

Oral History Interview

With

WILBUR D. SPARKS

Attorney-Investigator on the staff of the U.S. Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program (Truman Committee), 1941-46.

Washington, D.C.

September 5 & 19, 1968

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Sparks, for the record, would you relate a little of your personal background, such as where you were born, where you were educated, and what positions you held prior to your service on the Truman Committee?

SPARKS: Yes, Mr. Hess. I was born in Missouri, insofar as I know the only other member of the Truman Committee staff besides Mr. William Boyle, who was a Missourian from that staff. My home was Savannah, Missouri, northwest of Kansas City, about seventy-five miles, and I am now fifty years old.

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My birth date was October 4, 1918. My father was a lawyer in Savannah, a prosecuting attorney there back about 1913 or '14, a graduate of the University of Missouri Law School, and he was active in State politics during the 1930s. He knew Guy Park, the Governor of Missouri, from the days when Judge Park was judge of the circuit court in the district in northwest Missouri in which Savannah fell. My father served as a member of the state board which governed the School for the Deaf at Fulton, Missouri in the 1930s as an appointee of Guy Park. My mother was a schoolteacher in Savannah, Missouri before she was married, and her origins were down around Warrensburg, Missouri. I graduated from the public schools in Savannah, attended the state university at Columbia, got an A.B. degree there in 1940, and my LL.B. from the law school at the university in 1941. I certainly had every intention of going back to Savannah after my college education was completed and practicing law, probably in association with my father, but

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the events of the war intervened and they were directly related to my coming here to Washington, and to my being here still today.

HESS: When did you join the staff of the committee?

SPARKS: The specific event which brought me to the staff of the committee is of some interest I think. I joined the staff on October the 10th, 1941. My father was an active Mason, he was active in most branches of Masonry in Missouri, and became acquainted with Senator Truman as a result of his activity in Masonry. Senator Truman was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge in Missouri in the late '30s, and my father would have been Grand Master of the Grand Lodge a few years after his death in 1941. It takes fourteen years to go through the line and he was about seven or eight years behind Senator Truman. He had known Senator Truman, therefore, as a result of his activity in Masonry, and also because they both were active Democrats. My father had been chairman of the county central committee in Andrew County, and was therefore a

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part of the organization and knew Truman as a result of this.

I graduated from law school in 1941 and I took the bar exam in late June or early July, and at about the same time, either shortly before or shortly after I took the exam, I went to St. Louis with my father to attend a meeting of the Grand Lodge. I had been a Mason since I was twenty one, and in 1941, I would have been twenty-two years old. I had never met Mr. Truman before, and my father and I met Mr. Truman walking down the street in St. Louis, the first time there, and my father introduced him to me and told him that I had just graduated from law school and he said, "Well, what are you going to do?"

I said, "Well, I expect to go into the army." I had a student deferment from the draft at that time, and I said, "I expect to go into the army, probably in the fall or winter, and after I get out of the army, I'll be back practicing law with my dad again."

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He said, "Between now and the time you go into the army, what's going to happen?"

I said, "I'll be up in Savannah helping in the law office."

He said, "Well, just a few months ago up in Washington, the Senate passed a resolution creating an investigating committee, and I am the chairman of this investigating committee, and I think it would be good experience for you if you'd come back there and work for the committee for a few months. You may never get to Washington again in your life, but I think it would be good for you to and would be helpful to the committee if you'd come back there and work for us for a little while."

Now, in passing, I was told later by both Mr. Truman and by Hugh Fulton, the chief counsel of the committee, that this was the only instance of something like this happening, that in all other instances where people were added to the committee staff, this came about through Fulton rather than through Truman. Of course, I should

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also add in passing that Truman added Mr. Boyle to the committee staff, and of course that was an exception to it, but all the others were added as a result of a decision by Fulton.

HESS: He was in charge of hiring the staff?

SPARKS: Fulton was very definitely in charge of hiring the staff, and we can talk about that in considerable detail. He did say to me that day in St. Louis, "Of course, I can't absolutely promise you a job. You'd have to pass muster by the new chief counsel there, Hugh Fulton." I don't believe, based on a very close relationship with Fulton in later years and with some conversations with him along this time, I don't believe that Fulton felt that he was supposed to pass muster on me. I think he felt that this was a young man that Truman, for reasons of his own had offered to bring back to Washington, and put to work for a few months. But I am proud to say that Fulton always claimed that he was never sorry; I don't believe, however,

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that he felt that in this instance he was really supposed to say yea or nay on me.

I was very interested in this. I had been in Washington once before when I was sixteen years old and had graduated from high school in 1935, and my parents and I took a trip to the East, again because my father was a Mason. There was a Shrine convention here in Washington in 1935 and we came here and attended that. That was my only time in Washington, and so I was interested in it, as any boy from the midwest would be, a boy who was feeling like a man, having just graduated from law school, and so I looked forward to it. I said, "Yes, I'd like to do this."

He said, "I'll let you know when you should come."

In a month or two after that I received a letter. As I recall, I received a letter from Mr. Clark, Charlie Clark, who instructed me to come to Washington and arrive at a given time and be prepared to stay. I had an automobile and I

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put all my worldly possessions in the automobile and came to Washington and arrived here on the 10th of October. I went to Mr. Clark first in room 317. That may have been the only room number in the Senate Office building that I had, but at any rate I went to Mr. Clark. My recollection isn't very good at this time, but I'm pretty sure that he sent me to Hugh Fulton, and within a day or two, I met both Matt Connelly and Bill Boyle. Very shortly after that, within a day, certainly, I was on the committee payroll. I should not say that I was on the committee payroll. In the fall of 1941, only a very few people were on the committee payroll. The committee had started with an appropriation of \$15,000 in the spring, and at that time, until early 1942, if my memory is correct, almost all people who were working for the committee were on the payrolls of executive departments. I was on the Securities and Exchange Commission payroll until, again as I recall, January or February, 1942, it was at about

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that time that Mr. Truman and members of the committee started to make noises about dollar-a-year men. And I believe that it was because of that that this relationship with the Executive departments ceased. Also, I think, there was another very good reason for ceasing it, and again we can go into this in more detail later. But the committee's resolution was renewed in January 1942 at the beginning of the new Congress, the new session, and it got a large appropriation, and it was not only incumbent on the committee from the standpoint of public relations to start paying its own people at that time. I, however, was working fulltime for the committee, from the 10th or 11th of October on.

HESS: In October of 1941, the same month you joined the staff, the committee issued a report concerning the Office of Production Management, and their co-directors were William S. Knudsen, engineering vice-president of General Motors, and Sidney Hillman, president of Amalgamated Clothing

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Workers of America. And as I understand it, there were several people on the Office of Production Management who were in a without-compensation status, and also several dollar-a-year men, which Mr. Truman seemed to take a dislike to.

