was not articulated too much. However, I had one good discussion on it.

HESS: With whom?

CHAPMAN: With the President.

HESS: With the President. What did he say?

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CHAPMAN: He agreed with me part of the way on that. He thought that I was probably leaning too far on the--putting too much hope, putting too much...

HESS: Emphasis...

CHAPMAN: Let's say that I was putting too much stress in my discussions about their power that they would have in relation to this whole thing, if they had done this. Otherwise, he didn't agree exactly 100 percent with my position on what we would do and what would happen if we did it, you see; and he didn't agree with Dean's position on the precedent, because Dean was being right out openly opposed to the program of recognizing Israel, and Dean was a very cautious man. He was a typically trained and developed State Department man.

HESS: Did he think that if we did recognize Israel that it might shut off the oil flow from some of the Arab nations?

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CHAPMAN: He did; he did very definitely. He felt that could happen in a very short time after the action was taken. He didn't allow any time element to evolve there; he thought it would be taken immediately by the Arab nations and the friends of the Arabs.

HESS: What did Mr. Truman say when Mr. Acheson would give those views?

CHAPMAN: As I told you in the beginning, he never wasted any words in a conference, and when he had his views made up on an issue that touched upon human rights and the needs of human beings to have and need certain things in life, he didn't hesitate to speak very quickly and very frankly, and he told Dean--I wouldn't say he did this in my presence, because what he did, he talked to Dean on the telephone out at his farm between 4 and 4:30 in the afternoon, as we got...

HESS: On the day of recognition?

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CHAPMAN: Yes, on the day of recognition, and as we had come in on the train trip, the Western trip, the 10th of May we got in here I think; at least that date of recognition would give you the day that we got back into the city from the Western trip.

HESS: From the Western trip in June of '48.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: But he phoned Mr. Acheson at Mr. Acheson's farm, is that right?

CHAPMAN: He phoned him out at his house and said, "Dean"--now, the President tells me this...

HESS: Had you also heard the same thing from Mr. Acheson?

CHAPMAN: Not all of it, but parts of it. Parts of it; Dean was very cautious about ever quoting what he was saying. He was probably more cautious than I am about quoting the President.

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HESS: So, you learned more of this from the President than you did from Mr. Acheson?

CHAPMAN: I did.

HESS: What did the President tell you?

CHAPMAN: Well, he related to me his conversation with Dean that he had over the telephone, which was more revealing than anything else that I had had anyplace.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: Remember in my last interview--I think it was the last or next to it--I told you of the conference that Clark Clifford and I had had with the President on the train, and it was done so quietly and so--nobody knew a thing about it because we didn't discuss it, neither of us discussed that to anyone. Now, there was a reception; I think the Democratic Women's Club was giving a reception for Mrs. Truman and the

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President over at the Mayflower Hotel at 6 o'clock that night, and as I said, we were getting off of the train at 4 or 4:30 and he drove straight to the White House and right to the phone and called Dean. When he got over to the reception all of us were mixing around. So, he walked up

to me and with a good big smile on his face--"Well," he said, "you ought to be happy." He said, "I signed it within fifteen minutes after they declared the State of Israel. I have signed the appropriate communications, to the officials of the State of Israel."

And I said, "You're going to have some problems with my friend, I'm afraid, on that."

"No," he said, "that fellow even works with your friend; he knew we had an honest difference of opinion about this. Having that honest difference of opinion he recognized my right to my opinion as he did his, and in this case I didn't agree with him."

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HESS: He had phoned Mr. Acheson, though, before signing the recognition.

CHAPMAN: He phoned him to say to him--Dean says, "I'll come right in." Now the President tells me all this. He says, "Mr. President, I'll be right in to prepare the wire right away."

He said, "Oh, don't go to all that trouble." He said, "The boys here know enough about that to do it." He said, "I'll get some of the boys to draft it here and we'll send it out." And he had Charlie Murphy and Clark Clifford in mind to help draft it, I know. From the way he talked that's what he had in mind. And he said, "No, Dean, don't bother with coming in; it's a long way in here and it's late," and he said, "You shouldn't bother about doing it and I don't want you to go to that trouble." And he said, "You won't like my position on that anyhow, and maybe it's just as well you don't bother with it, just let it go."

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Dean said, "Well, I'll be very glad to come in and do it for you the way you want it, just what you want. I know Mr. President I don't agree with you; as to the future I'm afraid that we will pay for it during my lifetime."

The President told him, "I don't agree with you, Dean, that this will happen. I don't believe it will happen that way you think it will, and I don't put the same emphasis of power in the hands of the Arab people because of the oil that you do."

Now, I caught that in my talks with Mr. Truman that Dean didn't quite put the power in their hands that they thought they had; he didn't presume they had that much power, or would have, because of the production of oil.

Now, you see, when you open up a big oil field, and you strike a big field, and you got a fabulous flow of oil, you bring that oil up very fast; it comes out very fast, and it produces from that field clear out of proportion to the amount of

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oil that's being used to the amount of oil that's being produced. It's out of proportion to it, and if you're a small country and you hit a pool of oil, before you know it that pool of oil has sunk to a very low production level. In going through the reviews of all these fields, you've got the most conservative minds and you've got very liberal minds among the geologists. Describing the difference between a liberal point of view in a geologist and a conservative one may be simply illustrated. Mr. DeGolyer is, I think, one of the greatest geologists in the world, on oil and gas. I think he was absolutely the leading man in his field. Mr. DeGolyer was a conservative thinker in making his reports and in commenting upon his finding of fact on this particular field that he has surveyed. You will find that he has made a more conservative evaluation of that field than some people have ever thought that he would do. But I had

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known Mr. DeGolyer almost as long as his son-in-law, George McGhee, had known him. I had known Mr. DeGolyer for many years, and I saw his work. I saw how he translated his evaluation of a field, on a given field; how he gave the evaluation of that field differently from what another man over here would. For instance, Bob Nathan--he's not a geologist in that sense that Mr. DeGolyer was at all; he wasn't at all.

Now, Mr. DeGolyer did try to support our Government position on this; actually I turned his support and his endorsement of the oil companies' position 180° around, because if he was correct in saying that we would use up all the oil that we've got, entirely out of proportion to our consumption and our production, then he was saying that we would be out of oil. That raises my question of using the foreign oil first.

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Now, there are two schools of thought on that question clear across the board, on using foreign goods whenever you can, where it's a natural product, and where it's a removable product, and shall I say, a very limited product that will be destroyed...

HESS: Depletion, I believe is the word they use isn't it?

CHAPMAN: That's a very bad word; I don't use it. I testified once before the Congress and I used that word, and I created quite a conference on that word. An entirely new set of questions was raised immediately; they came up from the source that I would expect, and I was expecting it when I gave it. I knew that this was raised when I...

HESS: Who raised it?

CHAPMAN: Well, in the first place, a liberal from Texas raised it. [Ralph W.] Yarborough was quite a liberal from Texas. When you speak of a man as to

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whether he was a liberal or not, you've got to take into consideration his environment, the atmosphere that he was raised in and so on.

HESS: Did he oppose the oil depletion allowance?

CHAPMAN: No, he supported it.

HESS: He supported it?

CHAPMAN: He supported it. He later changed; he later changed, but at that time he supported it. That surprised me, because I thought he was just on the other side.

HESS: The Secretary of State in 1948 at the first recognition of Israel was not Acheson, but it was Marshall.

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: What do you recall about George Marshall's view on the recognition of Israel as he was the man who was Secretary of State in 1948?

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CHAPMAN: That was Dean.

HESS: Well, I believe he was out of Government at that time. He had been Assistant Secretary a little earlier, but I believe he was out of Government at this time. He was back in in January of 1949, at the time of the de jure recognition.

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes, that's right, that's right.

HESS: But I believe that the de facto recognition came first

CHAPMAN: That came...

HESS: In June of '48.

CHAPMAN: ...in June of '48.

HESS: Yes, and I don't think Mr. Acheson was in Government at that time; he later came in of course, the day after inauguration day of '49, January the 21st of 1949.

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CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: I believe he had been out of Government for a couple of years.

CHAPMAN: He had been out for awhile. Wasn't he in the Treasury Department for a while?

HESS: He certainly was.

CHAPMAN: He was in the Treasury for a while.

HESS: I think Assistant Secretary or something like that.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: And then he came back. Do you recall what George Marshall's views were on the recognition of Israel?

CHAPMAN: I don't know it well enough to be certain about it. What I would give you would have to be purely a guess job and I would be simply guessing on what he had done. I got the impression; I

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had the impression, and I don't know whether I'm correct or not, because I never sat down with Marshall and had a chance to talk with him like I did Dean, as I had with Dean, and as I had with some other members of the group.

HESS: You had a better working relationship with Mr. Acheson, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Much better. Much better.

HESS: How did Mr. Marshall's relationship stack up with the other members of the Cabinet. Was he a little distant from them, too?

CHAPMAN: Well, let's put it this way: You first put it in the terms that he was a little distant to his colleagues, but you soon, after you worked with him for a while, you soon learned that that bore no inference whatever towards an issue for or against an issue. He liked the man and trusted him or he didn't, and he worked pretty much on that level.

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HESS: Well, those were my words. I probably should have expressed it a different way, "What were his relationships with the other members of the Cabinet," instead of slanting it one way or the other as I did.

CHAPMAN: Well, your slant that I got out of it really supported what I was somewhat uncertain about, but had the belief, that Marshall at first was not favorable to this, but he later became--well, it was this way--Marshall was trained as a military man and he...

HESS: He was a VMI graduate.

CHAPMAN: He was very definitely a VMI graduate, and he had grounded into him the absolute belief and the idea that you had to support the Chief. The President's office was entitled to your support and if you couldn't give it you should quit. And he felt that very keenly, and we had almost a whole evening's conversation on that subject one night.

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HESS: With General Marshall?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: At his house?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Just he and I.

HESS: What did he have to say about it? What was the occasion?

CHAPMAN: Well, the occasion came up because we both were from Virginia, and he was a little surprised to learn that.

HESS: To hear that you were from Virginia?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was surprised to hear that I was from Virginia, and then we got to reminiscing about some of the old-timers where they--passing of a generation, was passing. I was just coming into this new generation and Marshall was going out. Time is going in that direction, see.

Now, I said to him, "Well, Virginia

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is changing and I believe that the attitude of the people of Virginia is changing a great deal, and I believe in another ten years you will have a different Virginia than you have now in the expressions of their public officials on social issues, particularly about their expressions on social matters, such as the civil rights issue, the question of social security, and matters of that kind.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He said, "Well, I think you're partly right, but I don't think it's going as fast as you think it will. But," he said, "I think the ultimate end will be--change will be what you are reaching for, and I think you will get it in time; you will get it."

"Now, of course, it's a question of timing; it will be a question of how energetic and how successful you are in working your relationships with Congress, to a degree of successful relation-

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ships with Congress, and if you do that," he said, "I think you can bring your question to the front, and get it discussed in an atmosphere that's much more favorable."

HESS: In your opinion, what were General Marshall's views on civil rights, and here I mean mainly black citizens' civil rights.

CHAPMAN: That's right. For Marshall, it was a personal matter with him. If he didn't like a fellow, he didn't like him; then he just wouldn't have anything to do with him. But whether he was a Negro or not, he wouldn't let that influence him as to what he did.

HESS: Did you ever hear him make any comments on civil rights matters or on the aspirations of the blacks?

CHAPMAN: I never heard him make a derogatory remark about the Negroes in any respect whatsoever. I've heard him comment upon the rights of the Negroes.

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He said, "The trouble you and I are in--of course, you're just coming in, I'm going out;" he put it that way. And I said, "The energy that you show around here betrays your words. You would never make me or anybody else from Virginia think that you are going out, anyway. You're going to be right here helping us carry through these programs; and it's going to be men like you that are going to bring around these other fellows who are leaning towards the support of the civil rights issue and the rights of the Negro."

And I said, "I think you are far enough along in your thinking about the Negro's rights that in the end you are going to be more help than a lot of these hot liberals that are now shouting, 'We shall learn now,' and so on."

HESS: We shall overcome.

CHAPMAN: We shall overcome. I said, "You are going to be there; you will be at the gate right when we come."

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He chuckled a little bit and said, "Well, I don't know about that;" he said, "let me put it this way, I'll be at the second gate if I'm not at the first."

Now, what he meant by that in the terms of our conversation, was that he was leaning that way and if Truman got the thought and wanted to do it, he was going to support him. He was going to do it on the basis of two principles. First, you should do it or resign from your office, if you can't support him. The other was, the time has come for some change, and how we handle that change will determine how fast we will be able to accomplish the rights we are trying to obtain for them. He says, "I don't agree with them on their methods of trying to get what they think is coming to them; however, if I had waited a hundred and fifty years for my rights to be recognized, I guess I'd be just as hot about it as they are."

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HESS: He made that statement?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he made that statement to me. Now, it didn't mean to me that he was out and out for the civil rights issue and its people, and all they stood for; I didn't get it that he meant all of that. But I got it to mean to me that here's a man that at the right time, his reputation is so established, that he can support the civil rights issue with President Truman without getting hurt. He's not in politics, so he wouldn't be hurt politically, in that respect; so, he would be one of the first types of man, the kind of men that would be real valuable to Truman to help put this program across. He would be worth more to Truman than any man he had on his Cabinet in regard to the question of civil rights when it got down to the end, because he never wasted any shots; he always saved his ammunition until it counted, and that's what he did, and that's the way he was handling the civil rights thing. He was going to support

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the President's position. I'm convinced that he was going to support the President's position. Now, I don't know what he has written about it and I don't know what he said about it or what anybody else has said about him.

I would like to go back to say that Secretary Marshall was not a man given to a lot of public speeches to attract attention, and to try to attract attention on that basis; but he did try, on a conversational basis, to get with a man that was of some importance and to try to talk with that man. If he was trying to win him over to his side, he would take the opportunity, that kind of an opportunity, to talk with him about it.

On the other hand, he'd let that opportunity also be used to convince himself of the other fellow's position, let him convince him. He was the type of fellow who'd want you to support your position. If you said so and so, what do you back it up with? That's a very good, really a very good policy to follow, to learn the habit of

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supporting your statements that you make that are sometimes shocking to some people, probably not to others. And he was that kind, and he wanted you to support your position on it.

I had the highest regard for Marshall; I had a very high regard for him. I felt he never once attempted to use his friendship with Mr. Truman to promote himself or his interests whatsoever, not in any respect.

Now there are people who will attempt to use their friendship with Truman , and sometimes they push--when a man is doing that he usually overplays his hand and...

HESS: Who do you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Well, a few friends of mine who were in that Cabinet I liked very much, but they overplayed their hand a little bit in trying to

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impress people of their closeness to the President and their power with the President. I don't like to use people's name in a way that's not complimentary when the man has passed away though.

I'll speak freely with you about Louis Johnson who is a very active, hard working man, tough as a mule, and he'd do anything to gain his point and win a position. And he'd make you think that he just slept with the President and that's the reason he was late for breakfast with the Vice President. He did that to a degree that was revolting to those of us that really knew the picture, and Johnson and myself had worked together very closely in the American Legion.

HESS: He had been national commander, had he not?

CHAPMAN: Johnson wanted to be.

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HESS: What's that?

CHAPMAN: Wanted to be national commander.

HESS: Wasn't he one year?

CHAPMAN: No, he missed it.

HESS: Oh.

CHAPMAN: I don't think he got it. I know he wanted it; I know he wanted it, and I'd traded with him. I was in that convention and I traded a little bit with him, because I was the one who really got the child welfare program resolution through the convention, to support child welfare, a child welfare program set up under a format that I had given to him for this resolution.

HESS: At an American Legion convention?

CHAPMAN: At an American Legion convention.

HESS: Roughly what year was that, do you recall?

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CHAPMAN: That's back in--should be around, somewhere around between '28 and '32, somewhere within that period.

HESS: You were representing Colorado at that time?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I was a delegate that year.

HESS: Did you hold a state office?

CHAPMAN: No, I never did. I never held a state office politically, or that way either. I never held a state office.

HESS: And Johnson had come up through West Virginia's

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...American Legion.

CHAPMAN: He had, and he had gone quite strong among the Legionaires throughout the country, and...

HESS: Well, we can check on that, but I'm pretty sure that he was national commander one year.

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CHAPMAN: Let's see if he was; he might have been.

HESS: We will check it.