SPARKS: Mr. Truman got into this subject, I believe, in the fall of 1941 first. I have refreshed my recollection a little bit on this subject by going back and looking at some scrapbooks, which I have, and also looking at a file of press releases, which the committee issued, which I gathered from time to time as they were issued and put in a loose-leaf notebook, which I still have. I believe Mr. Truman and the members of the committee became interested in dollar-a-year men along in the fall of 1941. One of the men in whom they were specifically interested was a man named Philip Reed of General Electric, and Philip Reed was with the old Office of Production Management and was a dollar-a-year man. That is, his

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salary was continued to be paid by his company and he was brought into the Office of Production Management because it was felt that he had special expertise from his services at

General Electric. Maybe it was technical expertise, or maybe it was management expertise, but this was the reason that the dollar-a-year men were brought in. They were usually brought in to serve in areas of their own industry. A man from the electrical industry would be brought in to serve in an area dealing with the electrical industry over in the Office of Production Management. This was one basis of objection that the committee had to the dollar-a-year principle. They felt that the people who came, say for illustration, from the electrical industry, would be likely to have ties back into the industry, both in their own company and other companies, which might result in acts of favoritism, or might result in colored opinions which would influence their activities. Now, as a matter of fact, this

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principle was carried forward both in the agencies during World War II, and even into the area of the National Production Authority in the 1950s, later on, and still exists today in the Department of Commerce where there are people who came from industry and who are down here for a few years, really on loan from their companies, on the theory that there should be people with expertise from industry who are working in the Government, that these people know the industry best. Today, however, they are on Government salary.

Mr. Truman withdrew his objection in January of 1942. He withdrew this objection to the use of these experts after Donald Nelson, who had been active, and had been in a position of responsibility in the Office of Production Management, and who was made the administrator of the War Production Board, Nelson came before the committee and said, "I need these men, and I believe that safeguards can be put up to prevent their making decisions which will be favorable to their own company, and

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can be put up to prevent these situations in which their opinions would be colored by virtue of their own connections with industry."

HESS: Do you recall what safeguards he had in mind?

SPARKS: Not specifically. I am sure that the War Production Board history would show this. I don't remember specifically what safeguards he had in mind. I do know -- I have read recently -- I have clippings in my scrapbooks, which indicates that after Nelson came before the committee and said, "I'm not going to solve these vast problems unless I have assisting me these people from industry." And Truman and the committee withdrew this objection. As a matter of fact, I recently have read some editorials, current contemporary editorials, which praised Truman and the committee for being big enough to stand back and say, "All right, Mr. Nelson, if that's the way you want it, we want to see that you get the kind of assistance you need, and so we won't press on this."

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Now, the other objection to dollar-a-year men, was the question of their compensation. Nelson did not stand firm on this. He did start putting some of these men on the Government payroll and changing the dollar-a-year, or without compensation idea, to meet the Truman Committee objections. I don't believe that all these men were taken off dollar-a-year immediately, but over

the years, the trend was in this direction, and there were enough taken off immediately so that Mr. Truman and the committee took the pressure off Nelson and off the new WPB, as far as dollar-a-year was concerned, right at that time. The question did arise from time to time over the years, and many times I heard Mr. Truman ask in a committee hearing or in a private interrogation when the activities of a given division or a given section at WPB were under consideration, "Well, now, who is in charge over there. Is he a dollar-a-year man?"

He never got over his suspicions of the

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dollar-a-year men, and I think with good reason. He remembered that as long as he was chairman of the committee, and probably longer.

HESS: When he made his so-called "farewell speech" to the Senate on August 7th, 1944, the only person named in a derogatory manner was Mr. Philip Reed.

SPARKS: Mr. Reed was sent to London, as I recall it.

HESS: That's correct. This is what he mentioned in the message.

SPARKS: Yes. He felt very strongly about Mr. Reed.

HESS: What was the nature of the relationship in general between the committee and Donald M. Nelson?

SPARKS: Well, first, it was very friendly. Secondly, the relationship, I believe, between Mr. Truman personally and Mr. Nelson personally, was one of friendliness, one of mutual respect, and perhaps on Mr. Nelson's part, one of a little bit of -- I wouldn't want to say "fear", but certainly it

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went beyond respect. Mr. Nelson knew two things, I believe, and I think this is probably true of the top people in the other Government departments. He knew that if he had the backing of the Truman Committee it was a step in the right direction in trying to get any policy implemented. He also knew that if something went wrong in a program, or if something didn't work out well, and wind of this got to the committee or its staff, that in spite of this friendly relationship he had with Harry Truman and the members of the committee, there would be no holds barred. They would treat him just as they treated other people in positions of high authority. I think he felt that -- to generalize, I think he felt that the committee was attempting to operate in the public interest, and in many, many situations was in fact operating in the public interest, and I believe Mr. Nelson wanted to operate in this manner, too. And I think he felt that this would be the overriding consideration when any program was up for evaluation by the committee.

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HESS: Do you think he was helpful in forwarding the work of the committee?

SPARKS: There's no question about it. As an example: In January 1942, the committee still was not really well established. The committee had already had a good many hearings. The early hearings of the committee before I joined the committee staff had dealt to some extent in generalities, the hearings in the summer and early fall of 1941 had to some extent been hearings to get members of the committee itself oriented, try to get some general policy set, try to get them acquainted with the people in high positions of Government with whom they were dealing, try to get their understanding firmly established of the programs that they were going to be evaluating as time went on. I have no idea whether Mr. Truman felt by the time of the fall of 1941 that the committee still needed to prove itself, but I do know one thing. I came across this a few days ago in my press release file. In January, 1942, the annual report of the

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Committee came out, the annual report which gave so much acclaim to the committee, and I would say gave the committee its first nationwide recognition in editorial columns of the newspapers. Before this annual report came out, the committee was due for its appropriation and renewal of its resolution. Somebody, and I have a suspicion about who was behind this, but somebody asked Mr. Nelson, Under Secretary of War Patterson and other heads of departments for letters evaluating the work of the committee.

HESS: Who do you suspect?

SPARKS: Well, it sounds like Hugh Fulton to me. It sounds like Fulton might have made the suggestion to Truman. But these letters proved to be quite praising in nature. They were not long letters. Each one could be printed on a single piece of paper, typewritten, but each letter praised the committee and each letter was released to the press. A press release was made up for each one

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of these letters, and there were several of these. And I am certain, without knowing anything at all about it at the time, I'm certain the reason for this was to give the committee some backing for the renewal of its resolution. Mr. Nelson wrote one of these letters. There is no statement in the letters themselves that they were asked to write a letter, but to anyone who was here at the time, it stands out all over the letters, and frequently the letters start out, "I understand that the committee's resolution is coming up for renewal and I just wanted to let you know how I felt about the committee's work." Nelson wrote one of these, and I know Judge Patterson wrote one, and there were some others. The letters were released to the public, undoubtedly were quoted in the newspapers, probably were circulated to members of the Senate. Certainly the word was given out that people in the Government who were having dealings with the committee felt that the committee was worthwhile, and I would guess that this had something to do

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with the renewal of the committee's authority. After that first year, I don't think there was ever any worry, any concern, about the renewal of that committee's authority. The appropriations became pretty automatic after that first year. The committee always operated on a shoestring, but certainly on a shoestring in terms of today's appropriations, but even at that time, I don't think the committee ever had more than \$100,000 in appropriation for a year. Now, they may have gotten

an appropriation in the summer or fall following that first \$15,000 appropriation, but I can't be sure about this. But I believe the one in January 1942 was the first one of any size.

Yes, I certainly do believe that Mr. Nelson helped the committee.

HESS: One more question on Mr. Nelson. In Donald Riddle's book, *The Truman Committee: A Study in Congressional Responsibility*, there is the following quote: "Nelson's liaison officer, Edwin A. Locke, Jr., kept the

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committee continuously informed of events in WPB." Just how closely did Edwin Locke work with the committee?

SPARKS: Very closely, and his successor, Eugene Earley, also fulfilled this responsibility. Number one, Locke acted as did a person who was designated as liaison in the other Government departments. Locke acted as the man to whom all committee inquiries of that department were addressed. Now our committee staffs operated probably the way most other committee staffs were operated. Mr. Truman authorized his signature to be put on committee mail by Hugh Fulton, but by no one else. And when inquiries were to be made or when letters were to be drafted by the individual investigators, they would go to Fulton, and Fulton would perhaps change them or perhaps sign them. Now, in the case of a letter to WPB, letters were not sent to Mr. Nelson. Letters were sent to Mr. Locke and later to Mr. Earley; in most cases the letters did not take a position on a given situation. If we wanted to find out what the facts were about a given situation over at WPB, we would write a letter

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stating very carefully that certain things were alleged and then asking for a statement from WPB, or Mr. Locke, about these allegations. Mr. Locke would farm out the letter when he got it to the industry division, or to the individual who would draft a reply letter and it would come back. Often, he would keep Mr. Nelson advised, but in many cases, he would not. He would simply handle this correspondence and at a proper time advise Mr. Nelson. Or perhaps if it was not important, not advise him at all. So that he acted as a funnel through which mail would go over to WPB. This was the least important of his responsibilities.

He also attended all staff meetings that Donald Nelson had at WPB. His title, I believe, was assistant to the chairman. So he attended all staff meetings and was constantly alert, I would say, to situations in which he felt the committee would have some interest, not only situations in which the committee had already evidenced interest, but if he felt that there was any kind of a ticklish situation

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that might conceivably interest the committee, he would make note of this. Now, in some situations he or Mr. Nelson would call this to the committee's attention, without any prior notice, without any inquiry from the committee to WPB. This didn't happen at any other Government department. This sort of thing I'm sure was frowned on in the Government departments. They were not supposed to volunteer information which could be the subject of an investigation. They

were there to answer the Senator's inquiries, and all other inquiries from the Hill, but certainly not to volunteer information. That was a little unorthodox. And I think it resulted from, again, from a feeling that Nelson had that "Here is a man who could be of considerable assistance, if they could put together an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust." Locke went on many committee trips, with the committee, where installations were going to be visited and in which WPB had an interest. He became rather close to Fulton. They were opposite numbers really, in staff positions, so that -- I

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don't mean personally close, but they talked on the telephone often during the day about many different things. They would work together rather than being at sword points, or anything like this.

One other thing about Locke that I think might be mentioned at this point that is of interest. I believe that Locke and Fulton together worked out an arrangement which proved successful with other Government departments, and which had a great deal to do with the worth of the reports which the committee issued. During the time when Mr. Truman was chairman of the committee, the committee issued thirty-two reports. These reports were all issued in unanimity by the committee, not a single dissent. These reports were all circulated to the committee members, were all written first at the staff level, and usually written by about two or three people, at least the draft that went to Senator Truman would be written by Fulton, or Harold Robinson or Matt Connelly, I would say. There may be exceptions, but I would say

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that they accounted for almost all those thirty-two reports.

Now, after the committee approved these reports, it was the practice, as worked out by Fulton and Locke, to send a typewritten copy or copies of this report to the Government agency, before they were made public, and the Government agency was asked to comment on the report. I don't know whether it was stated in the letter, but the understanding always was that they were to comment about the facts in the report, not about the opinions. And in some cases, I don't know how many, but in some cases the Government agencies, beginning with WPB, found misstatements of fact in the reports and called them to the committee's attention. They were always corrected, they were always changed to conform to the facts. I believe this had much to do with the acceptability of these reports, and with the effect that those reports had on the reputation of the committee over the years, because once having approved the facts in a draft of a report, the agency was never later in a position to shoot holes in it from that standpoint. They could differ with the report, or its recommendations,

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but they could not say, "You don't know what you're talking about." They could not say, "No, you're wrong here, that is not fact," because once having approved it, they were wed to it. I am pretty certain that Ed Locke and Hugh Fulton worked this arrangement out in the fall or winter of 1941.

HESS: Were there ever any times that certain committee members might not have wanted to have signed the report and made it unanimous? Was it ever a close call?

SPARKS: I'm not in a position, really, to say whether there was or not. I don't know of any myself. I do know that in some cases drafts were rewritten to meet objections raised by individual members. I believe that in one case, I don't remember what it was, a report was rewritten to meet some of Senator Connally's objections, Tom Connally. He was not active on the committee, but he approved every one of those reports, and here again, the basic premise that Truman was working from was that "This is going

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to be a bipartisan effort, an effort in which we all agree, or we don't act." Truman felt, and I would expect that this is something that was not inspired in Truman by anybody else. I think this is probably a gut feeling that Truman had, that "While we're at war, we'd better all hang together or we're going to hang separately." Of course, historians know Truman has said many times that he did not want to have a committee which resembled the Committee on the Conduct of the War in the Civil War. He did not want to go into the conduct of the war, and he didn't want to have a committee which would, in a partisan fashion, chew holes in what the administration was trying to do, or generally take issue with the administration, as such. He saw nothing wrong with criticizing agencies of the administration, but I think he felt that this was an important part of his philosophy as chairman of this committee, that the reports ought to be unanimous, and if they couldn't be unanimous, they ought to be changed and changed and changed until they were unanimous.

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HESS: In his *Memoirs* Mr. Truman states:

Senators Brewster and Vandenberg tried at times to make another Committee on the Conduct of the War out of our committee by attempting to bring the Congress into control of the operations of the military establishment, but we never permitted that to happen.

Do you recall anything about the activities of those two gentlemen?

SPARKS: Nothing about Vandenberg. Brewster certainly has to be called a gadfly on the committee. By personality, by philosophy, I would say that he was inclined to be a bit more partisan than some of the other Republican members. I would say, for instance, that he was more inclined to be partisan than Homer Ferguson was.

HESS: Can you think of an example offhand when this might have come up?

SPARKS: No. I wish I could, but one doesn't come to mind. Truman, of course, confided -- I believe that it's fair to say that Truman confided in the Democrats on the committee before he confided in the Republicans

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about the work of the committee. But he did have Senator Brewster and Ball and Burton and there was a fourth Republican member...

HESS: We have them on our list. We can get into that.

SPARKS: He did have them in his office, in his private doghouse room, very often discussing privately what course the committee was going to take. I think he went quite far in trying to get their acquiescence to committee decisions before they were announced.

HESS: Did the staff ever hold any meetings in that so-called doghouse, do you recall?

SPARKS: Not as full staff meetings. Neither Truman nor Fulton seemed to be a believer in full staff meetings.

HESS: How did they operate?

SPARKS: Well, first, Fulton operated as Truman's right arm, there's no question about that. Truman and Fulton were quite an interesting team. There is no telling what course history might have followed, in

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my opinion, if Truman had not found Fulton. I think it ought to be said for the record that I may be a little biased in connection with Fulton. After I left the committee in 1946, I joined Fulton's law firm and was either number one or number two in the Washington office of his law firm until 1956, so that I do have some special knowledge and special affection for Hugh Fulton.