CHAPMAN: He might have been commander. If he was a commander it makes a real good story in relation to the child welfare program.

HESS: What was that?

CHAPMAN: Because he was opposed to the child welfare program in the Legion. You see, I had put in a resolution, I had put in a resolution and I put it a lot of times, to set up a child welfare division in the headquarters of the American Legion, working directly under the national commander, an experienced professional worker who had had experience. So, he got this woman, and she was an experienced woman, and she knew how to handle those men like a

charm, she was really marvelous at it, at handling these men. Johnson was opposed to the welfare program, and the reason I was thinking that he, while he ran for it, he missed it.

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HESS: It could have been another year that he was commander.

CHAPMAN: Yes, it could have been another year.

HESS: Because I'm not sure what year he was commander.

CHAPMAN: I'm not either, I'm not either, but he might have been, because he was very active.

HESS: He opposed your idea?

CHAPMAN: He opposed this idea and here's what I did. You can check this timing with Paul McNutt. Now, Paul McNutt was running that year against Johnson; those two were pitted against each other, and this is what I did. I had the resolution with a certain number of copies all put together, and in my room that morning, Paul McNutt came to my room first, they found that I had four states of the West committed to me, that they would support whomever I supported for national commander,

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if they would agree to support the resolution on the child welfare program.

So, I had Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada; I had four states. I think those were the four. I had five states, I had five states. I had one more state in there. And they were committed to me, not for me as commander, but committed to support whomever I supported for national commander on the basis that they had agreed to support the child welfare amendment--resolution.

So, Paul McNutt came into my room that morning before I got dressed and I went ahead and was dressing while we were talking. He said, "Oscar," he said, "can you support me?" He said, "Now, I haven't got the chance to know you very well, but," he said, "I think you and I could get along well together, and I'd be delighted to have you in my setup in some way; things that you are interested in, I think I'd be interested in."

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"Well," I said, "that could be settled in a very few minutes. Are you interested in this child welfare resolution and have you read it?"

He said, "I read it last night." He said, "Some woman came to me last night and asked me if I had read it and said if I hadn't read it I ought to see you." This is the woman he finally got put in there to run it later, because she was an expert, really an expert on the thing."

Paul McNutt said, "I read it and I see nothing wrong with it." He said, "What you're doing, you're not limiting the future conventions. You're committing the present convention to put aside 25 cents of every dollar that came in, that came in for dues; 25 cents out of every dollar that came in for dues would be set aside for the child welfare program and be spent solely for that and nothing else."

I said, "That's exactly what it does, and that's what I want, unless you think we can get 50 cents."

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He said, "I don't think you can get 50 cents, but," he says, "I believe you can get 25 cents."

"Well," I said, "if it didn't, you'll give us enough money to really set up a skeleton organization to really run a one-man show, as this would have to be by the nature of the thing, a one-man show." He said, "And that's what this looks like you're doing; you are trying to get it started and later on try to get some more."

I said, "That's exactly my position there. Later on I'm going to ask for another 25 cents." And I said, "Now, I'm going to double this as long as I can and keep on chiseling on the fees and dues until I've got enough in that fund to really get some woman that would be a person interested in child welfare."

"Well," he said, "now, you're interested in child welfare because you've worked with the Juvenile Court of Colorado."

I said, "Yes, I did."

"Well," he said, "you've got some friends in

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your delegation; they think the world of you, they will do whatever you want, because not that they think you are such a strong Legionaire, but that you are strong on the human issues that you are interested in." And he said, "I'm interested in that." He said, "When I was Governor I got a good record to show you that I supported those things as much as I possibly could and still be re-elected."

"Well," I said, "all right, Paul, if that's your word, I'll give you my word and I will support you and will do my best to get the five states signed up; and, now, I've got to work fast, because we vote today."

He said, "Yes."

We voted that afternoon. Johnson in the meantime came in to see me. At noon I still hadn't had breakfast, and he came in around before noon and wanted to talk with me and I said, "Fine, sit down and have a talk." I said, "Lou, I don't want to waste your time or mine; right now time

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is of the essence here on my votes, you've got a long time to keep fighting for yours." And I said, "If you are for that resolution, I'd like to get your ideas on that, and then I'll have to make up my mind between you and Paul," and I said, "Paul has given me a pretty good endorsement."

"Oh, he won't keep his word about it anyway, so it don't make any difference because he ain't going to keep his word," said Johnson.

"Well," I said, "I have never had that about Paul; I've never had that experience about him. And I have the feeling that he did keep his word, although you may not always agree with him."

Well, we kept on; we were haggling for a few minutes and I said, "I've got to go down and meet some fellows for lunch and breakfast," and I said, "I've got to go down, so you let me know what you'll do about it right now."

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"Well," he said, "I can't support that resolution. I read it and everything; I can defeat that resolution easily." He was as dogmatic as he could be and he was just that way.

I said, "Well, maybe you can, but I'm not too sure you can. I've got more support for that than I thought I had when I first got here. I have whipped up the welfare organizations in the country and got them interested as a kind of a silent partner, being able to help them in their states on legislation that they needed for welfare work, and I'd get the Legion to support them if we had your support, too." And it was a good starting point, helpful, legislative trading; it is just like what goes on every day, and I traded. I said, "Well, all right, Lou, we will just consider then that you are not going to be for the resolution and I appreciate your honesty in telling me about it."

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"Well," he said, "that's the way I do business, Oscar. I do business right over the table, nowhere else; therefore, I have to tell you that I can't support your resolution."

He, of course, thought that he had it licked, and he didn't. I knew he didn't, but I knew it was close, and when Paul got up--I had done a lot of traveling around that hall during the next three or four hours. Along sometime in the afternoon we got to nominating our candidates for national commander--and when the ballot got to Paul McNutt, Paul got up and made a speech and he did a pretty good job. He did a pretty good job of it and in it he took this welfare thing and wrapped himself all around it like the American flag, and I got a little nervous; wondered if he hadn't made a deal some way or another. I got a little bit nervous about it, and he kept on selling it in

the speech and he kept telling them about it; and he talked welfare and he discussed how it would be of help to their own people.

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And that speech so moved that convention; and Paul was surprised at the support he got from that. Then, of course, he went to work hard when he saw that was coming up and then Lou was on the other side, so far. They both caught it as a hot issue, all of a sudden; nobody had hardly heard of it, and it hadn't been an issue at all. They had made it an issue in the way it was brought out. But the thing went to the point where Paul was elected, and Lou always blamed me for defeating him, and he said...

HESS: How did you get along during the time that you were both on the Cabinet?

CHAPMAN: We got along perfectly fine. Well, as a matter of fact, we got along all right because of the fact Ickes hated him. Ickes had no use for him at all, and didn't have much respect for his word or his ability, and he'd give him a swat every chance he got because he just...

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HESS: In newspaper columns that Ickes was writing at the time?

CHAPMAN: When he was in the Cabinet.

HESS: I don't believe that they were in the Cabinet at the same time were they; wasn't Ickes in them earlier?

CHAPMAN: Weren't they in there for a very brief period?

HESS: Well, when he was Harry Woodring's assistant?

CHAPMAN: Assistant, yeah. He was in there...

HESS: Just before the Second World War.

CHAPMAN: That's right, and he was...

HESS: But that is the time that Ickes and Johnson did not get along.

CHAPMAN: That's right. They didn't get along at all. Of course, Woodring, and Johnson didn't...

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HESS: Didn't get along either.

What is your opinion as to why Louis Johnson was selected to replace James Forrestal in March of 1949?

CHAPMAN: I could never understand that myself, thoroughly, as to why that was done, because I didn't think that Johnson had done enough to be in a position at the time to the President and his close associates to justify his being awarded with that kind of an appointment, to build himself up. I don't know how to interpret that, how to work it out, because I couldn't see where Johnson had really made many particular contributions any more than quite a lot of people had.

HESS: But he had been financial director, or what was the term, what was the...

CHAPMAN: Chairman of the Finance Committee.

HESS: Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Democratic National Committee.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Did you work closely with him during the 1948...

CHAPMAN: Yes, we worked quite closely.

HESS: What is your opinion of the job that he did as chairman of the Finance Committee?

CHAPMAN: Very lukewarm.

HESS: Could have been much better, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Obviously we could have got a lots more money if they had got somebody else.

HESS: Anyone in particular that you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Well, no, I think Forrestal himself would have gotten more money. I didn't realize that Forrestal was pushing for it very much, anyway; but I think Forrestal would have gotten more money than Lou did. No, I know Lou well, and we worked together in an official capacity pretty good there.

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HESS: According to my recollection, Mr. Forrestal was criticized in some areas because of an almost total lack of activity during this campaign.

CHAPMAN: That's right. Now, I mean some of that was justified, sitting from my position.

HESS: Wasn't his help requested?

CHAPMAN: I don't think it was. Now, to tell you the truth, I don't think it was.

HESS: Why wasn't it?

CHAPMAN: I don't know. I don't know why it wasn't.

HESS: Because there are those that say that his lack of activity in the campaign of '48 played a role in the fact that he left in March of 1949.

CHAPMAN: Well, I don't have any firsthand conversation with anybody about that that I could depend on about it. I don't really know, but I had a feeling that he had not been asked to. For instance, I

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knew that Ickes was not a supporter of Jim Forrestal, because Ickes was trying to get Tommy Corcoran appointed as Under Secretary of Navy, and Forrestal was Secretary; he wanted him to appoint him, and he...

HESS: But he wouldn't appoint him.

CHAPMAN: He wouldn't appoint him, because Ickes never forgave you for anything like that, and he thought he should have had it, and he wanted to get it for Tommy; but I don't think that Tommy had very much support at the White House.

HESS: What type of a job did Louis Johnson do as Secretary of Defense? He went in in March of 1949; he was there during the beginning of the Korean conflict and he left in September of 1950. So he was there about a year and a half through a very interesting time, but what type of a job did he do?

CHAPMAN: Very interesting. Frankly, I don't know too

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much about the military phase of our operation during that period.

HESS: Well, let me jog your memory on just a point or two; one of his first actions after he became Secretary of Defense was to cancel the aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *United States*...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...and John L. Sullivan, who was Secretary of the Navy at that time, resigned because of that action.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Which gives rise to the very big subject of the reduction of the armed forces and the Department of Defense at this time. Why was it reduced; whose idea was it to reduce our armed forces; was Mr. Truman trying to balance the budget at that time? I've also read that to try to gain money for domestic programs and domestic spending, that foreign programs and the Department

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of Defense were cut back to try to channel more money into domestic spending. But anyway, it's a long and involved subject.

CHAPMAN: It's a very involved story, one that you have to have some close association of work with to really get the truth of that story.

HESS: Did you feel that Louis Johnson was cutting back the armed forces and was reducing the armed forces perhaps more than Mr. Truman and the Bureau of the Budget was calling for him to do, or was he just following orders?

CHAPMAN: No, I think he was doing that on his own.

HESS: Carrying orders further than what had been...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...the President's wishes.

CHAPMAN: I felt that he was.

HESS: Because at the beginning of the Korean war, in

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June of 1950, our armed forces were down and Mr. Johnson received sort of a bad press at the time...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...because we were not ready to meet the situation that arose, because we had been cutting back the armed forces at the time. So, you think that he cut back the armed forces somewhat more than Mr. Truman had ordered him to.

CHAPMAN: That was my impression at the time, but as I said, I didn't have any close working relationship with Johnson as I did with some of the other Cabinet members like Secretary of Agriculture and even John Snyder, the Secretary of the Treasury; and there were other Cabinet members that I was closer to than I ever was to Johnson.

HESS: Okay, fine, that is a very important topic, and I think we might as well get on that right now. You mentioned John Snyder at Treasury; you mentioned

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Agriculture, which was of course, Clinton P. Anderson, and then later Charles Brannan.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: But what Cabinet members did you have the best working relationships with?

CHAPMAN: I had the best relationships with the Cabinet members--first now let's take them with the Roosevelt administration.

HESS: Yes.

CHAPMAN: A few minutes with that, and I had a good relationship with Henry Wallace.

HESS: At Commerce.

CHAPMAN: Well, no, it was Agriculture.

HESS: That's right, it was Agriculture.

CHAPMAN: I had very good relationships with him, and I had very good relationship with Charles Sawyer, and Sawyer, in fact, didn't agree on a lot of

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the public issues with me.

HESS: That was at the time when Mr. Sawyer was Secretary of Commerce, right?

CHAPMAN: That's right, Secretary of Commerce.

HESS: All right, tell me a little bit about Mr. Sawyer; what kind of a man is he and what were the issues that you disagreed on?

CHAPMAN: He and I disagreed on the civil rights issue. He was not very helpful in that.

HESS: And he came in in May of 1948.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And he stayed there until the end of the Administration. The three Secretaries of Commerce were Henry Wallace, who was appointed in '45, in March of '45, and he left, of course, when he went up to Madison Square Garden and made his speech...

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CHAPMAN: That silly speech.

HESS: ...in September of '46, and then Averell Harriman was there from--also from '47; he was nominated and confirmed--he was not sworn in until October of '46, it says here, and...

CHAPMAN: There's something wrong with that date.

HESS: Well, there's something wrong someplace isn't there? Because we've got a couple of '47s in here which I don't understand.

CHAPMAN: Well, probably what happened, he was nominated in...

HESS: Oh, certainly.

CHAPMAN: ...and wasn't sworn in for quite a little while.

HESS: Congress was probably not in session during that period of time.

CHAPMAN: Well, I think that was what happened.

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HESS: But why they have this date here I don't know. What we're looking at here are dates on all of our Cabinet members. But, anyway, Harriman was there until April of 1948 and then Charles Sawyer.

CHAPMAN: And I had a very good relationship with Averell Harriman. Averell himself was strange in a way; Averell came from a background totally different from mine, he...

HESS: Totally different from most, shall we say?

CHAPMAN: Yeah. That's true, and yet I got along swell with Averell and got help from him. When I say I'm getting along with a fellow if I'm working on a crusade, and I'm really working on something and I want it, and I go to those fellows and sit down and talk with them and try to get their support, and I don't get it, I just consider myself not in their picture, consider myself not on their team. I just forget it and go on to the next fellow.

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Well, in this case with Harriman, at first I thought, "Oh, I don't know about this fellow; we're not going to agree on anything," and I kept my mouth shut, didn't say anything, kept very quiet; and he soon showed his hands though on two or three issues, and I was quite surprised and pleased at the position he'd shown on two or three things. Yet, on one of the things he went to Russia for, I thought he overplayed that a little bit, for his own good and for the good of the Administration; I thought that he had overplayed it.

HESS: What did he do wrong?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think what he did wrong there, he came back here, and then, in ways that I wouldn't have handled it. He didn't give any credit to the right place at the right time to the President. I didn't think he was giving him the credit for certain things that had been done that I knew the President had done and had worked

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on. But later I got to liking Averell; later when we got a better working relationship, we got along together very well, later on. So, highly with that I rated Averell quite liberal in most things, not everything; in most things, in the latter part of our administration there, and...

HESS: What would he not be rated liberal on? What was he conservative on?

CHAPMAN: Well, I guess you could put it that way; it's awfully difficult to classify him. He's awful hard to classify in simple terms, but he's...

HESS: Is Mr. Sawyer somewhat easier to classify?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He was very definitely conservative.

HESS: Very definitely conservative?

CHAPMAN: Right down the line.

HESS: Well, he even titled his book, *Concerns of a Conservative Democrat*, and in his book, which

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I reread the other day, he mentions that one of the reasons why he accepted Mr. Truman's proposal to join the Cabinet was so that he could represent business, the leaders of business, and to try to change the views of the Democratic administration from being one of total anti-business attitudes.

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes.

HESS: Does that sound like what Mr. Sawyer was doing?

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's exactly what he tried to do. He really tried to do just that very thing.

HESS: He was businesses' representative?

CHAPMAN: He was, and he really tried it in an honest way. I think...

HESS: Was that normal for the Secretary of Commerce to be a business representative on the Cabinet?

CHAPMAN: That's just what he does; he represents the opinions of the businessman in most cases. I felt that John Snyder pretty much represented

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that position, to a certain extent, more than Morgenthau. I thought that Snyder represented-- when I say represent them, I don't mean that he was representing them, but what he was doing...

HESS: Fred Vinson was in there, too.

CHAPMAN: Yes, and Fred was in the same position in my mind as Snyder was; they both could be classified as semi-conservatives, both Snyder and Fred Vinson. Now, I think John somehow had a better knowledge of the technical side of money than Fred did.