HESS: Did he ever comment to you on how he was chosen to be special counsel for the committee?

SPARKS: I think the story was recounted. He told it to me and it was told to a good many reporters at the time. I don't know whether it appears in all the histories or not, but it appears in some. After Truman was made chairman of the committee, he went to Attorney General Jackson and he asked him for a recommendation. I don't know whether the name of Fulton came to mind or if he asked somebody for a recommendation, but Fulton at that time was executive assistant to the United States attorney in the southern

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district of New York. Fulton had been graduated from the University of Michigan about 1930. He was a native of Ohio, very bright as a student, went to New York and went into a large law firm in New York, Cravath, deGersdoff, Swaine and Wood, it was called at that time. And Cravath is of course what lawyers call a law factory in New York. It has partners numbering from fifty to eighty and associates numbering in the hundreds. They occupy several stories in a large building. They had round-the-clock stenographic service and their offices are open twenty-four hours a day. It's a huge law factory. Fulton did very well in this law firm. He was an associate. He was never a partner, but then if he had stayed on, I'm sure that he would have become a partner in the law firm and shared in its great profits over the years. I don't know the

processes by which Hugh Fulton went into the U.S. attorney's office. He never told me, and I never thought to ask him, as a matter of fact, why he left the Cravath firm and went to work in the U.S. attorney's office, but he did do

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this. He handled two important cases while he was there. He prosecuted Howard Hopson, who had been a top executive in Associated Gas and Electric for violation of the SEC act. And he prosecuted a Federal judge named Davis, J. Warren Davis, and I believe the charge there was some sort of bribery. I'm not sure. But Hugh Fulton's name was on the front pages of the New York papers in the late '30s in connection with these cases. Still in all, I don't believe Truman had ever heard of him. Truman was too immersed in the workings of the United States Senate at that time to be very interested in what was going on in New York law courts. I just don't believe that Truman knew much about Fulton. But the Attorney General recommended Fulton and Fulton came to Washington, and after talking with Truman about this job, agreed to become counsel. It was a curious decision, I believe. Fulton had a very bright future as a lawyer ahead of him. He had the knowledge that he had gained in the Cravath firm, a huge firm representing very important corporations. He had the

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knowledge of the Government and of the Federal courts that he had gained as assistant U.S. attorney. I would say that the odds certainly were that he would not have gone to work for the committee. Truman at the time was not well-known. He was the junior senator from Missouri; he had not received any nationwide publicity, except the publicity that he had received in chairing the railroad investigation, and I don't believe that was of great consequence at the time. Truman had \$15,000, no staff, his main interest at the time was finding out first what had happened out at Fort Leonard Wood, what had happened in the construction of these camps all over the country. This is what got Truman started with the committee, and it was not until some weeks or months later that he began to talk in terms of anything other than camp construction. When he made his first speech to the Senate in early March, 1941, that was the major topic that he talked about. He did say that he had concluded that there ought to be a committee

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overseeing this sort of thing. He was primarily talking about camp construction. So it's curious that Fulton should have taken this gamble, because I consider that it was a very real gamble for Fulton, he had a lot to lose, and it seems to me, not very much to gain by going to work in this position. He was going to be paid, I think, \$9,000 a year and while at the time this was a good salary, and may even have been more than he was making in New York, it certainly was small money in terms of what he could expect to be making in private practice in a very few years in New York City. But Truman, I think, answered a couple of questions that Fulton asked him in a very typical Truman manner. And I believe that these answers had a great deal to do with persuading Hugh Fulton to take this job.

HESS: What were those questions?

SPARKS: Well, those questions, and I don't know that they were put in these words, but Fulton asked and Truman replied to the effect that if Fulton would come to

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work for the committee, he would have a free hand -- with the staff, and that all the committee was interested in was ascertaining the facts, that they were not interested in being partisan, that they were not interested, I would bet that Fulton harked back to the Committee on the Conduct of the War, and talked about that. They were not interested in a muckracking, yellow journalism sort of committee inquiry; they were interested in rendering a public service. I would think that he probably appealed to Fulton's basic instincts, which were really, at that time, public service instincts, to my way of thinking. I believe that Fulton got a commitment from Truman that this would be the situation if he should come to the committee as its counsel. I believe he would not have come there if he had not gotten that commitment. I don't believe that Truman had any qualms at all in making a commitment like this, because I believe he wanted to go into it with all the cards face up on the table. And I just don't think there

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was any problem involved here.

HESS: Basically, what were Hugh Fulton's duties and how effective was he in carrying them out?

SPARKS: Here again, you have to keep in mind my bias. Fulton, I would say, had two duties. One was to administer the affairs of the committee staff, and the other was to advise Truman on the policies which the committee would follow. Now, first he had to select a staff. There is, I think, a little bit of question as to whether or not there was anybody working for the committee as a staff man when Fulton came to work. I heard Charlie Clark say that Truman hired him. I've also heard a story that Fulton hired Charlie, and told him to get them some offices and to get some stationery, and to get the physical facilities that they would need for a staff started. If you'll recall, Mr. Clark's title was associate chief counsel. I heard Truman say many times in a rather joking way, that Clark gave himself that title, and this may very well be the case. I became

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very well-acquainted with Charlie Clark, both as a junior member of the staff and then in later years when I was practicing law in Washington and he was also practicing law. And I wouldn't be at all surprised if he gave himself the title of associate chief counsel. That would seem to indicate that Fulton was hired first. But at any rate there was never any question about who was top dog on that staff. Fulton was top dog, and Truman looked first, last and always to Fulton. Fulton, I think, went ahead to hire the rest of the staff, I mean the professionals. Fulton had nothing to do with hiring the clerical staff. Clark pretty well left this up to Matthew Connelly.

HESS: Hiring the clerical staff?

SPARKS: Hiring the clerical staff, the stenographers, the clerks, anybody in this category. The people who were hired very early in the game, I would say, had a great deal to do with shaping the kind of staff that we were to have. Fulton wanted people, and in a large part

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got people, who didn't have any previous ties with congressional investigations. Now, there were some exceptions to this. Both Charlie Clark and Matt Connelly had worked on the other side of the Hill, had worked over in the House of Representatives on committees over there. And Matt had a history of working in several Government agencies before that time. He had worked in Massachusetts and had worked down here for the Works Progress Administration, before he went to work over in the House of Representatives. But with those two exceptions, the people who worked on that committee staff came from outside the Congress and had not had prior experience as congressional investigators. I think this was intended, on Fulton's part, and certainly concurred in by Truman. He wanted men who didn't have these ties, who didn't have these preconceived ideas about how an investigation ought to be conducted. Most of the men were young men. There were very few exceptions. And I think this was intended by Fulton and by Truman. They wanted men who had stamina, they wanted men who

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didn't have too many ties. A good many of the men were unmarried and could travel without any difficulty. Several of us got married rather shortly, and some of us married girls on the staff, as a matter of fact. He wanted people that he could influence into doing the kind of a job that he felt should be done. These were largely lawyers. Only one man had really extensive investigatory background and that was H.G. Robinson, Harold Robinson. Harold Robinson had been an FBI agent and was a remarkable man in his own right and had a great deal to do with the thoroughness of a lot of the important investigations over there over the years. Robinson had worked in the espionage area for the FBI. Robinson had run the radio station out on Long Island that had communicated with the German government in the late '30s. A movie called "The House on Ninety-Second Street" was made about this. If you should ever get a chance to interview Robinson out in California you should do that. He was a very able guy, a guy who had a lot to do with morale on the committee staff, quite a joker, light-hearted type, always had a story to tell you, but when you got

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down to the investigation, Robbie was a most important factor in the kind of a job the staff did.

HESS: While we're at this point let's start down a list of the staff members that I have, and when we finish this, there will probably be some others who I have not put on this list and we can cover those, but if you will tell me a little bit about what their backgrounds were, why that particular person was hired, and how effective they were in carrying out their duties. Number one on our list is William Boyle, Jr.

SPARKS: He was an able man. He came to Truman through the Kansas City political organization. I don't know how early Harry Truman and Bill Boyle knew each other, but they certainly knew each other there in the 1930s, when Mr. Boyle was in the Kansas City Police Department and became director of the department, in the late '30s. He came to Washington in 1941, after the committee was formed, and started to work for the committee. He was a senior investigator at that time,

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I certainly would say. Because of his closeness to Truman, he was in and out of Truman's personal office a good deal, more so than almost any of the others in the early days, even more so than Matt Connelly, I would say. Only Fulton on the staff was closer to Truman than Boyle. And in some respects, even Boyle may have been closer.

HESS: Do you recall any investigations that he worked on?

SPARKS: He worked on quite a few. It seems to me that he did some of the work in connection with the analysis of the Office of Production Management in the fall of '41. He worked on our study of aluminum, I believe.

HESS: How were those various assignments made? Did they try to pick a person who had some special competence in a field or did it just depend on who was available at the time?

SPARKS: No, they didn't try to pick people who had competence in a field. None of us had particular competence in a field, really, until we started working on a subject. Because of Fulton's basic philosophy, one of being thorough, before we finished we became very well-versed,

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I wouldn't say we were experts in a field, but we became very well-versed in any field that we started to work on. We were always working on more than one thing at a time. We didn't ever stick to one subject. We would have five to fifteen investigations going all at the same time. And so it might be that a given investigation would be concluded just a month or so after it was started, or it might be that it would go on for a year or even two years. So this would mean that you'd handle the investigation, you'd handle all the correspondence that came into the committee on this subject. You would draft the replies. You would have a great deal to do with preparing interrogation for a hearing; with gathering witnesses who would testify, and I'm talking about witnesses now not in the realm of high Government officials, but witnesses, oh, in an investigation about a housing project, it was not uncommon to bring in an inspector or to bring in a foreman, to testify about defects in a housing project. The attorney (the investigator, he was called) would have to go out to the field and interview people and piece the story together, and pick people who make good witnesses, who had

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a personal knowledge of a piece of the story, and see if they would come to Washington and testify. And this was the way the staff worked. We had access to all sorts of information that later committees seldom get access to, it seems to me. No one said "No," to us. I work for a committee now. I'm assistant counsel of the Anti-Trust Sub-Committee in the Senate and it's not at all uncommon for a Government agency to drag its feet, or to even refuse to give us information today. During wartime, and with the reputation of the Truman Committee, nobody said "no." When you asked Donald Nelson for information, you got it and you got it fast. Over in the military services, there was a tendency to just throw the files open to us and say, "There it is, you find it." And this was a way of saying "It will take you some while to dig it out. We won't help you find it." But even there we never got a "no." There was always, at least on the record, a complete willingness to cooperate and give us information.

HESS: Was Mr. Boyle an effective investigator?

SPARKS: Yes. I didn't ever work myself with Mr. Boyle on

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an investigation, but I would say he was effective. I would say he was less effective than somebody like Robinson or Connelly. But if you must compare, he was certainly as effective as most other investigators.

HESS: He left in March of 1944, I believe to go to the Democratic National Committee.

SPARKS: I don't think so. I believe he left first to go upstairs full time for Mr. Truman.

HESS: On his personal staff?

SPARKS: On his personal staff. This *Who's Who* here says that he was executive assistant to the chairman from '42 to '44. He continued to be on the committee payroll past '42, of that I am pretty sure. He went upstairs but continued to work on committee matters. He went upstairs when Harry Vaughan went in the army. I'm pretty sure that's what happened.

HESS: He took his place, is that right?

SPARKS: He took Harry Vaughan's place. He was his personal secretary, I believe, in those days. Secretary to the Senator. At that time, there wasn't any administrative

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assistant, the number one man in the office under the Senator was called his secretary.

HESS: Did he sever all of his connections with the committee at that time?

SPARKS: When he went upstairs? No. He continued to be on the committee payroll, I'm pretty sure. He continued to do quite a bit of work for the committee. Now in 1944, before he went to the national committee he left the committee payroll and started working pretty much full-time on Truman's personal matters, on his office staff work, but until that time he had continued to work quite a bit on committee work.

HESS: Fine. The next man on our list is Fred Canfil.

SPARKS: Fred Canfil stayed in Kansas City, to my knowledge, and worked as a committee investigator out in the central part of the United States during the time that he was on the committee. He was on the committee, it looks like about eighteen months.

HESS: Do you recall any investigations, any matters of interest that he might have had a hand in?

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SPARKS: No, I don't.

HESS: Do you think he was effective?

SPARKS: I just don't know. I didn't have any contact with Fred Canfil during that period.

HESS: Charles Patrick Clark we mentioned a little while ago, but how effective was he in carrying out his duties?

SPARKS: I would say he was effective. Charlie Clark had gone to law school with Frank Parks, and my knowledge of his history before he came to the committee is what Frank told me. He worked with Frank over at the General Accounting Office after they got out of law school, and then left the GAO and went over to various committees on the House side to work over there. I would not say that Mr. Clark was an intensive investigator, or a really skillful interrogator. I would say that his instincts often led him places that his intelligence wouldn't lead him.

HESS: Can you give me an example of that?

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SPARKS: No, I'm afraid I can't. I think that he gave the appearance of being less able than he actually was. Charlie Clark gave the appearance as long as he lived of being a hot air artist, I would say. Many people thought of him in this way, as a kind of blowhard. I think he did talk too much, but I think he was quite a bit more able than some people gave him credit for being. I think he was a good organizer. I think that he had extreme loyalty to Truman. I think he had loyalty to Truman much more than he had to Fulton. I think that whenever it was possible, he would work with Truman, and I think this is a pretty human sort of trait. I never criticized him for this. I think that his background here in Washington was often helpful to Fulton who had no Washington background. I think his background in the area of, well, I've said "background in Washington." This means background on the Hill, it means background in knowledge of Government agencies here in Washington. I think he was very helpful to Fulton and to Truman in getting the committee started off with knowledge in this direction. I think Charlie was downgraded by some people because they did not admire his habit of talking so much, and

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his personal speech habits. He just sort of led you to think that he talked a better game than he played. This is why I feel that a lot of people downgraded him because they arrived at this opinion and never changed it. They didn't examine too carefully just what he was doing and how he was doing it. I'm sorry I can't be more specific, but I do have this opinion of Charlie Clark, and I would want it in the record.