HESS: Mr. Snyder had been in the banking business for a good many years.

CHAPMAN: Exactly. Well, he knew the mechanics of money, you see; if you don't know the mechanics of money--I don't. I'd make the worst Treasurer in the world, because I'd be the-- Roosevelt offered me a judgeship, if I'd take a judgeship.

HESS: In Colorado?

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CHAPMAN: No, here in Washington...

HESS: Here in Washington.

CHAPMAN: ...the District, there was one open here.

HESS: About what time was that?

CHAPMAN: That was about, let's see...

HESS: First or second administration?

CHAPMAN: It was in the second, it was in the second administration.

HESS: In the second term, the second term.

CHAPMAN: Yes, and he...

HESS: Why didn't you take it?

CHAPMAN: Well, in the first place, I wouldn't make a good judge, and I didn't like that kind of work.

HESS: Why don't you think you'd make a good judge...

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CHAPMAN: I haven't got the patience; I like to keep moving, I like to keep working. I like to keep working on things with people. I like to keep working with people.

HESS: Well, that's maybe the kind of judges we need, to cut down on some of the backlog.

CHAPMAN: I think probably that is true. But I told the President; I said, "Mr. President, frankly I don't want a judgeship." I said, "I'm too much of an active person to want to get shelved, and that's what I'd feel like."

"Oh," he said, "you'd make a good judge." He said, "You'd scare the hell out of them, but," he said, "you would make a good judge. If you made any errors up here," he said, "the circuit court will correct you."

I said, "Well, that's a good way to put it, and that's what I have learned my lesson in the conservation field. I was interested in conservation before I took the job as Assistant

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Secretary," and I said, "in spite of the fact that Harold Ickes is the hardest man in the world to work with, I don't want this. I have honestly tried, and tried hard to get along with him and work with him because I wanted to work there. I liked the work; I like that kind of work;" and, I said, "I'm dealing now with people where the rights of an individual, the rights of corporations--that's why I like Interior. I don't know; I know probably the Secretary doesn't like me and I don't know of anybody that he does like, particularly, but one person; Tommy Corcoran is the only person he likes.

HESS: I have a question about Charlie Sawyer; you mentioned him a while ago.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: He was the representative of business. Let's see if we can find an example where you may have been on one side and he may have been on the other, and what I have in mind is the Columbia Valley

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Administration.

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes.

HESS: Mr. Truman had asked that a CVA be set up much as TVA had, and some of the major opponents of that were the power interests of the West.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Were the power interests of the West actively represented in that matter by Charles Sawyer?

CHAPMAN: Well, I would say he was as active as he could be and not get thrown out on his ear.

HESS: All right, CVA was not established.

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: What degree of credit, or blame, could be given Charles Sawyer in the fact that CVA was not established even though Mr. Truman wanted it established?

CHAPMAN: I think it was not because Mr. Sawyer

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had so much power that he could do that. It was the fact that the local people in the co-op districts were very much disturbed about these co-ops being set up, and these dams being built, whether they were losing a part of their power and losing anything that they had.

HESS: I think we had better shut off here.

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Fifteenth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C.
February 2, 1973

By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, in our last interview we were discussing Cabinet members. We have a list with us this morning of Cabinet members, and just looking over that list, which members of the Cabinet should we comment further on?

CHAPMAN: I would like to make just a short statement about Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury. He was not too well-known and it was not but a very short period of time that he served under President Truman, but he had a very fine and pleasant relationship there with President Truman; and, of course, this was well-known through every media and every other method of dispensing this publicity. Mr. Morgenthau really worshipped President Roosevelt. He came with him; he had lived up there in New York close to

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him at his home, then he came with Roosevelt to Washington and then he stayed in the Treasury for quite a while. He was succeeded, I think, by John Snyder. No, I'm mistaken, he was succeeded by Fred Vinson. Mr. Vinson, incidentally, later made a great reputation for himself as a wonderful Chief Justice, and he was most loyal and most helpful to President Roosevelt. He was a great friend of his in the true sense.

HESS: Did Mr. Vinson make a good Secretary of the Treasury for Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: I think he did. I think he made a good Secretary of the Treasury. He was more conservative in his general attitude on the monetary system than I think Mr. Truman might have been, but he had very good thinking and he had a pattern of planning out what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it. He did a very good job for him.

HESS: Was he as conservative as the gentleman who

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followed him, Mr. John Snyder?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't think he was; I think he was a little bit more liberal, little bit more liberal than Mr. Snyder was--I would so interpret that. They both were good men; they both served at the right time, and they served at a time which they could give the best in them, and they...

HESS: Were there times when you felt that Mr. Snyder may have been giving Mr. Truman advice that was a bit too conservative for the good of the country?

CHAPMAN: I felt that he was a good fiscal man, fiscal from a true sense of the word, but he was not imaginative enough in the terms of projecting projects into our system to keep it growing. Our democratic system of government that we have, that we function under, is the type of a system that you have to keep projecting new ideas and new thoughts into the program to keep the country growing. Its economy and its social

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status need to be kept fed with new ideas and new things to try to help people, and I didn't think that he had quite that--not enough initiative in that field.

HESS: There was a time, as you may recall, September the 6th of 1945 when Mr. Truman sent his famous 21 points message to Congress, calling for additional housing, more housing for the United States, and calling for a medical program, 21 points that were fairly liberal. Now, I understand that Mr. Snyder was opposed to a good many of those points.

CHAPMAN: It was my understanding that he had opposed those very vigorously. Rather definitely he made his position known to the President, that he thought they were too liberal and the President, in his usual way of getting advice--he knew enough people on both sides of an issue that he could get information from two sets of people on the same subject and he'd pretty much come out with the

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proper answer that he ought to make good in.

The only trouble with that is that it has a tendency toward a drawback so that your opposition can organize around that so easily, especially if he's a member of the President's Cabinet and is opposing the President's program of that kind. It makes it easier for the general opposition to organize a program against it and can easily kill it in the House and Senate. That's a danger of that kind of a freedom of expression (if you want to put it that way). You had to be very careful about how much we assume of our Cabinet members; how much freedom do we have a right to assume in expressing ourselves, especially publicly, in opposition to a Presidential program.

Now, in my mind I always took the position that when the President submitted something that I considered extremely important and valuable and something that was for the benefit of the people as a whole, and it was so clear to me that that

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just ought to be done, I felt compelled to express myself on it. I never had come to the position, at any time, of publicly expressing myself against any of Truman's programs, because President Truman a lot of the time was ahead of most of his Cabinet in suggesting liberal things.

HESS: Can you give me an illustration of something that the President may have proposed that you were somewhat in opposition to? Can you think of anything that we can give as an illustration?

CHAPMAN: I don't think he definitely proposed this idea, but there was heavy pressure on him to sell him the idea, to get him to change the whole oil policy of the United States, to make a change in policy. It could have meant millions and millions of dollars. I was very concerned about that and expressed myself pretty freely about my opposition to any change in the direction that

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they were discussing. I was for some change, but not the kind they wanted. I was for a different type of change in the oil situation, and there ought to be better equalized comparison of their competitor's industry.

HESS: Did you present your opposition to the President, did you tell him about your views?

CHAPMAN: I did. I had a very fine talk with the President. He assured me (the President in talking with me), he assured me, "I'm not going to make my mind up on this overnight." He says, "I'm inclined to feel that the big boys have done their share already, out of the industry as such, and there may be an equalizing point to be yet passed. I don't know, but," he said, "I don't want to make my mind up upon it just yet until I've talked to a few more people." And he said, "I'll assure you that I'll talk to you again before I--if I don't, before long, on this I'll talk to you again."

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Well, he did talk to me again and he went along with my position on it completely; went along with it and I couldn't have asked for better support. Now he could only do so much because of the opposition. The opposition was so clear here he couldn't then do very much because it was so strongly expressed at that time. So, he did discuss the subject matter with me, and I appreciated it very much. It gave me a good light on what I thought was a proper attitude of the opposition. If there was any opposition, he had the right format to discuss it on, to start out on the format that he had in mind.

Now, that being true, I was not too worried about the oil matter with Mr. Truman after I talked with him a few times, because he was so definitely--you know, Truman never left you in doubt. He might disagree, but you were never in doubt where he stood. And he'd tell you very frankly, and he always did, and it was so helpful to us all. A Cabinet member is so often left in

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the cold, not being able to get quite through to the President all the things he wants, because there are so many people that cut in between you and the President.

HESS: Did you find that a problem in the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: Not at all with him; I didn't have one bit of it. That was the one thing that I shall always appreciate about President Truman, he never cut across a program we were working on. He had suggestions for changes; he'd discuss them with me and we'd agree on them, work them out, and we would work out changes in many programs. We did that, but it was done in a way of development and progressing along the road that we all hoped to go and wanted to go, if circumstances permitted it, that being circumstances political and economical.

HESS: As you know, in the present administration, there are those who say that the Cabinet members have a

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great deal of difficulty scheduling appointments with the President and they are blocked from seeing President Nixon by some of the members of the White House staff. Did you have any difficulty with members of the White House staff in the Truman administration? Here I have in mind such people as Clark Clifford and Charles Murphy, Matthew Connelly, people in that particular category.

CHAPMAN: No, I never had any problem whatsoever with any of those.

HESS: They did not attempt to place themselves between the President and the Cabinet?

CHAPMAN: No. No. Every one of those men that you have mentioned in there, every one, and all the rest of them that worked around the White House with the President, that had the opportunity to work between you and the President, taking a different position from you and what you had

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recommended to the President--not a one of those men, to my knowledge, ever did anything that I thought was unfair to my position or my opportunity and right to present my case, keeping it before the President in its proper perspective; and I never had any trouble with seeing or talking to Clark Clifford, Charlie Murphy.

HESS: In your opinion, how much more difficult would it make it for you today to be Secretary of the Interior with the present setup, if indeed it is true that the Secretaries have trouble seeing the President? If you were in the position of Rogers Morton today, do you think you would have a more difficult time today conducting the affairs of office than you did in the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: Well, you have to take that question back to the basic philosophy of the men, the difference in the philosophy of the men involved, both Nixon and Truman, and Mr. Morton and Chapman; and there

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was not as much difference between Morton and myself as there was between Truman and Nixon, I can tell you that.

As a matter of fact, I had some opportunity to work with Mr. Morton on a couple of matters that were very broad and very important in the development of our country. He has been kind enough to invite me over and has discussed with me one or two very important matters, important for the development of a policy that was so vital to our country as we went along. And he was very nice to do that, but he never--I don't think he fired anybody because of any political dealings. I never felt that he let any of them go just for the sake of political expediency.

Well, a President on his first initiative should try to pick a man that thinks in the same general direction as he does, who has the same philosophy, as much as he can. He can't possibly pick one that would get them all; it's impossible.

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You're human beings and you have a certain philosophy about something and you want to express it; you've got to be careful where you express it, and how you express it so that it doesn't leave the wrong impression of what you are trying to do.

HESS: It would seem to me that on Mr. Truman's Cabinet he had quite a diversity of opinion though.

CHAPMAN: Oh, he did.

HESS: He didn't pick men that were all of the same thinking. Now, here again, I hark back to Mr. Snyder, his Secretary of the Treasury, quite conservative; yourself, Secretary of Interior, quite liberal; so Mr. Truman did not pick people in just one mold, correct?

CHAPMAN: Well, I'll tell you where he did. Mr. Truman had a natural, human instinct of understanding the man in the street; he really had a

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gift for interpreting the thinking of the problems that that man had, and to think of his problem in his setting, in the way he was working and the problems he had to deal with; and he seemed to understand them so well that he got along with people very well.

Now what may appear to some people to be diversity--the observation that you have just made--was simply that Truman always allowed freedom of expression of his Cabinet officers so long as

they made it in the right place, to him. You can discuss whatever you want with him about something that you disagree with, but you shouldn't go out as a Cabinet officer, and I shouldn't go to Chicago and make a speech.

HESS: Or to Madison Square Garden like Mr. Henry Wallace did.

CHAPMAN: That's right. You shouldn't do those things. I mean those are the things in which you are breaking a major policy pattern, that you know is

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different from what the Commander-in-Chief has been advocating, and you should not attempt to make that change to the public by making a public speech against it in that way. Mr. Truman did not appreciate that, and I wouldn't, and I don't think any other ordinary man who wants to be man enough to run his own shop would tolerate that kind of a thing. Now, there were a few who overstepped the bounds of propriety in exercising too much of that right, of the freedom that the President gave them.

HESS: Who comes to your mind besides Mr. Henry Wallace?

CHAPMAN: Well, you had several men in the very beginning there that really thought they were President.

HESS: Who do you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Well, not to be unkind or discourteous to the man; I do give him great credit for a lot of good work, and he did a lot of good things, but I didn't think that Secretary Byrnes handled himself

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just in the proper way in building up confidence with the public regarding the two men. His method of approach to the subjects and the way he presented them was one that would always tend to promote a lack of trust and confidence in the minds of the laymen in the street. He would give them that impression.

HESS: Now, you mentioned that Mr. Byrnes, before you identified him, had the opinion that he was President. Could we go into that just a little further?

CHAPMAN: Well, for instance, I don't recall the exact subject matter that was under discussion at the time, but when Mr. Byrnes came back from Paris on one of his very important trips, he came back and he made a complete report and statement to the public before he had reported to the President.

HESS: He had announced that he was going to make such a statement.

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CHAPMAN: That's right. That is right, you are correct.

HESS: And then Mr. Truman requested his presence on the *Williamsburg*, as I recall...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...before he made any public statement. What do you recall about that meeting?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I recall that, very definitely.

HESS: At which time he was told that if he had something to report that he should report it to the President first.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Instead of coming back and making an announcement that he was going to make a public statement.

CHAPMAN: That was the first time that that happened.

HESS: Why do you think that Mr. Byrnes had this attitude? Now, what I'm driving at here is

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the fact that he wanted the vice-presidential appointment in 1944 very bad, as you will recall. This we have already discussed...

CHAPMAN: Yes, we did.

HESS: ...about his call to Independence asking Mr. Truman to place his name in nomination. There are those that think that Mr. Truman's appointment of Mr. Byrnes, as Secretary of State, was sort of in the nature of a consolation prize to the man who thought that he should be in the first chair, who thought that he should be President at this time.

CHAPMAN: Well, I think that probably gave rise to some of the reported buildup of the ego of the individual himself, that he was President, I am President; he made me Secretary of State, which is the second man in importance in terms of the total program of the Government's policy. And so, therefore, I'm going to go ahead and run it. This is my

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interpretation of what I think came from his mind. He felt that he had been given the right to go ahead and do as he pleased.

Now, he assumed too much on that freedom of action by the President, that he allowed all of his Cabinet members to speak out freely on the subjects under their jurisdiction. He allowed them to speak without any restraints on them. He never tried to direct your policy or what you were going to say or not say, unless you took something up with him and asked his advice and explained what you planned to do, and if that was something that was in opposition, or that tended to be in opposition to Mr. Truman's own policies; he would tell you so. Then he'd leave you to your own judgment.

Now, at that point, if you had good sense with dealing with men, and dealing with people, and having to run a united organization, a team program, you'd understand what you should do. But if you didn't, you'd make your mistake right at that point as far as your relationship with

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Mr. Truman was concerned.

HESS: What other Cabinet members should we discuss now? What about Robert Lovett, who was Secretary of Defense?

CHAPMAN: I'd like to mention Mr. Lovett because I don't think Mr. Lovett ever got the credit from the public that he was justified in getting for his ingenuity, his brilliance, his hard work physically and mentally. He was a man who was not afraid to project his ideas in the open before Senate committees. I've seen him do it, things that he and the President had discussed and they both understood were going to create opposition when he did it, but he was willing to do it. If Bob Lovett thought something was right for the benefit of the people, all the generals and admirals in the Navy couldn't change him, and couldn't affect him, because he would not make a dogmatic position for himself out of that difference. He would look for information to see

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if he was wrong, to justify the position he was taking; and I know several small incidents in which he did that, and he did a terrific research job on it to be sure that he was getting off on the right basic...

HESS: Could you give me an illustration of that?