HESS: He resigned to be inducted in the army in October of 1942. Do you recall after Mr. Truman got into the White House if there was ever any discussion of having Charles Patrick Clark join the White House staff in any capacity, or join the Truman administration?

SPARKS: I would have no knowledge of this, no knowledge of this. Mr. Truman went into the White House while I was still on the staff. I left the committee staff in 1946. I didn't talk with Mr. Truman in the White House more than a very few times, and then strictly socially after he went down there. I wasn't privy to anything at all along that line.

HESS: Our next man on the list is William S. Cole.

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SPARKS: Well, Mr. Cole was a protege of Senator Brewster. He came from Bangor, Maine, was a lawyer, was a man in his middle fifties, I would say, when he came down here. He was on the committee staff for several years and I would say was a rather astute lawyer, a down east type, a man who did what he was told and did it in a competent way.

HESS: Was his appearance on the staff evidence of Senator Brewster's non-bipartisanship?

SPARKS: No, I wouldn't say so. I would say that probably -- I don't know this -- but I would say that probably Senator Brewster suggested to Fulton that at a time when we needed staff people, Cole could do a job. Fulton had a problem with staff people during the war. He had people drafted out from under him. We lost people like Herb Maletz, Tom Flynn, and Charlie Clark to the army. Truman did not at any time ask for occupational deferments for his investigators. I was 4F. I stayed on for the whole war there on the basis of a physical disability, but Fulton certainly had staff troubles, and also he lost some of his younger men after a year or two. I would say that probably both Bill Cole and Haven Sawyer,

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who was also from Maine, and who was there as a result of a recommendation by Senator Brewster, came in because they were older men and they were not subject to the draft, and gave some promise of being useful as staff investigators. That's probably why Truman and Fulton agreed to take them on.

HESS: All right. The next man in line is Matthew Connelly.

SPARKS: Matt Connelly had a great deal to do with the success of the committee. There's no question about that. First of course, he had a lot of political savvy. He had been active here in Washington in political matters and up in New England in the political area. And this was important to Fulton, because when Fulton came to Washington, about all he knew about politics, in my opinion, was what he had read in the papers. He had no previous experience in this area. He was a young man. When Fulton came to Washington, well, he had to have been around thirty, I guess, thirty-two, something like that. Fulton graduated from college in the class of 1930, in the summer, and I guess Fulton must have been thirty-one or thirty-two when he came to Washington, and his whole experience had been

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in New York, as a lawyer, up there. Before that he was a country boy from Ohio, and that was it. He was lucky in getting Matt Connelly, because Matt was very savvy in the Washington area, knew a lot about backgrounds of people and knew what made a lot of people tick. I think that as

time went on, he and Fulton developed a sort of standoffishness, they still respected each other, I believe, but they were not as close in later years as they were right at the beginning. I think at the beginning Connelly was extremely helpful in this area of advising Fulton about the Washington picture. He was also helpful as an investigator, and he had good instincts, and really good expertise as an investigator.

HESS: He was the first man to hold a title that you later held, that of "chief investigator." Just what were the duties of the chief investigator?

SPARKS: In the early years he was the number three man on the committee. When Matt was chief investigator, Charlie Clark was associate chief counsel and Hugh Fulton was chief counsel. Now, a little bit later, the chief

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investigator was perhaps the number four man on the committee. There were a couple of assistants layered in between the chief counsel and the chief investigator. But, the chief investigator had a lot to say about parcelling out assignments. He hired and fired the clerical personnel. He was responsible for looking at all the correspondence which was drafted by the investigators before it went in for signature by Fulton, or upstairs for signature by Truman. He had to be pretty well on top of all the investigations that were currently in progress. It was my habit, and it was certainly Matt's habit, it was Harold Robinson's habit while he was chief investigator, to talk daily with the investigators about the progress they were making, to try to be as aware as possible of what they were doing, without horning into the picture and running their study for them. We certainly did try to delegate responsibility for a given investigation to an individual or individuals, and within limits let them decide on what staff steps ought to be taken. Matt did this very efficiently, I believe. He was very effective in the 1941-42 area in the housing investigations because he had had experience with this in WPA. He was effective in many of those early investigations, there's no question about it.

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HESS: Then he went with Mr. Truman when he became Vice President, and then on into the White House.

The next man on the list we've discussed quite a little bit, but I have a few more questions regarding him, and that's Hugh Fulton: Do you know why Mr. Fulton left the committee in 1944?

SPARKS: I think he left because his loyalty was primarily to Truman, and he felt that the new chairman ought to have the right to appoint his own chief counsel.

HESS: Do you recall if he assisted Mr. Truman in the campaign of 1944?

SPARKS: Yes. Yes he went on the campaign train with him. He wrote some speeches or had a part of writing some speeches.

HESS: There was some speculation at the time that Mr. Fulton would join either the White House staff or the Truman administration in some capacity after April 12, 1945, when Mr. Truman became President. Do you recall why he did not join the Truman administration?

SPARKS: I don't know why. I know this. I know that on the

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first day when an appointment list was published at the White House after Mr. Truman had been sworn in late that afternoon, Mr. Fulton was the first man on that appointment list the next morning. This was published in the newspapers, and has been stated in at least one of the history books. I was still up on the Hill at the time. Fulton, when he left the committee, he had formed a law partnership with Henry Walter, whom he had known in the Cravath firm in New York. And they intended to, and did form what was primarily a New York law firm. They had a Washington office almost from the outset. Their offices were down in the Occidental Hotel building.

Shortly after the firm was formed, Harold Robinson left the committee staff to head up the Washington office operation. Fulton spent a great deal of time here in the Washington office, but as the years went by, spent less and less. And the firm tended to be more and more a New York firm. This was the reason that ultimately I left the firm and not too long after I left the firm, the Washington office was closed. I really don't know why, I wish I could shed some light on the reason why Fulton did not go into the Truman

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administration in some capacity. I know this is kind of a blind alley for you and you may have hoped that I could tell you this, but I can't. I have some speculation. I've already said that Fulton and Matt Connelly became less close during the latter years of their association on the committee. There were newspaper stories published at the time, within a few weeks after Mr. Truman became President, which indicated that there had been a disagreement of some kind between Truman and Fulton. I really don't know the nature of that disagreement. I do know this. I do know that Fulton was always disappointed that after being trusted by Truman for a good many years, and after being close to him, in a relatively short period of time he became an outsider rather than an insider. I suspect that some of this falling out may have come as a result of Fulton presuming that he would continue to be the inside advisor that he had always been. This is purely speculation. This is based more on my knowledge of Fulton's personality, and Fulton's sort of bland assuredness of himself. That isn't an expert way of saying it. Fulton had great confidence in his own ability. Fulton was not boastful. He just assumed that he could do just about anything, and

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he nearly always did. It seems to me possible, and I have speculated about this, with people who knew both parties at that time, who knew all the parties, it seems to me possible that at a very crucial moment, or over a very short period of time after Mr. Truman became President, that Fulton may have presumed to be on a point that he shouldn't have presumed, and this may have alienated Matt Connelly, who would have had quite an influence on the President. Fulton never said to me. Fulton didn't talk about it with his friends. It was only in passing moments that you could detect a disappointment that he felt very deeply in no longer being close to Mr. Truman.

He occasionally, very occasionally, saw Mr. Truman as the years went by. I'm sure that the source material would show how quickly it was that other people became Mr. Truman's advisers and Fulton did not.

HESS: Do you know what the basis of the misunderstanding between Mr. Fulton and Mr. Connelly was -- what started the rift -- if that's the proper word?

SPARKS: Well, it may not be too inaccurate a word. No, I don't. I would say that maybe origins had something to

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do with the rift, and backgrounds may have had something to do with it. I've already said that Matt Connelly and Bill Boyle and Harry Vaughan on the committee staff had origins which were political in nature. I haven't said it in these terms, but this is the essence of what I've said. The rest of the people -- I don't know, somebody else might say that my own origins were of a political nature, but I was too young and green really, when I came to Washington, to fall in this category. But the rest of the people on the staff did not. Now, I certainly would not say that this put the staff in two camps. It did nothing like this. There were no hard feelings between Matt Connelly and me or Bill Boyle and me, or there weren't even any hard feelings between any of these three and Hugh Fulton. I would guess that to some extent these three regarded Fulton and the rest of us as being a bit naive about some things, and we probably were, on which they felt a little bit better informed, and undoubtedly were, a good deal better informed, especially in the early years. Now how did this affect the relationship between Connelly and Fulton? I think it may very well have resulted in a feeling on Connelly's part that Fulton should place

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a greater trust in him than he did. Maybe Fulton rewrote something that Connelly wrote. This sort of thing is perfectly possible. There was one disagreement, but I cannot remember the nature of it. Harold Robinson told me about it. It had to do with how an investigation was carried out, and Connelly wanted to do it in a specific manner and Fulton gave him absolute orders to the contrary.

HESS: About what time was this, do you recall?

SPARKS: No, but if I had to guess I would say it was in '43 or '44.

HESS: Do you think that this was about the time that their misunderstanding started?

SPARKS: I wasn't aware of a misunderstanding until much later. I was not close enough to this particular disagreement to know whether it was serious or not. I have looked back and reconstructed some of this. Keep in mind now that even at the time I left the committee staff, I was still in my late twenties, and I was still a pretty naive young fellow myself. It seems to me that other people might be a good more

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discerning about this situation than I was.

HESS: All right, Mr. Sparks, one other question comes to mind, and we have touched on this, but I thought you might want to elaborate on it a little bit, and that would be the value of Hugh Fulton toward the success of the Truman Committee?

SPARKS: Well, I think he was of very great value. I said once, earlier this afternoon, that I wouldn't be able to speculate really on what course history might have followed if Truman had not come in contact with Fulton. I think that Fulton had a very heavy influence in making the committee respected. His interrogation at hearings was such as to arouse respect among members of the press corps, and the combination of this dogged counsel and this feisty little chairman from Missouri, really got a lot of press attention. They became the objects of very great interest on the part of newspapermen who covered the Hill. There is absolutely no doubt that the committee got Mr. Truman a great deal of national publicity which had an effect on his acceptability as a potential vice presidential candidate in 1944. The histories all

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say that if he had not become known as chairman of the committee, he would not have been even thought of by President Roosevelt, by other members of the Senate as a potential vice presidential candidate. If he had continued to be just a junior senator from Missouri, I do not believe that he would have been President, so that his national stature grew very greatly because of the committee and its record. I believe that the committee and its record have to be heavily ascribed to Fulton. I do not believe for one instant that Fulton exercised any sort of Svengali influence over Truman. This was not the kind of relationship that it was. Truman and Fulton were both country boys to begin with and they had this in common: Truman and Fulton both liked to read. They both were very persistent in their nature. They respected each other because of this quality, and because of a mutual belief that grew over the years that the committee was doing a worthwhile job. I believe that Truman relied very heavily on Fulton in deciding what to investigate, how to investigate it, and in deciding what the committee ought to recommend. I think that Truman was a man who made up his own mind, but he was very likely to look to advisers that he

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respected and people that he felt had a superior grasp of the facts, and get their recommendations before he made up his own mind. And I think he looked to Fulton very, very often in deciding things about the committee. I don't believe that he looked to Fulton very much in making political decisions. I have said that Fulton went on a campaign trip with him on the train in 1944. My guess would be that Truman used Fulton more as a technician, as a speechwriter. He was a man who was good with the English language, who could dictate speeches quickly, who was a quick thinker. In that area I would say he depended on others. But as far as the mechanics, as far as the policies which the committee should follow, I believe he depended very heavily on Fulton. I don't believe there was another man on the staff who would have been able to even come close to equal Fulton in this ability, had anyone else on that staff been the chief counsel. I don't believe that if Charlie Clark or Matt Connelly or any of the others of us had been chief counsel, the committee would have been one half so successful as it was with Hugh Fulton as chief counsel.

HESS: Fine. You mentioned the hearings, and I have a couple of questions about them. How was it decided what cases should be brought to a hearing?

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SPARKS: I think this was a joint decision between Fulton and Truman. We recommended at the staff level that a hearing be held, and when I say "we", I mean up to and through Matt Connelly. I don't think that we ever made a decision that a hearing should or should not be held. This decision was made by Fulton and by Truman. This is really the traditional staff process. This is the way that decisions are made on the committee that I work for today. On any congressional committee with very much staff, there has to be a level at which this decision of whether to hold a hearing or not is made, and it's not made below that level, and I think that was the case with the Truman Committee, it was usually made jointly by Truman and Fulton.

HESS: Did you attend the hearings?

SPARKS: Oh, yes, yes. This doesn't show in the transcript. I believe that in most cases only the counsel or the assistant counsel showed as being present. In the committees that I work for now, any staff member who is present is shown as present, but I attended the hearings often -- well, I attended the hearings always

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on subjects where I had helped prepare an interrogation or where I had any knowledge of the facts. I formed a habit in those days which I have always followed of pretty well staying away from hearings in which I wasn't directly related. But some staff people went to hearings because they felt that they ought to be learning about a given subject, or maybe out of curiosity. I've tried to stay away from this over the years.

HESS: When you attended the hearings, did you take part in the interrogation, or was that left up to the chief counsel?

SPARKS: No, that was pretty much left up to the chief counsel. I prepared questions in written form, and I sat behind the chief counsel, and would occasionally whisper in his ear or pass him a question on a subject that I thought ought to be followed up. But this was a matter for the chief counsel. On a few occasions, Charlie Clark acted for Fulton, and was the person who did the interrogating. But this was almost always when Fulton was out of town. Fulton

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did the great preponderance of this.

HESS: Did Mr. Truman usually attend?

SPARKS: Yes, almost always. Now, we're talking about committee hearings. We have to keep in mind that Truman also used a subcommittee technique. Mr. Truman would commonly appoint one or two or three members of the Committee as a subcommittee to go into a subject. He nearly always did this where field trips were involved, where hearings outside of Washington were necessitated. He would appoint two or three members as a subcommittee to make a trip and to

hold a hearing and to come back. He would appoint somebody like Mon Wallgren or Harley Kilgore or somebody with whom he had a good, close relationship, as chairman of a subcommittee to go out and hold the hearings and come back, and a staff man would go with them, perhaps Fulton -- usually Fulton would go with them -- sometimes Charlie Clark or Matt Connelly. But they would bring a transcript back with them and perhaps more hearings would be held here in Washington to follow up what was learned out in the field.