CHAPMAN: Well, I think one was the building of the air carrier. Now, we look at it as just one of the little housekeeping jobs of the Navy and the Defense Department. That was a housekeeping job; that was one on which the Secretary ought to have a position, and he ought to have complete clearance with the President on such an expenditure as that you see, as such a big expenditure, and also affecting your defense situation. And the military people that the President had confidence in, and others that he consulted about these various things--Bob Lovett wouldn't hesitate to inquire of those people their points of view and what it is based on; and he never hesitated to look to the bottom

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of the story and try to get the real facts separated from the jealousies of human beings working together and so on.

HESS: He had always worked quite closely with General Marshall had he not? Now, he had been his assistant when General Marshall was Secretary of State.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And then when General Marshall was called back in 1950 to be Secretary of Defense, Mr. Lovett came with him again, and succeeded him in 1951 when General Marshall went back to Leesburg and back into retirement. What can you tell me about the relationship between General Marshall and Robert Lovett?

CHAPMAN: I felt, from the knowledge I had of them, that they were in as near complete accord as two men could be, and I felt that they worked together in perfect harmony, and that they felt

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completely at ease at what they were doing; and Robert Lovett always worked with respect to his senior officer, and he followed that very closely. By the same token, he felt the same relationship to the President, that he should keep the President informed of everything.

HESS: Mr. Lovett came from Wall Street. He was, and is, a very wealthy Wall Street investment banker. I believe he's a member of the Republican Party, is that not right?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he is.

HESS: Was this a bit unusual for Mr. Truman to use an influential Republican as a Cabinet member and as an important policy adviser?

CHAPMAN: Well, let's say it this way; he hadn't been in the office long enough to establish a pattern for such a thing as that. However, if you check Mr. Truman's pattern of development of his appointments you will find several places where he

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didn't follow the party line necessarily.

HESS: That's quite right.

CHAPMAN: He figured if a man was a good man, and he thought he was a good man, he would not refuse to appoint that man to a good place because of that.

HESS: This is a very important topic. I can think of a few and maybe you can add a few more. Now Paul Hoffman, who ran the Marshall plan, the European Recovery Program...

CHAPMAN: That's right, one of the most important places in the public picture at that time.

HESS: Who are a few of the other important Republicans that were in the Truman administration?

CHAPMAN: Well, of course did Stimson stay on for a while?

HESS: A while.

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CHAPMAN: He didn't stay long.

HESS: He didn't stay very long.

CHAPMAN: But he had served a long time, you know.

HESS: Yes, he had.

CHAPMAN: And I mean, his age; but let me tell you, Stimson, from my research that I have done on him, myself, Stimson was a great man.

HESS: Or a little less, from April to September of '45.

CHAPMAN: That's right. But he left on a perfectly friendly and a good attitude and a good understanding, as near as I could learn. They parted with a very good approach to each other, and they could consult with each other afterwards; they were not cut off just because he resigned.

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They had not cut off their relationship.

Now, that was what I had learned about it, had interpreted what I had learned; that's what it really meant in their relationship, they worked together. Stimson had very strong support in this country; I wouldn't say support as a Presidential candidate per se. However, he was in the category in that he was one of the possible choices of his party except that he was too independent and would not play politics with his position.

HESS: Did you ever hear President Truman articulate his views on the importance of having members the opposition party in high policy levels in the Government?

CHAPMAN: I definitely have. He's definitely made that statement in my presence several times in discussing different things that we ought to bring people in for. We ought to get a good man to do this particular job, say a new job opened up; and it doesn't matter whether he's a Republican or a

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Democrat, if he's a good man and can do this job, we ought to try to get them.

HESS: Well, there the emphasis is on the man regardless of the party.

CHAPMAN: Absolutely.

HESS: But did you ever hear President Truman say something to the effect that we should bring a Republican in?

CHAPMAN: Only in this respect. Truman has made this kind of a remark that would give me the impression of what he meant, to the extent that he felt that you go beyond the emphasis of the man; that the different segments of the population in the country ought to be represented as much as competency and loyalty would permit. He believed in a wide base representation.

HESS: This gives rise to a question that just entered my mind; was the subject ever discussed of bring-

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ing a black man into the Cabinet?

CHAPMAN: I once discussed it with the President. I never had discussed it in a Cabinet meeting. It was never discussed in a Cabinet meeting when I was present--if it had been I wasn't there--but I discussed it personally with Truman at one time.

HESS: Did you have anyone in particular in mind?

CHAPMAN: Do you know what he said?

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: And Thurgood Marshall was the name that was mentioned.

HESS: That was the man that you had in mind?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I was talking of Thurgood Marshall for the circuit court of appeals. There was a vacancy coming up at that particular moment and I knew it. Well, he put Judge [William] Hastie in there.

HESS: In the Third Circuit Court.

CHAPMAN: In the Third Circuit Court.

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HESS: He's still in Philadelphia.

CHAPMAN: And he's the first Negro ever appointed on the circuit court.

HESS: That's true.

CHAPMAN: And he was also the--I don't know whether he was the first Negro we ever appointed as Governor of the Virgin Islands...

HESS: That's also correct.

CHAPMAN: ...but I think he was.

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: Truman had no hesitancy of just going along and doing the thing that ought to be done because of the competency of the man being able to do it and his loyalty to his country. He never stopped to discuss; he wouldn't discuss with you whether he was white or black; he wouldn't really waste

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his time discussing that factor per se. You just assume that what you're looking for is a competent man, and that was his limitation on it.

HESS: At the time you were discussing Mr. Thurgood Marshall what was the post that was under consideration?

CHAPMAN: Well, at that time--I think there was a change being considered in the Solicitor General, in Justice.

HESS: A post that he held later.

CHAPMAN: He did later hold it. Did Truman appoint him later?

HESS: No, he was appointed later I believe, if I'm not mistaken, by Kennedy.

CHAPMAN: I believe he did.

HESS: I could be wrong on it.

CHAPMAN: I believe he was.

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HESS: And then later was appointed to the Supreme Court by Johnson, but I think that he was Solicitor General back during the Kennedy administration.

CHAPMAN: Yes, I think Kennedy appointed him first Solicitor General. I had built up that momentum a little bit behind Marshall.

HESS: What did the President say? I mean he was not appointed Solicitor General at the time.

CHAPMAN: No, well, the reason he wasn't appointed at that time is, that at that particular time, first, the President had a problem of personalities he had to adjust and deal with in competition for that place, between some white people and he wanted to get it worked out first.

Well, he never quite could get this situation in the right posture, to make the appointment in such a way that it would not be interpreted as a political appointment; say that he appointed Thurgood Marshall simply because he was a Negro.

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Now he didn't want that.

Now, he didn't want you to--there's another thing Truman did that I was very pleased to see him do and he did it very forcefully to many people in my presence. For instance, this job over here is not a job for a Negro; it's for any man that qualifies and meets the qualifications for that office, and I want to quit calling this--for instance in my department I had a little instance where they had a habit of always naming the Land Office Commissioner here in the city; they always had a habit of calling that the place for the Negro, saving it for him.

So, they always approached it from the point of view of putting a Negro in there. The President said to me; he said, "I don't want to put a Negro in there," he says, "I want to break that habit of setting aside a position for just a Negro. I want the Negro to be set aside for whatever job he is qualified for and be appointed to that job because he's qualified and not because

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he is a Negro."

HESS: All right, still it must be recognized that there were very few Negroes appointed to policy positions in the Government at that time. Was it difficult to find qualified people?

CHAPMAN: It was difficult to find qualified people to do it.

HESS: Here we are talking about Thurgood Marshall and Judge Hastie; they are very well-known men and well-qualified and they were--Judge Hastie was appointed.

CHAPMAN: He was, and later Thurgood Marshall has been appointed.

HESS: And later Thurgood Marshall, but what's the difficulty in finding good qualified Negroes?

CHAPMAN: Well, now, here was your problem; this goes back for a hundred years. Your basic educational system was showing up, at the very period of time

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when they should have been on the top level of qualifications from academic and educational point of view. Now they did not have that kind of a qualification in most cases. Then there were a lot of cases, they were well-qualified, they just weren't appointed; so the racial question did enter, and there's where the racial thing drew the line. That's where it finally came to a head, and Truman drew that issue really very forcefully in appointing a Negro, or establishing the right to an appointment to any place in Government by a Negro. Even though he realized he'd have difficulty in following up, you didn't have a large office, a great big law office that had 40 or 50 or 75 lawyers in it that were qualified to do this or that kind of a case. We didn't have that.

HESS: All right, proceeding on, sir, there's another segment of our society that also went unrepresented in high positions that now we hear a good deal about from Women's Lib. Was it ever discussed regarding

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appointment of a woman to either the Cabinet position or to the Supreme Court or to a high policy position?

CHAPMAN: I have never heard the President express himself in the approach in discussing a position whether a person could or should be a woman. To him, was she qualified. That's all he cared about; he didn't care, he was perfectly willing to appoint a woman and his attitude was such that it was easy...

HESS: Still none was appointed, though.

CHAPMAN: No, that was the trouble and that was one of the problems we had, and that was one of the things that I should say I was defeated on.

HESS: You tried to get a woman appointed did you?

CHAPMAN: I did, I tried.

HESS: Who did you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: I tried to get a woman appointed, a very

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brilliant woman, and of course, Mrs. Perkins stayed on as a Cabinet member for a little while and then Truman didn't fill her place with another woman. Now, he said, "I don't want to get that place established as a place for a woman."

HESS: She left in June.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Her resignation was effective June the 30th of '45, and then Louis Schwellenbach...

CHAPMAN: Yes, Schwellenbach, the Senator from Washington. Bone was also a Senator from Washington and he was appointed...

HESS: Homer T.

CHAPMAN: Yes, and he was appointed on the...

HESS: Homer T. Bone.

CHAPMAN: ...Circuit Court. Homer T. Bone. He

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came back from making a trip to Puerto Rico to make a report to the Senate on what we should do about the Puerto Ricans, that they were asking for their independence. He said, "If I had it in for Puerto Ricans and wanted to really do them dirty, I'd give them independence." He said, "They'd ruin themselves in six months; they'd all be on charity." And he was completely right, they were not ready for it at that time.

HESS: There are a good many Puerto Ricans that are agitating for independence yet today; do you think that would be a good idea today or not?

CHAPMAN: There are not many people, really, for independence...

HESS: It's a minority party, but it's a vocal party.

CHAPMAN: It's a very vocal party and...

HESS: Sometimes it's even a bit more than vocal,

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because as you will recall, on November the 1st of 1950 they took some shots at President Truman.

CHAPMAN: That's right. That's right.

HESS: Do you remember that?

CHAPMAN: I sure do!

HESS: November the 1st, 1950.

CHAPMAN: Because my name was on that list of three that they were trying to shoot when they came up here.

HESS: Is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Who were they?

CHAPMAN: The President and myself; and who was the third person? The third person was a Senator.

HESS: Where was that list found?

CHAPMAN: In the pocket of the fellow who was killed,

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was shot, right on the ground in front of the Blair House. It was contained in a note, just a scribbled note.

HESS: And your name was down on that list.

CHAPMAN: My name was on the list. They got that; the Secret Service boys really did a...

HESS: Did they ever find out if those same people were anticipating shooting at Mr. Truman then, and then coming over to shoot you, or were others assigned? As you will recall during the Lincoln assassination different people were expected to carry out assassinations all at once.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Now was that the same way it was in your situation?

CHAPMAN: As near as I could understand it from what Jim Rowley told me. He made a pretty fair check

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on that. He said he couldn't catch any connection where there was a good organized factor in that part of the story to make it valid. He said, "I couldn't see that that really made a valid story." These men were given these three names, to be sure and get these three, but get Truman first.

HESS: Which they failed in doing...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...and were shot there at that time?

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Well, back to our Puerto Rico situation. Do you think that Puerto Rico should be given independence?

CHAPMAN: I would say this: I believe the Puerto Ricans are arriving at the state of independence, and I believe that they will soon be ready for it. I doubt if they are ready for it at this time [1973].

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If they had a larger number of leadership people and qualified leaders like we were speaking of a moment ago, then I would answer differently. We had difficulty in getting certain qualified Negroes but we've got plenty of qualified Negroes. You can't say that today and get away with it, because I could go over a list on my own to prove to you that this man is qualified to hold very important jobs.

Now, Puerto Rico lacked a certain amount of what was necessary for a better educational background for its leaders. If they had a dozen or so men for leadership comparable to [Luis] Munoz Marin on the Island all the time for the next ten, twelve years, then he would have them in a position of qualifying themselves for leadership of their own people and their own government. The only question I have is, whether they've got enough of those types of qualified people to lead the government. That's the only thing that concerns me. I want to see them get their independence as soon as they can, but I want to see them get

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it at a time, and in a way, that will not set it back by another forty or fifty years. I'd like to see if go forward in the proper time and I would want to bring them forward with the Virgin Islands, together, and be brought together to see if that may or may not work, but it ought to be studied. That ought to be studied to see.

HESS: When we were discussing appointing women to positions you mentioned that you had one in mind; did you name her?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I give you a little history to show you my loyalty is a very strong element in my life, makeup; my loyalty is usually quite strong when I'm for a person. I was for this woman for a long time because I'd been for her, I'd worked with her, and I worked with her in Government and out and I knew what kind of a job she could do, and I wanted her appointed Secretary of Labor. But it came at a time that you were establishing the precedent for having a job set aside just for

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women, because Miss Perkins had just served twelve years there. I think there was some feeling of that. Then, second, there was some feeling of opposition to her because of her strong loyalty to John Lewis.

HESS: What was her name?

CHAPMAN: Josephine Roche, one of the most brilliant women that I have ever worked with.

HESS: What positions had she held?

CHAPMAN: She had been Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under Morgenthau, and she resigned when Lewis broke with Roosevelt, because her first loyalty was to him. And that goes back to a historical, personal reason; it wasn't just a happen-so. She was one of the most brilliant people, man or woman, that I had ever worked with. She had been president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company in Colorado.

HESS: Did you present her name and her case to

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President Truman?

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: What did he say?

CHAPMAN: He said, "I met her. I think she's a smart woman." He said, "I think she's brilliant, and," he said, "she could hold any Cabinet position." And he said, "She could be Secretary of Interior without any trouble at all because she has a broad thinking of conservation as such, and she's familiar with the problems of the West, and that would interest me more than putting her in Labor."

Now, that was because he just didn't want to contribute to this other factor that was already entering into the whole echelon of appointing people because they were a Negro or a woman or something else.

HESS: Was she under serious consideration for a post in Interior, though?

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CHAPMAN: No. No, that never was considered because Ickes was Secretary then. There was no one, really, seriously considered for Secretary of the Interior at all.

HESS: Can you think of any other women who may have received some consideration for any high position during the Truman administration? Of course, Anna Rosenberg at one time was brought in and made Assistant Secretary of Defense; she was in charge of personnel matters.

CHAPMAN: Yes. And they've kind of made this job of the Treasurer of the United States (different from the Secretary of the Treasury--a different technical job), as a lady's job.

HESS: Treasurer of the United States is that position, isn't it now?

CHAPMAN: That's right, that's right. Now that's...

HESS: Georgia Neese Clark Gray.

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CHAPMAN: Georgia Neese Clark Gray.

HESS: Even though her name is not on this particular bill her name used to be on bills, didn't it?

CHAPMAN: Yes. I just saw her the other day.

HESS: Is that right?

CHAPMAN: Yes. And she looked good.

HESS: She's living out in Kansas now somewhere, isn't she?

CHAPMAN: She's still running her bank out there.

HESS: Now that is a position, though, as you mentioned, that has been more or less set aside for a woman.

CHAPMAN: That's right, just by force of habit, I think.

HESS: So, it really isn't any big thing when a woman gets that position; it's normal.

CHAPMAN: It's not a big thing to get that. If you

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put a woman on the bench, that's one thing, and...

HESS: Was that ever considered?

CHAPMAN: Well, not with Josephine Roche...

HESS: No.

CHAPMAN: ...because she was not a lawyer, and I don't know whether it was ever really considered or not; I don't even know, but...

HESS: Now, one reason why I asked that is, I have talked with India Edwards...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...and one of her duties working with the Democratic National Committee, was to try to obtain positions for women in Government, and as Mrs. Edwards has told me, she had a heck of a lot of trouble trying to get jobs for women.

CHAPMAN: She did.

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HESS: Did she ever come and speak to you?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, I talked with India probably a dozen times on this. We discussed this.

HESS: What was her line of reasoning, and did you at any time appoint women to high positions in the Department of Interior?

CHAPMAN: I never did because I was caught in a box between my--what I would like to term my intellectual thinking--I can't state practical political situations which I couldn't handle without hurting Truman. There was a woman that could have been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Interior or Under Secretary either one, just as good as any man we had.

HESS: What was her name?

CHAPMAN: And she could have been just as good as any of them. She was that woman from-- I gave her consideration for it with the hope that I would

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get a chance to present it to the President.

HESS: Where was she from?

CHAPMAN: She was from the State of Washington. What was her name?

HESS: If you recall it later we can add it to the transcript.

CHAPMAN: I'll have to add it to it, if we can, because she was a very prominent woman and a very capable woman, a woman that could make a public speech on most any subject, and...

HESS: Why wasn't she appointed?

CHAPMAN: Partly because her own Senators wouldn't support her and didn't support her, as she thought they were and they were not.

HESS: She was under the assumption that she was being supported by her state Senators, is that right?

CHAPMAN: That's right. She was under the assumption

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they were supporting her, and they just were not supporting her, and so I was caught on that three way circus, too. You have to watch because you'll be blamed for something that you couldn't do anything about when the Senators from your own state don't support you.

HESS: Did that happen often when a person would come in and say, "My Senator's for my appointment," and they mean it in all good faith, but when they saw their Senators they may have got their tacit approval; and then when you phone the Senators and say, "Hey, I'm checking on so and so who was just in to see me and they say they have your support," and the Senators would deny it, or would backtrack, is that...

CHAPMAN: Definitely.

HESS: Did that happen often?

CHAPMAN: Not too often. Not too often, but it does happen. It does happen, but it is not something

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that occurs so much. In this case it did happen, and I didn't want to put the President in an embarrassing position by pushing him any further on this, when I saw what was happening to her support.

HESS: One lady's name who comes up occasionally, I believe, is Judge Sarah Hughes of Texas, the lady who swore in Lyndon Johnson as President aboard Air Force One on November the 22nd of 1963.

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's right.

HESS: I understand that there was some support for Judge Hughes to be a member of the Supreme Court back in the Truman administration; do you remember anything on that or not?

CHAPMAN: Yes, there was some support for her.

HESS: A good deal of support from India Edwards, I know. I don't know about anyone else.

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CHAPMAN: There was support from India, strong support.

HESS: Did you ever hear President Truman comment on that particular situation?

CHAPMAN: No, I never did hear him comment on that particular appointment, about that person. I never heard him comment on that. She had some good support from other people in Texas, too. Rather interesting though, she belonged more or less to the conservative element of the party down there than she did the liberal.

HESS: They have a real civil war down there in the Texas Democratic Party, don't they?

CHAPMAN: They were having a fight down there on this liberal and conservative issue every election nearly. Yarborough was on the other side, and Yarborough was a good man Yarborough was a good Senator. I don't know how well he supported the President; in his support and votes I don't

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know how he'd stack up with that, but I considered him friendly to the President--at least I interpret that as such. And he was a good man; I thought Yarborough was a very good man, but...

HESS: I believe Senator Tom Connally was one of the Senators at that time, was he not?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was. For a while he was, not very long, and he was one of those who--well, he would have backed her.

HESS: You think so?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he would have backed her. He wasn't for her, he wasn't excited about pushing her, but he would not have stood in her way; he would have supported her if necessary.

HESS: How about Sam Rayburn, do you think he would have supported a woman?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he would have. Sam will fool you. You know, that's the thing that always discouraged

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me about Lyndon Johnson. Lyndon Johnson was so cheated out of his place in modern history regarding his attitudes towards race and women. He was as strong for accomplishing something on the racial thing as any man on earth. You would have never gotten that civil rights bill through Congress at all had it not been for Lyndon Johnson. He was the one man that was the key to that fight and it couldn't have gotten through without him; and Truman's support naturally gave it its real start. Then Johnson's support on the Hill. For the first time, we had joint cooperative support between the Senate and the administration.

HESS: And we might add for the benefit of historians reading this transcript that this is one week after the death of Lyndon Johnson; he was buried a week ago yesterday.

CHAPMAN: That's right. That's right, a week ago yesterday.

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HESS: On Thursday. All right, in looking on further on my list of...

CHAPMAN: There was one more that I was going to mention there. I wanted to make...

HESS: Who did you have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Charlie Brannan of Agriculture. I want to say Charlie Brannan never--he followed Clint Anderson as Secretary of Agriculture.

HESS: Mr. Anderson retired from the Cabinet in May of '48 and that was when he ran for Senator from New Mexico and then he was followed in the Cabinet by Charles Brannan.

CHAPMAN: That's right, he was. He was followed by him. You know, at first he wasn't for Charlie. He left...

HESS: Anderson was not, or President Truman?

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CHAPMAN: Anderson was not. But after carefully working with him and watching him for the program and for his attitudes on things, he turned around 180° almost, and said that he had come to the conclusion that Charlie would make a darned good Secretary.

HESS: Who supported Brannan initially?

CHAPMAN: Well, Jim Patton was his constituency, principally, outside of the...

HESS: What was the name of his organization, the National Farmers' Union?

CHAPMAN: Yes, the Farmers' Union.

HESS: Denver based, is it not?

CHAPMAN: Principally, it was North Dakota and Denver. They were the two principal places, because they had two very strong men, Jim Patton in Denver and I've forgotten the other fellow's name, up in

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North Dakota, who was a very strong man, a good man.

HESS: Also with the National Farmers' Union?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was in the Farmers' Union.

HESS: Patton was the president, was he not?

CHAPMAN: Yes, Patton was the president, and the other fellow was his constant opponent on everything and that sort of weakened him after a while. When Patton, on account of his health, had to withdraw from some things, why, this fellow was not strong enough then to even get it on his own. He had killed himself off.

Well, I wanted to say this: Brannan devoted a lot of time, to try to work out social programs that would fit into the administration's picture, President's policies generally, and then promote and inject those programs wherever he could into the social needs of our people, and that would naturally arise with the Secretary of Agriculture

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through the poor farmers, first; that would be his first attention. And he did pay attention to those; he worked hard for those people. He sacrificed a great deal for that.

HESS: Did you see the Brannan plan as a social program to advance the position of the poorer farmers?

CHAPMAN: I saw it as an effort to do that. I could not understand it thoroughly as an economic thing; I couldn't for the life of me get the understanding of it. I just decided; well, I didn't know as much about farming as Charlie did.

HESS: It is a complicated situation, is it not?

CHAPMAN: Well, it's a very complicated economic structure, and one that you've got to have an expert running it all the time or you'll never get it established. I couldn't see it, but Charlie and Jim Patton had sold it, to first

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the Farmers' Union and then they spread that to some other farm crowd, the Grange people, and sold it to them. They never sold it to the Farmer's Bureau of the--what you call it?

HESS: The Farm Bureau.

CHAPMAN: The Farm Bureau; he couldn't sell it to that old fellow. He was always on the conservative side of everything. Well, I supported Charlie with this as much as I could, but frankly I couldn't understand it well enough to be an advocate or a promoter of it. I was afraid to stick my neck out or make a speech on a stump for something that I couldn't myself understand.

HESS: If someone asked a sharp and penetrating question on the Brannan plan itself, it would have been a little embarrassing to say...

CHAPMAN: Terribly embarrassing.

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HESS: ...I don't know that much about it.

CHAPMAN: I went to see, for instance, Stu Symington. I said, "Stu, you're not against Charlie Brannan are you?"

He said, "Hell, no, any man that can cook up a program that he's got where I can't ever find the tail of it and work on, I've got to--you know, I'll give him credit." And he laughed. He said, "Now, I'm going to tell you the truth, Oscar;" he said, "I've got nothing against Charlie Brannan and I supported him before because I knew he would be honest about it and sincere in trying to do something;" but he said, "for the life of me, he doesn't get it across in explaining it to people. It isn't explained adequately."

HESS: Many people at that time had heard of the Brannan plan, but I really wonder how many people really knew what it was?

CHAPMAN: You know I haven't found anybody yet that

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knew what it was. I haven't found anybody that knew what it was. Now, I give Charlie great credit, though, for a lot of things he didn't get credit for and things that he did. He worked awfully hard in the committees between departments and things like that, and between the

National Committee and his own office; he worked very closely with them. I did not work too closely with the National Committee, per se.

HESS: The Democratic National Committee?

CHAPMAN: No. I stayed away from them as much as possible, feeling that it would give me my best strength to carry on my work if I didn't get involved in their little personal desires or trying to build up somebody for the Presidency at some point, or do something else that they wanted accomplished and they wanted help with the Cabinet officers.

HESS: One of their interests is patronage. Did they

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ever come to you? We mentioned India Edwards, but were there other times when the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who was J. Howard McGrath or William Boyle or Frank McKinney, or anyone else who had held the position, were there times when they came to you about patronage, about getting a job for a good Democrat?

CHAPMAN: Not a one ever came to me and asked me for a job. The reason for that was I had in as nice a way as I could, as pleasantly as I could, let it be known that my office was not going to be used for a patronage ground between the politicians; it was going to be strictly appointments on the merits of the competency of the men who take it and that was the only basis I was going to consider them on. I told the President what I was going to do at that point, and he said, "Go right ahead, I'll support you in anything you want to do in that field. You know how to handle it without creating a public break," and I did. I didn't have a public break of any kind.

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And, second, the Department of Interior, during the period that I was Secretary, which was a little over three years, I think, not a single investigation or a resolution was put in the hopper up there to investigate any part of the Department of the Interior, or me, or anything in the Department during the entire time.

HESS: The State Department caught heck for a while, but...

CHAPMAN: Exactly. Exactly.

Well, George Malone from Nevada was going to put in one on the Indian problem, but you can always put one in on the Indian problems, anytime, and we didn't find it embarrassing to anybody.

HESS: Anybody that's got anything to do with it.

CHAPMAN: I went up to see George; I had known George for 20 years and I had supported George for national commander of the American Legion that time when I caught him in a good fight with

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Lou Johnson and...

HESS: That we covered last time.

CHAPMAN: That's right. I used him beautifully. He wanted to be commander so bad, he could just taste it. He was the kind of a fellow that if one person mentioned it to him, he's got a mob supporting him. And he didn't have...

HESS: An optimist.

CHAPMAN: He really was an optimist; he didn't have support at all; he didn't have a man in the convention that would vote for him.

HESS: Was he Senator or something at that time that you went up to talk to him about the proposed investigation?

CHAPMAN: Yes. He had started; he had written out his resolution and was planning to put it in, and...

HESS: Where was he from?

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CHAPMAN: Nevada.

HESS: Nevada.

CHAPMAN: I went up and I said, "George, if there's anything in the world in that Department that you want to see regarding the Indian Problems, if you will let me know what it is, I will bring it to you. You won't have to send for it, or subpoena it; I'll bring you anything in the world you want on any of the papers that I've got, every piece of paper on the Indian Service. I'll bring them up to you in a box, if you want, and you take six months and study them, and look them over, and see what you want to do with them." I said, "All I ask you to do is give them a good study; don't go into it half cocked, because I'll have to make a defense if somebody gets off grounds. I'm not going to deny that there isn't a lot of things that ought to be done yet. I'm simply going to deny the fact of your statement, which is not a correct statement; it's only based on hearsay,

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and a lot of things like that. But," I said, "all I want to do is to--if you will tell me what papers you want in the Department of the Interior or any man you want to come up here to testify before you as a Senator on this committee," I said, "I'll see that he's up here, or I'll bring him up here, or I'll come up and testify and open the hearings for you, and I'll do everything I can to make it a real intelligent hearing."

HESS: What did he say then?

CHAPMAN: Well, he got so taken back; he was just taken back, he said, "Well, in that case, I do need the resolution."

I said, "No, you don't." I said, "I have long since learned that what you can't get by good, intelligent, and honest cooperation with a man, you will never get by force." And I said, "In this case, you can't get what you want by force, because I can't get it either."

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And I said, "I'd like to get some of it, and I'll help you all I can to make this a real intelligent thing so that it won't be just a smear campaign."

"Well," he said, "you have so and so over there; we don't like him out in Nevada."

HESS: Who did he have in mind?

CHAPMAN: Who he had in mind was one of my best field men that I had in the whole Indian Service. I brought him over from the Grazing Service and put him in charge of all of the Grazing Service on Indian land, you see, and he really did a good job.

HESS: What was his name, do you recall?

CHAPMAN: His name was [John W.] Frey.

HESS: Oh yes, yes.

CHAPMAN: Frey was a good man, he was...

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HESS: What seemed to be his difficulty?

CHAPMAN: His difficulty was he couldn't get along very well with certain types of people; it was just a personality thing with him. He just couldn't get along with anybody, that was all there was to it.

HESS: Now didn't he lose his position?

CHAPMAN: Later.

HESS: Later.

CHAPMAN: Yes, later.

HESS: Still during the Truman administration though, was it not?

CHAPMAN: It was just...

HESS: I believe he was transferred at one point.

CHAPMAN: He was; he was transferred. He was transferred, but that did not come out of this.

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HESS: Oh.

CHAPMAN: It wasn't because of this; this had no relationship to that. The change was partly his own desire in wanting to make the change. He talked with me about it and he told me that he knew that certain people wanted him transferred and did not want him in the Indian Service. He says, "I'm not getting any support from the Indian Service, anyway," and he says, "all I'm doing is running a risk here of hurting my reputation and no chance to accomplish anything." And he said, "Where you are working in an atmosphere of that kind, it's much better if you get out of the way and let somebody else take it and then you go on to something else, and that's what I'd like to do."

And I said, "What do you want?" I said, "I'll support you for anything you want." I said, "As a matter of fact, I'll support you for Assistant Secretary here if I had a vacancy that

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was coming up."

He laughed; he said, "Well, I'm not looking for a promotion, I'm just looking for protection."

I said, "Well, I'll do everything I can to give--I'm familiar with your work and I have done a lot of reviewing of your work, and I know what you've done and I'm for it. Now," I said, "Ferry Carpenter is an extremely conservative cattleman, and he'd do anything that the cattleman wanted and then in turn, they'd do anything that he wanted." Ferry Carpenter was a very brilliant fellow; he had two degrees from Princeton. I said, "He's a very brilliant man and he knows what he is doing, even though it isn't in the right road; it isn't in the right direction. He's headed in the wrong direction, regarding the use of public lands." I said, "He doesn't have the right pitch on the public land as I think he should have, although he's a good man, a mighty good fellow, and a very smart man. But he doesn't think in the right track on

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this program that we are carrying."

Well, he and I are very close friends; we are very close friends. Now I had a difficult time because of that, of trying to keep him straight, but he was trying to use me to protect his position on his policy that I couldn't protect, because I couldn't go with him on a lot of his stuff. That was Ferry Carpenter, from up there in western Colorado, a very fine man, wonderful man.

HESS: After you offered to give the records to the Senator if he requested them, did he ever request any of the records?

CHAPMAN: He withdrew his resolution for them from the committee.

HESS: Well, you told him that he didn't need that, though, and if he wanted them you would bring them to him.

CHAPMAN: I told him that for anything he needed, all

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he needed to do was ask me for it. All he needed to do was just ask me for them.

HESS: Did he ever ask?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He didn't ask?

CHAPMAN: No, that was the end of it.

HESS: That was the end of that.

CHAPMAN: That's it. He saw that I was setting aside a man that was going to devote his time to taking care of George Malone and all of the papers he wanted. This fellow was very good at handling Senators and I assigned him to follow a hearing like this. And that man would brief himself on this subject matter so thoroughly that he could repeat it like the Lord's Prayer to him. He'd go up to the Senate in a minute, because when he went up representing me he would have made the most thorough briefing study of that subject

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matter of any man you ever saw, just like he was cramming for the bar examination, getting ready for it. He reviewed file after file, case after case, on what had come out in the past; and he had gone over these things and I told him; I said, "Now, I don't want you to go up there to defend me, I simply just want you to keep the record straight with the Senate, that's all I want. And

don't try to defend me, because I've got my political enemies that have nothing to do with Indians." And I said, "I've got political enemies that come up from other sources and you can't afford to step out and try to defend me on those things when you are working as an expert on this other, so don't try that."

And he didn't. And do you know, he kept those people off my neck so carefully and so thoroughly that I come back to my opening statement there on this subject, that not a single investigation was ever held in my department while I was Secretary. He was really phenomenal. He

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worked pretty carefully and it was because I kept a careful record, and a careful program between the Congress and my office, and I had this one man assigned to do nothing else but watch any hearing that might be in the offing, and he would follow those hearings, study them carefully, be ready for them when they came to the front, so you always had a chance to learn about any particular hearing that's going to come up on the Department; you'd learn about it long before it came up.

HESS: We are just about to run off.

CHAPMAN: We used to do just that way.

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Sixteenth Oral History Interview with Oscar L. Chapman, Washington, D.C.,
February 9, 1973.

By Jerry N. Hess,
Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Chapman, to begin this morning, let's discuss the events of 1952 concerning the election. When did you first become aware that President Truman did not intend to run for reelection in 1952?

CHAPMAN: I think that it kind of developed in my mind, and strictly in my imagination, as to what was taking place in the administration. I began to feel it without any expression from Mr. Truman one way or another. He at no time ever made any expression of whether he was going to or not going to run. But I gathered from the--you get as much from a man's smile as you do his words; but when he was talking to me one time, I got a feeling that he was telling me something that he wasn't saying in words.

HESS: Do you recall about when that was, what date?

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CHAPMAN: Yes, that was about less than 60 days before that dinner was that night that he...

HESS: That's right, that was March the 29th of 1952 at the National Guard Armory.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So this was about two months before then?

CHAPMAN: Just about two months before that dinner.

HESS: What did he say...

CHAPMAN: I began to get a feeling that he was thinking in his own mind of some new approach for his own life.

HESS: What did he say that led you to believe that?

CHAPMAN: Well, one comment he made during our little visit was a comment about some of the--well, just for classification purposes, I'd call them the more conservative group, some on the Hill that were critical of Mr. Truman instead of openly

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taking the lead to support him and help him. They were letting their feet drag and weren't really helping us as they ought to.

During that conversation, as we were talking about this, he made a comment, and he was looking at me when he said it, and I was looking him right in the face, and as I said, a man's smile and his expression often convey an impression of a man, more than what he's telling you, his words.

And I got an impression from him at that moment that he was thinking of whether he should or shouldn't run. He made this comment when we were both a little critical in our discussion with each other. We were a little critical about a certain party who had been not helping us but handicapping us a little bit, and we made a comment and he said, "You know, what they don't

know is I don't have to run for President." And he was looking at me right in the face, and I caught a grin on his face when he said that.

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I said, "No, you don't have to, Mr. President, but you have an option, in this case. Not many people will ever have a chance to have the option that you have, because you have served, for all practical purposes, practically all of Roosevelt's fourth term." You see, Roosevelt was elected on the fourth term, but he served, what, up until April?

HESS: From January 20th until April the 12th.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: Two or three months, something like that.

CHAPMAN: Something like that, but Truman for all practical purposes served...

HESS: Just about eight years.

CHAPMAN: That's right, about eight years. And that law, the spirit of that law was really carried out the way Truman did it, the fact that he had...

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HESS: Even though he was exempted.

CHAPMAN: He was exempted through a technicality here of a situation, but...

HESS: The 22nd Amendment, was it not? I think it is.

CHAPMAN: I believe it was. Yes, that was a Norris amendment; don't you remember that was a Norris amendment that changed the inauguration date.

HESS: I'm not sure, but the amendment that limited the times that a President could serve and cut it down to two terms was passed during Mr. Truman's administration, but he was specifically exempted in the wording of the amendment.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: It said something or other; the present holder of the office is not bound by this amendment or something like that. He could have run if he had wanted to.

CHAPMAN: That's right, he could have run.

HESS: In your opinion why didn't he run?

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CHAPMAN: Well, I think it was just one of those things where he had his feet on the ground and was thinking solidly with the people. Why should he take on another four years when his own party wasn't giving him much help or trying to give him any help, and he was carrying the whole fight and was very successful in helping the party to hold itself together. Had we been able to get the more conservative group and some of the so-called liberals; a few of the liberals were not doing too much to help us.

Now, you see, lead that over into this problem that Stevenson was faced with in '52. Here he had been living, and did live, in a community where the *Chicago Tribune* was the dominant force of all the news media in that area, and so he saw something critical about Truman in every issue of the paper nearly. I think that he had been influenced to some extent, enough to feel that if he publicly tied himself to Truman, too--if he

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did it too openly and too strong, he might hurt himself with the reaction of people who considered him a Truman man to the extent that Stevenson didn't want to be considered as anybody's man. But he didn't understand Truman. That was the whole truth of it there and it took him about four years after that campaign before he began to understand Truman and what his problem was; because Truman had served up through '52, and then when President Eisenhower defeated Stevenson for reelection in '52, Stevenson had time to do a little thinking, lecturing and writing some articles, and he was doing some thinking. He was quite a thinker and quite a writer and he was an extremely conscientious man, but he was--I was more or less like a go-between, between one group of the party element here and the other group.

HESS: Did you ever speak with Mr. Stevenson about his views on Mr. Truman? Did he ever convey

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to you what he thought of Mr. Truman?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, we discussed it quite thoroughly, to a great extent. I went out and I did this at President Truman's request, now. I went out to Springfield.

HESS: About what time of the year was this?

CHAPMAN: I went out on Lincoln Day and gave the Lincoln Day address, at a luncheon that day.

HESS: February the 12th.

CHAPMAN: That's right. I went out there that day and spent the two nights with Stevenson at his mansion there. And Mark [Marquis] Childs was there spending a weekend with him, and I had quite a fine opportunity for really consulting with Stevenson and talking with him, going very deeply into his thinking about this thing. And I talked with him about this and I raised this question. I said, "Now, Governor, if you are thinking of running for President;" I said,

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"I have not talked with you before. Let me say to you, I would like very much to see you run and I will certainly do everything in my power to support you, but," I said, "you've got a problem here. You've got to find a proper way to approach it to the public." I said, "Your expressions on Truman have been that you didn't entirely agree with him on some of the things he handled. You didn't seem to be in opposition to any particular policy that he was putting over; therefore, that left it more or less a personality difference of opinions of people." I made that statement to Stevenson.

He said, "Oscar;" he said, "my trouble is, he could get along with these fellows like [Richard J.] Daley out here in Chicago, and," he said, "I can't, I just can't get along with them. It isn't easy for me to get along with them, but I have no feeling against Daley. It's just," he said, "I find I let that run over into my thinking about Truman. I find it not easy for

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me to be close to him in some way or another."

"Well," I said, "I think, maybe, if you will forgive me for saying so; I think it's your approach to this, your method of handling it, that has created that situation more than anything else." I said, "You have known that Mr. Truman has spoken very kindly of you on several occasions, and I'm talking with you today to say that Mr. Truman wanted me to tell you that he was hoping you would run, that he'd give you every support he could, to do whatever you wanted him to do to help you. And he would help you, and he wanted you to run, and he told me that I could pass that on to you and let you know."

HESS: One thing I want to clear up; this was before the announcement at the National Guard Armory?

CHAPMAN: That was before the Armory thing.

HESS: Yes, see, the announcement at the National Guard Armory was March the 29th.

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CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: The end of the following month.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And this was February the 12th.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: So, this was a good indication, was it not, that the President did not intend to run?

CHAPMAN: That was one of the principal things that I put together that he was not going to run.

HESS: When did he ask you...

CHAPMAN: He never once told me that he was not going to run, one way or another.

HESS: What did he say to you when he asked you to go to Springfield and speak to Stevenson?

CHAPMAN: Well, we were talking and I told him I had an invitation to go out there to speak at the

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Lincoln Day luncheon at Springfield, within a week or ten days or so, and asked if he had any message, anything he wanted me to convey to Mr. Stevenson. I said, "The last time I spoke with Stevenson has been probably six months before," and I said, "he spoke in a friendly tone towards you at that time." And he did, but when I spoke with him later, he had been worked on by somebody to get him away from Truman, to get a break in between them, whoever it was. I couldn't tell who was doing it, but there was also somebody influencing the President to turn him against Stevenson, and they were doing the same thing to Stevenson, some so-called friend.

HESS: Was it someone on Mr. Truman's staff?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't think it was anyone on his staff that was doing it. I think it probably was one of the Senators, some Senator that I think had a good deal of access to the President.

HESS: Who was the man?

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CHAPMAN: I don't like to use his name; he's a sick man today, and I don't want to name him, but that was Clint Anderson.

HESS: What did he have against Stevenson?

CHAPMAN: I don't think he had anything. I don't think he had anything in the world against Stevenson. I think he really wanted Truman to run again. I think Clint really wanted him to run again. Clint thought he could make it.

HESS: He thought he would be reelected if he ran?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he really did. He thought he could. Now, I could be interpreting that wrong. That's my own interpretation I'm putting on this; it's not a direct statement from him that he said...

HESS: Did you ever hear him say that?

CHAPMAN: No. No, I never heard him say that, but what he did say, was the opening with an option here for Stevenson and Truman to work the thing out.

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He was quite fond of Truman, I thought, but Clint was a fast footworker, when it came to the convention. He was a fast footworker, and he got around among the delegations very well and being Secretary of the Agriculture he made himself well-known and fairly well respected and liked among the farm groups.

HESS: Then he'd run for the Senate in 1948.

CHAPMAN: Yes, that's what he did.

HESS: What was your opinion? Did you think Mr. Truman could have been reelected in 1952 had he run?

CHAPMAN: I doubt it.

HESS: Why? What were the obstacles?

CHAPMAN: The obstacle was nothing but time. Time, and Eisenhower was a world hero at that time, but that made him an extremely popular man and...

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HESS: One thing we ought to mention, too, is the Republican battle cry during that particular election was "Communism, corruption, and Korea."

CHAPMAN: That was the theme song that the Republicans put across on us pretty well.

HESS: The communism reference was to investigations about Communists in Government at that particular time, particularly the State Department.

CHAPMAN: You see, [Joseph] McCarthy had stirred up the people to create doubts in their mind. He had done a pretty good job of stirring up a lot of people. He particularly had certain church elements very concerned about this and of all the people in the world that could influence any church element, Joe McCarthy was the last man in the world you would look to to think that he'd be influencing a group of religious people. But it fitted into their whole philosophy and religion. Let me go back a little bit to clarify a little bit more of the importance.

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We may go back to when Truman asked me to take that speaking date in Illinois and have a good talk with Stevenson and see if "You can't get him to announce himself as soon as he wants to, or whenever he wants to, it doesn't matter to me. If he wants to wait until the convention, fine, but if he'd give me a hint that he'd probably take a run at it, I would be laying the groundwork to help him. And it's in an area in the party where he needs some help." And that was so true. Stevenson needed help badly from what I would call the conservative group, from them; he needed help there more than he did anywhere else at the moment.

He had a liberal-tinged group that was supporting him, very strongly. I was very fond of Stevenson, but he was the hardest man to work with in terms of getting your guidelines from him to go forward on whatever you were working on, whether it was on your program or the election, the political phase of it. He was scared of politics; he acted like a man that was really scared of politics, whereas Mr. Truman just enjoyed it, like he was playing his last game of football or base ball or something. He's going to play his last

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game. He was going to have some fun with it and Truman was having the time of his life; he really was. He was enjoying himself and he had made up his mind. And those were the two things there that were . . .

HESS: But you didn't have the feeling that Mr. Stevenson enjoyed politics?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: He didn't like politics?

CHAPMAN: Not a bit. He didn't like politics at all.

HESS: Did he feel uncomfortable with politicians?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Oh yes, very much.

HESS: You mentioned that with Daley and others...

CHAPMAN: Yes, he was uncomfortable with them; he didn't feel like he ever had a good rapport with the politicians.

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HESS: Don't you feel that he viewed himself as more of a statesman than a politician?

CHAPMAN: Yes. That was it; he was thinking of himself more as a statesman. I said this to him once; I ran the risk of making him misunderstand what I meant, but I said, "Governor, some people can be statesmen, but not until they are elected to office, and after they are elected they can then become statesmen. But you don't usually find anybody in America that has become a statesman unless he has shown his political strength with the people on certain issues and things of that kind and is able to express himself to the people in such a way that he becomes a man that's considered a leader."

HESS: What did he say, do you recall, when you told him that?

CHAPMAN: Well, yes, he said, "Well, my trouble is, Oscar, I think you put your hands on it; that's one of my troubles. Now" he said, "I have nothing against Mr. Daley. Daley

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is--he's a typical example of my trouble;" he said, "I don't have anything against him at all. But," he said, "somehow or another he has created an atmosphere, and has created a surrounding of himself, a psychological thing among the people, the public, that think of him as a politician, something that's evil and bad."

"Well," I said, "how are you going to change that unless you change our system of government, and I'm not for changing our system of government; I like it like it is. I think it's pretty good; needs some changes here and there, but it's pretty good as it is and I like it."

He himself was his own worst enemy, Stevenson was; he really had a spark of greatness in him. He had a spark of genius, and a philosophy of concern for the poor man and the working man, but he didn't quite know how to approach them. He never quite--for instance, at no time did he ever reach the depth of love for him by the poor

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people, as the poor people did for Truman. He never reached that point, at any place. Now, when I have said you've got to be elected and show your ability to do something before you can become a statesman, and people ought to remember that when they are trying to be a statesman before they run for office once, try it out.

HESS: At the time that President Truman was debating this in his own mind, whether to run, whether not to run, and he spoke to you about talking to Stevenson, were there others under consideration by the President? If he didn't run, was he thinking about other people who would be good men to run on the ticket, other than Stevenson?

CHAPMAN: I didn't get any firm statement from him as I did on Stevenson. There were others, no doubt, in his mind...

HESS: As you will recall, at the convention Senator--Vice President at this time--Vice President
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Barkley, even though age was against him...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...he wanted the nomination in '52.

CHAPMAN: He did want it badly.

HESS: And there were others; Estes Kefauver, who went up to New Hampshire, ran in the primary in New Hampshire and out-pollled Mr. Truman. And the New Hampshire primary, of course, was before the President's announcement that he was not going to run.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: There were those in the party that held it against Estes Kefauver for doing this, for openly opposing the President before the President's announcement that he did not want the renomination. So, there were others who would have liked it. Did you ever hear Mr. Truman say anything about Estes Kefauver's running against him in New Hampshire?

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CHAPMAN: He thought it was an unfair political cut at him, and it was.

HESS: Because he hadn't announced that he wasn't going to run.

CHAPMAN: He hadn't announced. Kefauver lived three doors from me up there on Hillbrook Lane. And I saw a lot of Senator Kefauver, and I liked him very much, because he was quite aggressive in fighting for issues. He did a good job in the Senate on legislative matters. He worked hard and I give him a lot of credit on some of those good things that we did get through up there on the Hill; he helped them. But I know Mr. Truman had a right to feel that this was a little bit of an unfair cut from his own party to do this at that time. Now, he should have waited until Truman made his statement, and then he would at least have kept the door open for himself for friendship with that group when and if the time did come, you see.

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HESS: You didn't hear President Truman speak favorably of anyone other than Stevenson?

CHAPMAN: Not favorable in a sense that he made any outright statements for some particular person running for President. Now, Jimmy Byrnes, he always thought Jimmy was still holding it against him from previous conventions, I think, and...

HESS: '44 in particular.

CHAPMAN: Yes. So, he had no--he didn't have that following with him in the party; Truman didn't, because whatever following Byrnes had--he didn't have as much as he thought he had, not by any means.

HESS: Was Richard Russell's name ever mentioned in 1952?

CHAPMAN: Only mentioned in a mixture of expressions of sentiment, "A southerner that's real conservative couldn't be elected anyway." And he never discussed it with any firmness that he thought he really...

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HESS: Because even though Richard Russell was from the South he would have liked to have had the nomination.

CHAPMAN: He wanted it. That's the first time I ever knew he really wanted it. But he wouldn't have been elected either; he couldn't have been elected. You have to take things as they are and as you meet them. Now what you can do one year, you can't do a year later. Now if--here's what happened. Truman's situation fell almost in the same category as Johnson's fell in his category. Truman was nominated for Vice President with Roosevelt; Roosevelt was a smart political man, I don't care what anybody says, he was a smart politician, and he did like Truman.

HESS: I don't think you'll get too many arguments on that count.

CHAPMAN: I don't think so either. Any man who gets elected four times, you can't argue with that.

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Well, he liked Truman, Roosevelt did, and I knew this. I knew he liked him and I had a very good relationship with Roosevelt. I had an excellent relationship when I was Assistant Secretary of the Interior, all the time I was in there under Ickes. He always helped me. Anytime anything came up that looked like there would be some problem for me, I would just go in and talk to Roosevelt. And I could talk with him on anything I wanted, and he was most helpful to me all the way through; he was helpful. I found out that Roosevelt was very fond of Truman; he liked him. He thought Truman had done a masterful job and a faithful job in that Senate committee, that he was carrying that investigation on.

HESS: Did you hear why he did not speak directly to Senator Truman in the entire time that they were selecting a vice-presidential nominee? I've always thought that was rather odd.

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CHAPMAN: It was; it was odd from my reaction of playing the game, and how you would do it, guessing; but I did not take that as a feeling against Truman. Knowing Roosevelt as I had I am positive he would have said, "Well, I don't want Truman." If he didn't want him he would have said so to me; now, because he did say so about two men that he didn't want and I knew that.

HESS: But he did take him as a running mate in 1944 without speaking directly to him about the prospect, right?

CHAPMAN: That's right, but he wrote the letter; now you see he wanted...

HESS: I've understood that Roosevelt phoned Bob Hannegan when Truman was sitting--it was in a bedroom, and Truman supposedly was seated on a bed.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

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HESS: ...right across from Bob Hannegan and Roosevelt phoned Hannegan to ask Hannegan if he had Truman lined up. And Hannegan said, "No, I haven't, sir, he's something like a contrary Missouri mule and he's sitting right here," but still Roosevelt didn't say, "Well, put him on the line. Hand him the telephone. I want to speak to him." It was all indirect and through a third party.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: That to me seems odd.

CHAPMAN: It was very odd. Knowing how smooth Roosevelt handled his politics, I was surprised that he hadn't cleared that out of the way before Chicago and let them be working; but you will find, if you check back through history then, that no Presidential candidate--well, very seldom, I wouldn't say any, but very seldom does the candidate want to pick the Vice President or want to be known to have dictated the Vice

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Presidency openly. He'd like to do it quietly, but he doesn't like to do it openly. Now a lot have been like that.

HESS: In 1940 Roosevelt sent a letter to the convention stating something to the effect, "If you don't put Henry Wallace as the second man on this ticket, I won't run."

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Very open. He said, "If you don't give me Henry Wallace I won't run."

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: And then four years later...

CHAPMAN: He wouldn't say a word.

HESS: Wouldn't say a word, seemed disinterested as to who the party picked.

CHAPMAN: Well, you know there's a possibility that a good deal of that was in his mind, that he didn't

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care an awful lot. That is he had gotten tired of the opposition about his running and about whether he should run or shouldn't, and he was getting tired of all that, I think.

HESS: But he still didn't make an announcement that--similar to the one that Stevenson made in 1956...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...when Stevenson said to the convention, "I'm going to leave it to you to pick the second man." That brought on the fight between Kefauver and Senator John Kennedy.

CHAPMAN: That's right, exactly.

HESS: But Stevenson at that time made it known very plainly to the convention that it was up to them to pick the Vice Presidential nominee and he would take whoever they picked.

CHAPMAN: And that was a good way to do it.

HESS: You think that's a good way to do it?

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CHAPMAN: I think it's a good way to do it. Let it be known, "I'm not going to try to pick the Vice President." Now, sure as the world, if I were running, I would want to let my friends and the leadership know that I didn't want John Smith to be elected Vice President.

HESS: Well, in 1952 the man who ran with Stevenson was Senator John Sparkman of Alabama.

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: Why was he chosen as second on the ticket in 1952, and who chose him; did Stevenson choose him?

CHAPMAN: No.

HESS: Who did?

CHAPMAN: Sam Rayburn.

HESS: Sam Rayburn.

CHAPMAN: Yes.

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HESS: Why?

CHAPMAN: Sam Rayburn was obviously the turning point in the selection of John Sparkman. And he made the statement in my presence that he thought John would get more votes than anybody else for that. He had turned to me, Sam had, and he said, "Oscar," he said, "you'd have too many of these southerners on your neck before you even started; that's the trouble with your being the..."

HESS: Would you agree with that observation?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Yes, he was right, and there wasn't any question about it; I knew it. That's why I didn't try to push myself; I didn't.

HESS: Do you think you would have had a pretty fair following from the West?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I'd have had a good following.

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HESS: Yes, since you were from Colorado and you were Secretary of the Interior, and the Interior is probably the most important department when you get out to the Western part of the United States.

CHAPMAN: I'd have carried Virginia, too.

HESS: You'd have carried Virginia?

CHAPMAN: I really would.

HESS: Since you were born there.

CHAPMAN: As a matter of fact, Byrd would have nominated me, or he would have seconded it.

HESS: Did you always have a pretty close relationship with Senator Byrd?

CHAPMAN: Yes, always.

HESS: Wasn't he usually known as the arch conservative; he was a fiscal conservative, isn't that right?

CHAPMAN: He was at that point; he was a fiscal conserva-

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tive. He was a financial expert in working out fiscal policies, and that was his field, really that he was an expert in. Now, I came in...

HESS: Would you find him a social conservative?

CHAPMAN: Oh, yes, he's a social conservative; he's not...

HESS: Because he's from Virginia.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he's a social conservative, too, and not just a fiscal conservative; he was a social conservative. For instance, he couldn't support Truman's liberal bills on...

HESS: Civil rights and...

CHAPMAN: None of those. He wouldn't support it, where Johnson I knew would. I knew Johnson would do that. It happened that Byrd and myself never had a cross word the whole time when he was in the Senate and I was in the Department of the Interior. Only once he came to me to get me to not change a park

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concessionaire in the Smoky Mountains up here in the ridge--what do you call it?

HESS: The Blue Ridge.

CHAPMAN: Blue Ridge, where we had those cottages, things.

HESS: I believe there's a mountain down there called "Old Rag" that was his favorite place. He used to climb it.

CHAPMAN: That's right, that was his favorite mountain.

HESS: He used to climb it every year on his birthday.

CHAPMAN: Yes, he'd go up there every year and climb that mountain. Now, Byrd and I were very good friends; he was like Bill [William Munford] Tuck and myself. There wasn't a closer friend I had in the House then than Bill Tuck, but never once has there been any public issue on which he and I would be together.

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HESS: Where was he from?

CHAPMAN: Virginia, my district. He was in my...

HESS: Southern Virginia.

CHAPMAN: Southern Virginia, Halifax County. He was right in there.

I had a client in here yesterday, and the boys brought him in. They had been working on his case for him and they brought him in to see me yesterday, and this fellow was talking to me and he started talking, and I said, "You are a Virginian aren't you?"

He said, "Yes, how did you know?"

I said, "You're a tidewater Virginian, anywhere from South Boston to Norfolk."

He said, "By God, you've hit all but the address. What made you think I was a Virginian?"

I said, "You look like a Virginian." He just looked like one. I said, "You belong to the changing group of aristocracy of the South, and your father was one of the aristocracy of the South,

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Virginia. You inherited that good will of his and you're doing it well." I said, "That's why I recognized you as soon as you started talking. I recognized your tidewater brogue; it's totally different from up here around Fairfax County, anywhere else in Virginia, because the tidewater brogue is totally separate and different from any of the rest of the state. And if you're used to it, familiar with it in your younger days, you could recognize it." And I did. But it just buffaloed him. Well, anyway, he was talking to me just day before yesterday. He was in here and he talked with me about the possibility of the campaign.

"Well," he said, "we didn't have a chance in the last election to carry anything down in Virginia, not for the Democrats." He said, "As a matter of fact, I voted for Nixon myself." He said, "I don't know what was the matter with our candidate; he just couldn't get off the ground." He said, "Nixon got him down in the first round

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and never let him up. He just kept him down during the whole fight." And he did, that's just what he did do.

Well, now, let's lead to something else.

HESS: I believe the convention in 1952 was held in Chicago.

CHAPMAN: Chicago.

HESS: What do you recall about that convention?

CHAPMAN: Well, that convention held some very interesting sidelights of history. First, you had a President there that had announced that he would not be a candidate for reelection, although he could have under the law run again. He was qualified, and was not disqualified because of that act of Congress which limited Presidential candidates to two terms. He was exempt from that, because he was President when the bill was passed.

Now that convention gave you a lot of history

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and watching the change take place from a middle-of-the-road, a liberal middle-of-the-road man, like Truman, against a fellow whom you couldn't place to save your life--Stevenson. He'd make a speech one week that you could kind of take as a guide for this direction, and the following week he'd make another speech that would look like he was leaving that road and going to another. And he didn't follow consistently with his public announcements--pronouncements, on policy of what he wanted to do. He wasn't consistent following through with them, not that he meant to be, he wasn't trying to be deceitful; it was one of the things that he had the right of a candidate to change his mind if he was given evidence and information to justify a change of his position.

HESS: What could the Democrats have done to have won that year, in 1952?

CHAPMAN: Nothing. You couldn't have won that year.

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You see, you had up against us that year--I first said that Truman couldn't have been reelected; I want to hedge on that a little, because a man in office as President of the United States goes into the campaign with one leverage in his favor against the other candidate who's never been a candidate before, and he would have had an edge there that people never stopped to think very much. In the beginning, you see, they started a lot of wild rumors and wild talks against Truman, but that wouldn't have lasted through the campaign. I think Truman's method of campaigning in the previous election, '48 election, proved to me that with his method of campaigning he could have taken it again.

HESS: His give 'em hell type of campaign, and...

CHAPMAN: Yes.

HESS: ...taking the issues to the people.

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CHAPMAN: Yes, and he would make no campaign against Eisenhower at all. Eisenhower was a military man, had served his term and retired. Truman had given him every cooperation that he could and supported him in his work, to help him close the war in Europe. I'm not so sure that Truman wouldn't have been elected. If he had taken the same type of campaign that he did in '48, I believe he would have done it, because Eisenhower did not fit that type of campaigning at all. He didn't fit it; he couldn't do that kind of campaigning and make any headway.

HESS: Still the election was held and Eisenhower won.

CHAPMAN: By a big majority.

HESS: By a big majority.

All right, how would you evaluate the handling of the transition from the Truman administration to the Eisenhower administration; was it a smooth one, was it not smooth?

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CHAPMAN: Well, I didn't think it was very rough.

HESS: Who replaced you; who was the Secretary of the Interior for Eisenhower?

CHAPMAN: The Secretary's name who succeeded me was--the former Governor of Oregon. He died a few years ago, a couple of years ago.

HESS: We can add his name.

CHAPMAN: He was the Governor of Oregon and he was appointed Secretary of the Interior. He was Douglas McKay.

HESS: Did he send in delegates, or his representatives, ahead of time to work out a smooth transition?

CHAPMAN: He came himself. He spent nearly five weeks in my office, sitting there with me. And I let him sit in with me on every conference that I held about anything. I said, "Now, I want you to see what I have to do. Some of these things

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being done, based upon the policy that's been established and thoroughly approved by the President, and that's what you will get as you go along here." I said, "You could get a great deal of feeling for this department if you sit in and watch the people who come in and see me and what they talk about, and I'd like for you to hear them, what they talk about."

Well, one committee of five people from Oregon came in to see me to get me to change the boundary lines of a reservation that we had set up and withdrawn that land in Tule Lake from public entry; that is so nobody could settle on it. We were planning to divide it up; we had come to an agreement with the Park Service and the Reclamation Service that part of this should go into Reclamation land and the rest of it should go into the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Well, I had gotten that case absolutely closed and had so notified them in my previous conference with them. I was going to approve the

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recommendation that the two men had agreed on, the two directors. I was going to approve it, as I thought they were as near right as they could get, and it's a question of arguing about where the boundaries should be; how much of this should you put in Reclamation and how much should you put in Fish and Wildlife Service.

Well, I didn't want to open that thing up, because it was like opening up a beehive anyway; there was a bitter fight going on out in the state on that.

The Governor being the Governor of the State, never had anything to do with that kind of a thing at all; he didn't have anything to do with it, so he never had any experience with it. And when he heard me talk to those people; he heard what I said to them, and I said, "Now, Governor, I want you to know that I've made my mind up after very much conversation about this thing that this should be the line that we draw there and I wouldn't open that thing up for another hearing, because if you do you're going to have them coming

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here by busses and you'll fill the auditorium down here for an all day hassle. That's all it will be, because you'll never settle it that way anyhow, but still there will be a whole crowd come in here and demand a day of your time in the auditorium down here." And I said, "I wouldn't open that up again if I were you. Now you're coming in; I'm not going to open it between this and the 20th of January, I'm not going to open it. So, it's up to you and I'm going to leave that up to you, but I'm warning you this is absolute political dynamite, but it's not Republican or Democratic politics." I said, "I'd warn you not to open that up, because you are from Oregon, and they'll crucify you." Well, they damn near killed him; they liked to have crucified the man. He made a mistake of saying out there on a visit one Saturday that he was going to give them another hearing. And so he did.

HESS: He opened up Pandora's box.

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CHAPMAN: He opened up Pandora's box and all hell broke loose on him, and the conservationists just went after him from that day on. They never let up on him. Now, they hadn't bothered me; they had settled down to the fact that I was banking my reputation against theirs, and I was just as much of a conservationist as they were.

HESS: When he first came in he did want to cooperate?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did.

HESS: Did you think that it went fairly smoothly in the other departments?

CHAPMAN: I didn't hear of any that was particularly disturbing. Certainly in mine, the Department of Interior, the transfer of mine couldn't have been easier.

HESS: Did you hear anything about Sherman Adams during this particular time?

CHAPMAN: Yes, I did. I heard...

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HESS: He was concentrating his efforts, I believe, mainly around the White House...

CHAPMAN: That's it.

HESS: ...but I wondered if he had come in to see you or if you had any dealings with him.

CHAPMAN: No, he never saw me. No, never called me. I knew Eisenhower very well, I knew him when he was in the Philippines over there, when he was the shoeshine boy for MacArthur, and MacArthur treated him just like a shoeshine boy.

HESS: Did he?

CHAPMAN: He was so insulting I wouldn't have worked with him for five minutes! I wouldn't have worked with him, but MacArthur treated him like a messenger boy, that's all he was. Not that Eisenhower didn't have some ability, he did, but MacArthur didn't want his ability and his type of mind on his work. He

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was considering himself the father of all military strategy; he was the top military strategist in America, of the world.

HESS: He wanted some "yes men" around...

CHAPMAN: Exactly.

HESS: ...not some original thinkers.

CHAPMAN: He didn't want anybody to waste his time by arguing with him.

HESS: Just say "yes" and move on.

CHAPMAN: That's all. Say "yes" and move on, that's a very good one.

HESS: All right, in recent times some of the historians and revisionists have been finding all of the roots of present-day troubles back during the Truman administration. They see the roots of the difficulties we've had in Vietnam; they see the roots of the difficulties we have had with Communist China, with our views on communism.

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What is your opinion of that general line of thinking?

CHAPMAN: I don't think that that's hurting Truman a bit. I think there are more people today that think Truman was right on his major policy positions that he had to take, and there are more of them that support him today than ever did before.

HESS: Some of those revisionists say that when the United States employed such programs as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall plan and point 4, that to marshal public support behind those programs, the Government purposely set out to frighten the American people by invoking visions of Communist world conquest; and that the only reason we wanted to restore Europe and the other nations of Europe was to restore markets for our products. In other words, if Europe failed our markets would dry up and unemployment and depression would result; self interest in other words.

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CHAPMAN: Well, let me look at it, point it up this way. Had I been President of the United States at the time Truman had it (God forgive that I would punish the people for that when they got a good man)--Truman thought these things out very carefully, very carefully; he was not, he didn't take any "yes man's" position on anything. He would talk to different people and get different points of view on a given thing. Now, when he made his decision to support the Marshall plan, I talked with him, and I supported him strongly in it; I felt very keenly. Now, I said, "This is a terrific load for the American people to carry, but what's the alternative; I think it would be worse."

HESS: What did you see as the alternative?

CHAPMAN: I said the alternative would be the industrial life of the European countries, being industrialized as they were, would go to pieces; they'd go down.

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Their markets would be taken from them anyway, not by us particularly, but the Japanese would have taken a lot of it, and your powerful enemies in the war would have taken a lot of it back, and they would have gotten a lot of that market. In the meantime Russia would have pushed in and gotten a foothold in Europe to such an extent they would change the whole picture, the whole future, for Europe and they would be in time, straddling the horse, riding him right through the field, and they would be, in time, the controlling factor almost in that area. You once give them control of power of one area, or let them get it, and they expand it very fast with a machinegun or anything else they need to, just like they did Hungary. They had planned that for a long time.

HESS: Did you see our efforts in Europe as being along the lines of a containment of communism?

CHAPMAN: There was some degree in that, but I didn't think of it or take that too seriously as being

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something they could succeed with 100 percent anyway; because you can't contain intellectual ideals, whether good or bad; you can't necessarily contain them in a geographical area.

HESS: Can't fence in an idea.

CHAPMAN: You can't do it. You can't do it. Now you may dislike it, fight it, but you can't fence in an idea and you can't contain it. Now Truman saw that just as plain as you did just then; you expressed it just right. It was an idea that you could not contain in the sense that the people were trying to think of it. The Republicans were particularly trying to--some of them were trying to lead the parade to turn the American people against Truman on communism, and that is why you couldn't get any of the usually more level-headed Republicans to take on Senator McCarthy and answer his stuff themselves, because they knew it was not true. They knew it wasn't true. Half of the stuff he was giving in his

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speeches on the floor of the Senate, they knew was false.

HESS: But most of them didn't want to speak out.

CHAPMAN: They didn't want to speak out because they saw a possibility that we may be the defender of America against communism that's growing. It's growing.

HESS: If you'll recall, one person did speak out at first--Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine...

CHAPMAN: That's right.

HESS: ...in her famous "declaration of conscience."

CHAPMAN: That's right. That's right.

HESS: Did you ever hear President Truman speak of that?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he did. He thought it was very fine.

HESS: He appreciated her support.

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CHAPMAN: He appreciated her support. She was supporting the principles for the American people, and he didn't take it as a personal thing; he took it as a matter of conviction of this woman, and he appreciated it very much, he liked it.

HESS: In your opinion, what were Mr. Truman's major accomplishments during his administration and what were his major failings?

CHAPMAN: I think as we have been around and watched--you and I have been around here, now, since Mr. Truman left in '52 or '53.

HESS: '53, 20 years ago.

CHAPMAN: Twenty years ago this...

HESS: Last month.

CHAPMAN: . . . last month. That's right. January the 20th.

HESS: January the 20th.

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CHAPMAN: Now, we've been around here 20 years; we have seen the wheels change--it's gone almost 180° around, in circling around in favor of Truman as compared to being against him at that time. Back in '52 there was Eisenhower's campaign, and it was totally negative in every respect; it was a negative campaign. He had nothing but a few cliché's; "my crusade in Europe,"...

HESS: "I will go to Korea."

CHAPMAN: ...and, "I will go to Korea." Now, you see, Nixon was trying to take that phraseology and put it into his capsule that he was working on here with the Vietnam war, and he was trying to time the Vietnam war effort to his campaign, and he did. He more nearly...

HESS: Just about like clockwork wasn't it?

CHAPMAN: Oh, he fitted it; every move he made was for his campaign. We'd have had the same offer

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we've got today right down to the last dot on the "i" that we could have had a year ago, had he taken it, but had he taken it he would have been defeated for reelection. Now he kept the war going, that's cruel to say, and I hate to have to say it, but he did. I think he was conscientious about it; I think he really felt that that was important, but he also felt that it was important for him to be reelected than anything else, and so he was working to that end. And he timed those things so carefully, and it looks like the public had lost all interest in their public officials and whom they sent to Washington; it just looks like they had lost all interest and weren't taking much interest in it.

HESS: What would you see as Mr. Truman's major foreign accomplishments and then his major domestic accomplishments?

CHAPMAN: Well, lets take it this way: First, he was picking up the pieces to put together a great

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economy that had gone through a world-shaking experience of the expenditure of money in amounts unknown before in history. And he had to spend it to bring an end to the war. They closed the war down, and Truman, in the sight of history, will sit in the focus of that conference to close the war; he will rise to be as big a man as any man who sat at that table, even including Churchill.

Now, they're far apart in their method of approach, but their hearts were pretty much beating the same. Truman had one thing that kept him on the straight and narrow path at all times; his heart was always with the little people of the country. He tried to help them. So, first he tried to do something to shift the changing economic situation from a war base to a peacetime base, and mesh them.

HESS: Right, reconversion to a peacetime economy.

CHAPMAN: That's right, and that's not an easy job;

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that is a hard job. Now, Mr. Nixon is going to find out that that's a much harder job than just letting the boys get killed over there; and they still take it and go with him for a while; they did, and he knew that; he timed them just right.

Now, Truman was having to manage a change over from a war base to a peacetime base with our economy. That meant he had to do something without farm production right away. Our farm problem made its entrance very quickly. Now, I felt that Charlie Brannan made a good Secretary of Agriculture, and he didn't get the kind of publicity that I thought he was entitled to, about some of his proposals. I'm not an economist in the sense of dealing within agricultural commodities, and I don't feel that I'm capable of judging his situation on that, but I felt that Charlie had made an honest effort, a real effort there.

HESS: All right, Mr. Chapman, what is your favorite memory of Mr. Truman?

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CHAPMAN: My favorite memory of Mr. Truman is his constant thinking and talking about the farm problem, and conservation. He was far more conservation-minded than people realized. One of my great memories of him was that he supported me on my conservation program and I was considered right at that time--a little bit of a liberal on conservation, and Mr. Truman supported my program absolutely 100 percent.

One of the things that I ought to tell you about is something that I discussed with Mr. Truman, and this was about the time he appointed me Secretary. The Kerr gas bill passed, and I had been fighting it. I had been opposing it right along, and, so, I knew who at the White House was supporting it, who were not. But I played a very cautious hand there, and I got Mr. Truman one evening when about 10 of us were having dinner and they were playing poker; I don't play poker. Now, I just visited around with a few who didn't play like I did, but Mr. Truman enjoyed a good game

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of poker once in a while.

They had us all at the Statler Hotel and we had a suite up there. Clint Anderson was there, and he principally set the thing up, Clint did, because Clint liked to play poker, very much. I got a chance to talk to the President that night by himself for a few minutes when some of the crowd wasn't all there; I got a chance to talk with him. I said, "Mr. Truman, Mr. President, I haven't talked with you quite fully enough to give you the benefit of whatever my ideas may mean to you on that Kerr gas bill." I said, "I want to let you know that I personally am opposed to it, and I don't think it's a good bill. I don't think it's really a good bill, and I hope it won't pass, but I think it will. If it passes they can't pass it over your veto, and I don't know what position you're in on it."

He said, "Well, are you recommending to me to veto it?"

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I said, "I certainly am Mr. President; I will give you a justification memorandum for your reasons for vetoing it, which I think will be very strong and you will see then the reasons why it should be vetoed. I've got an economic memorandum prepared on it, and it will give you the benefit of protection for your reasons why you do it."

"Well," he said, "is this another one of those give-aways to the boys?"

I said, "This is not only a give-away, Mr. President, but they've got it limited down to just a few of--one of your friends, out there in Oklahoma."

"All right, don't tell me who he is; you just don't tell me who he is; you just send me the veto message at the bottom of the bill."

So, when the bill got to the White House, the President always sent them--as a rule, he would send an important bill back to a department head to look at before he approved it or vetoed it.

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So, he sent this bill over to me that morning as soon as he got to his office; he had it sent right to my office. I got it, and I sent this memorandum I had already prepared. I sent this memorandum, which in effect was his veto message; he'd carve it up to fit and--I laughed, because Clark and myself are good friends, I'm very fond of Clark, and I think Clark made a great contribution for helping Truman.

HESS: Clark Clifford?

CHAPMAN: Yes. Clark Clifford really was a great help to Truman. I knew he was for this bill; he wanted it approved, and I didn't, and he knew I didn't want it approved. But you know I...

HESS: What was his connection?

CHAPMAN: He was a pretty close friend of Kerr's. He got to be pretty close to Kerr; and he was supporting anything like that for Kerr, if he could he

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would support it--and there was grounds to support it if you had that philosophy about it, but it didn't have the economic soundness for the mass of the smaller producers, you see.

HESS: It was slanted for the benefit of a few bigger producers?

CHAPMAN: It was only good for about ten companies, I'll tell you that.

HESS: Kerr's oil company being prominent among those?

CHAPMAN: Kerr-McGee was among them.

HESS: Kerr-McGee being prominent among those.

CHAPMAN: That's right. They were the leader in that. They were the leader that would have gotten the benefit from this bill, and they were...

HESS: And it was vetoed.

CHAPMAN: He vetoed it. I was so pleased with that because he had talked about that to me. And he

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remembered, when the bill got over, he had...

HESS: Do you think Mr. Clifford was giving him advice contrary to your advice?

CHAPMAN: I don't know that he was.

HESS: What I was speaking about was this particular measure, but you don't know if he was?

CHAPMAN: No, I don't know if he was; I just know how Clifford personally felt about the bill.

HESS: Because he spoke to you about it, did he?

CHAPMAN: Yes, he had talked to me about it; and I had told Clifford that I was going to oppose it. I'd have to oppose the bill, and hope we could stay together on it.

Well, he said, "We'll either stay together, or out of each other's way."

Well, he did; he stayed out of my way, but he was for the bill. How much he did on it, I don't know.

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HESS: Do you think this might be an indication of an instance in which a President received advice from a White House staff member, certain advice, and then he received contrary advice from a Cabinet member, and accepted the advice of the Cabinet member? Might this be an indication?

CHAPMAN: Well, that's an indication, of course, of what Truman did with me. I can't name you a single case in which he went over my head, or my recommendation, when I put it on the record, and wrote him this--well, Clark I think rewrote the veto message, but it was all right; it was going to be vetoed, and how much he talked with Truman, I don't know.

HESS: Can you think of any indications in which your advice was not accepted by the President, perhaps because the President was receiving contrary advice from White House staff members? In other words, the Kerr-McGee was something you won; can you think of an indication of something that you lost?

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CHAPMAN: This other occasion that I had in mind concerning conservation of a large area that I wanted to save if I could, I didn't win, but I didn't make the kind of a crusade, or the kind of a dead-end fight--you could go so far on certain things, you either have to resign or something, you can't work for...

HESS: What particular project was this?

CHAPMAN: This was out in California where I wanted to build this dam, and...

HESS: What was the name of the dam?

CHAPMAN: ...it was that one on King's River.

HESS: We can add it in later.

CHAPMAN: King's River. I'll get the name of that dam. It was a very big project, and I wanted to bring that water down from the curve up in Oregon, the bend of that river out of Oregon, into California in that point, and take it in

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California on down the coast of California; and we could have carried it in the river bed without digging a ditch. We wouldn't have had to have dug a canal 25 miles all the way to Los Angeles.

HESS: And Mr. Truman did not okay that?

CHAPMAN: He didn't okay it. Now, he wasn't opposed to it outright, but he said if we approved that, "that's going to shake my budget pretty close, because I'm pretty close on the budget and that's a pretty big one"--and it was; we were talking about a 200 to 300 million dollar program that would develop out of that. We wouldn't build it all in one year, of course, but you'd be committing the Government to it; but that was why he expressed himself in those terms to me.

HESS: Was he usually pretty budget conscious?

CHAPMAN: Not too much. Not too much. He was more conscious of the importance of the project; did

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it contribute anything to the community and to people as a whole? If he thought the bill was sound and had a contribution to make for the benefit of the people, he was not budget conscious in those cases.

HESS: His first consideration was the social betterment.

CHAPMAN: Absolutely! And I've seen him do that now, on--at least he did it with three cases of mine that I had, that I was recommending which he approved. Now that one, he couldn't approve and I didn't blame him because we differed not only on the benefit of this project, but we differed on the fact that I was willing to stretch the budget that much more into a deficit budget than he wanted to for that year, because that was a pretty good chunk of money for a civilian department. We didn't get the kind of money that the military got. But that was a pretty good slug of money to get into one bill in the Interior. He

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said, "I think we better lay that off until next year and then put it in in the beginning of next year, and hit that first." Then he said, "That will keep out some other projects that are not, I think, as valuable or contribute as much to the benefit of the people as this would. And so, let's put it in a different order, and then I'll avoid for this year having to raise the deficit any more than we have, and I wanted to cut it down," he said.

I understood that and I mean I don't consider that being against my project, because later on he approved it; we got a--that's the only letter I ever got from Senator Nixon. He wrote me a letter thanking me for that project, putting it through. It was the canal connecting California with the Mexican connection--make that connection. We had to get enough water to fill that dam before we could make these contracts with the Mexicans down below, to give them a chance to use their land, and then we had to deliver a

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certain amount of water to Mexico that had a certain percentage of saline water. It couldn't be above a certain amount, in the water. We were putting too much salt water in the Colorado River already, and that was coming out of the Arizona Central Valley project, the Arizona project. They had drilled those wells in the project to bring up water, knowing it was salt water and too salty to meet this treaty. And therefore, we destroyed their crops for two years down there, down in the valley of Mexico. On the Mexican side we destroyed all of their cotton crop. They had a good cotton crop, some corn, and they were really destroyed by this salt water.

HESS: All right, Mr. Secretary, after sixteen long sessions, do you have anything else to add on Mr. Truman, or your role in the Truman administration?

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CHAPMAN: Let me say this, that I ended my public career with Mr. Truman's termination of his office and I never enjoyed an association with anybody in my life any more than I did Mr. Truman's. I never had better treatment from anybody in my lifetime. Nobody treated me any fairer than Mr. Truman did, in all of my dealings through the White House in every respect. That went through political matters which we dealt with and which I helped with a great deal. I tried to contribute something to the political situation, particularly of the West. I was recognized as somewhat knowledgeable about the western picture on that. And then Mr. Truman was the kind of man that if you worked with him a little while--you had to learn him at first--but if you worked with him a little while, you soon learned, you soon found out that what he said was what he was going to do. There was no pussy-footing with him, and he didn't try to kid you around; he

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didn't try to pass me off to somebody else, to talk with them and get their support for this or that. If I came to him for a project that required the White House support, he'd make his determination as to whether he would support it or not after he interviewed whom he wanted, and he would either call me in, say, "I'm sorry, but I can't support that bill of yours," or he would go ahead and say, "That's all right, I'm going to support that bill for you."

This is something I maybe shouldn't say, sounds egotistical, but I don't believe any man in the Cabinet, anywhere in his administration got any more favorable approval of his work and helping him with his work, than Truman gave me. I don't believe any man was any more lucky than I.

HESS: You had a good relationship with him.

CHAPMAN: I had a good relationship. I had one of the finest relationships that a man could have. First

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place, I didn't make a rush in there to be Secretary of the Interior when Ickes went out; as a matter of fact, I didn't want it at that time. And if I took the time to explain it to you, you would understand why.

HESS: I think we've covered that.

CHAPMAN: We've covered that and it proved I was right. And it worked out just right. Now, Mr. Truman fitted the needs of the American people just at that time, so definitely; he was the--I don't know of any man that could have followed Roosevelt, and I was close to Roosevelt, and I spent many weekends up there at Hyde Park. Rex Tugwell, Harry Hopkins, and myself, were the three that were usually together up there. We worked together on outside projects away from our departments, where the three of us were working together on something for Roosevelt, a project of some kind; and we worked together on that and I got wonderful support from Roosevelt, but it wasn't the kind of

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support that I had from Harry Truman. By that I mean, Roosevelt might change his position on you without calling you, but Truman never did that.

HESS: Roosevelt would do that, but Truman would not, is that right?

CHAPMAN: Truman would not do that. But Roosevelt would feel that he had the right to do it, and he did if he wanted to.

HESS: And let you find out about it later?

CHAPMAN: But that doesn't make for good cooperation, you see.

HESS: That's right.

CHAPMAN: Truman never once turned me down like that, never once left me hanging not knowing where I stood. He was really a wonderful guy.

I told you how I was appointed. I think I gave, you that at the first part of this history;

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and it was the most unusual thing you could conceive of happening. Nobody but Truman would do a thing like that, do it that way. Now, he had as much confidence in this as he thought was necessary; he knew me well enough that he thought--I think I know him well enough--he thought he didn't need anybody else. He went on and appointed me without talking to anybody. That day--I'll never forget that day. Charlie Ross called me from the White House; it was Armistice Day, which we used to have then, instead of--now we call it what, Military Day or something?

HESS: Veteran's Day, and they've even moved it into October. It's not even into November anymore.

CHAPMAN: And that's taking it out of context of history, because it was at 11 o'clock on the 11th of November that they signed the cease fire from the front lines.

HESS: And that's where they should have left Armistice

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Day.

CHAPMAN: They should have left Armistice Day there.

HESS: I think we had better shut it off.

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