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HESS: Did you ever attend a field hearing?

SPARKS: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall what subjects they were on?

SPARKS: Oh, a good many. I attended hearings down in Texas. Right after I went to work in October, 1941, we were concluding, as I recall, an investigation that had to do with the efficiency of the Dallas plant of North American Aviation Company. There had already been some hearings in October, and if I am correct there were other hearings later in October, after I came on.

I attended hearings out in Detroit, having to do with Willow Run. We had some hearings out there in 1942, which incidentally started as the result of a complaint by George Meader. Meader at that time was prosecuting attorney in Washtenaw County, which is Ann Arbor, Michigan, he lived in Ann Arbor, and George Meader and the Ford Motor Company people and the Chamber of Commerce people in Detroit sent a joint complaint to the committee about the kind of housing and the great volume of housing that was going

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to be put up to house people who were going to work at Willow Run. I went to those hearings up there. George Meader later became a member of our committee staff. He was a classmate of Hugh Fulton at the University of Michigan.

I went to hearings out in Ohio when we went into Wright Aeronautical Plant out there. That had to do with inspection procedures that were in effect out there at the plant.

HESS: Is that the Curtiss-Wright airplane engines case?

SPARKS: Yes, that's right. Don Lathram and I worked on those together and Don and I made a field trip out there and then went to hearings.

HESS: What do you recall about that problem? That was a rather famous and well-known case that came before the committee.

SPARKS: Well, those hearings arose out of a letter, the usual congressional terminology is, a letter from a citizen. I don't know whether it was an anonymous letter or whether it was a letter from just an ordinary person who worked in the plant out there. Quite a lot

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of matters that we investigated came from this type of complaint. The more we had hearings, the more national publicity we got, the more letters we got, the more we had hearings. This is what congressional committees thrive on; this is what makes congressional committees effective. This is a large reason why congressional committees are interested in newspaper publicity. The more people know of their work, the more effective they can be because they will get more letters commenting on their work, and giving them leads, and giving them ideas about what to investigate. This is the way the Wright Aeronautical case arose. I do not recall too much about it, except that a man who was working in the plant out there criticized the inspection procedures and criticized the Air Force (it was called the Army Air Corps at that time), but criticized them because they were not overseeing the Curtiss-Wright inspectors there in that Lockland Plant. And we went out and talked to these people, got copies of inspection reports, which without a shadow of a doubt they were not supposed to give us, but this is often the case, you often were given materials to document a complaint which you weren't supposed to have. What you would have to do would be to go in and

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ask the Air Force to furnish you a copy of the same report so you'd have it on legitimate grounds. But we went out and talked to -- spent, I guess, maybe a couple of weeks talking to people in the plant. At the same time, of course, the usual procedure was followed of asking the military people for comments on these allegations, and they were gathering information through their liaison people and down through the ranks, on out to Wright Aeronautical. And often, you'd be out in the field investigating something, and you'd come across a man who would be in the course of gathering information with which he was supposed to answer a letter back to the Truman Committee in Washington. Sometimes this would irritate him, sometimes he would be understanding about this. We'd frequently have these two kinds of inquiries going at the same time, really checking on one another.

HESS: All right. Shall we get back to our list of names?

SPARKS: All right.

HESS: The next name is Rudolph Halley.

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SPARKS: Here again, I'm guilty of some bias, because Mr. Halley also was close to me and I was close to him. He became a partner in the Fulton and Walter law firm. Halley was a New Yorker. He had met Fulton when they were both assistant U.S. attorneys in New York. He had continued to be an assistant U.S. attorney after Fulton came down here, and then in 1942, I guess maybe in late '42, he came down here essentially as Fulton's assistant, as Fulton's number one man. Here now you see his loyalty was primarily to Fulton. He supervised investigations, acted as an interrogator occasionally at the council table, but most of the time while Fulton was on the staff, let Fulton carry this out. He succeeded Fulton as chief counsel when Fulton went out and went into law practice. And then about a year later in the fall of '45, went into the law firm. Even at that time, I remember when Rudy left, I told him that I probably would be going back to Missouri to join my dad in his law practice. But I didn't do that, and along in '46, they decided

that they needed another man in their Washington office and offered me a job and I went into the Washington office.

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Rudy again was down here often in the Washington office and I became even more closely acquainted with him than after the time when we worked together as a committee. He was a very tenacious man. He was a very intelligent man. Rudy Halley was Jewish; had a lisp. His lisp became somewhat famous then in the '50s when he became counsel to Senator [Estes] Kefauver on their Committee on Organized Crime, I think it was called, and their faces were put on television screens all over the country interrogating gangsters, and this Halley speech defect became the subject of caricaturists and the night club comedians and all sorts of things all over the country. He was most able, a very persistent investigator, a man who had more political knowhow, perhaps, than Fulton. I have pictured Fulton as a man who was somewhat naive in politics. I think I ought to make sure that the record shows that this naivete didn't last. He picked up knowhow rather quickly, rather soon. He and Halley were a good team. This is why they decided to go into partnership as law partners in later years. They worked together very well. Halley had a lot to say about the choice of investigations after he came on the stand. Fulton put a lot of faith in Halley in this

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respect. He often talked about just turning it over to Halley completely, but really not until he left the committee staff did he turn anything over to anybody completely. As long as Fulton was counsel there, he ran the ship, there's no question about this. Halley handled a number of very important committee matters. It was during his period as chief counsel that the committee started its investigation that led to the Erie Basin Metal Products Company, that led to the conviction of Congressman Andrew J. May, and put a number of industrialists into the penitentiary for violation of Federal statutes. Halley also had a good deal to do, I believe, with the Higgins boat case, which was one of the most intriguing of our investigations. I worked on this, and Harold Robinson worked on this.

HESS: How did that get started?

SPARKS: I think Higgins came to Washington with a complaint, about the chilly reception that the Bureau of Ships at the Navy Department was giving to his proposal that he build landing boats for the Navy Department. Higgins had been an entrepreneur in pre-war days, who made money just about any way he

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could think of, but among other things, developed a lot of commercial ventures down in Central America. He found that he could carry out some of these commercial ventures with greater success down in some of those banana republics by developing a boat that he could land anyplace without having a pier, without having a wharf to land it by. So he developed a boat that could land on a beach, run up onto a beach and load and run off the beach. It was a very early predecessor of the boat that ultimately took our troops into North Africa. After war was declared and it became apparent that we were going to have to take troops somehow into Europe, Andy Higgins came to Washington with a proposal that he build some of these boats for the Navy. I'm

sure this was before any plan to land troops in North Africa was evolved, and later in Italy, but he had a product. that worked, and he proposed that he build some of these for the Bureau of Ships. Well, the Bureau of Ships already had a product that it was trying to develop. It was trying to do the same thing. It was trying to develop a landing boat. The only trouble was that the Bureau of Ships landing boat wasn't very seaworthy. I remember our finding descriptions in the Navy Department file, the Bureau of Ships file, of the tests that were being given to the Bureau of Ships boats down in Hampton Roads, off Norfolk. There they would

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run these boats out to sea, and before they'd know it, they would be almost swamped and sunk. They persisted down there to perfect their own. This is something akin to the pride of authorship, I guess. You know, on the Truman Committee staff we almost ruined our eyes reading files, reading photostats especially, white on black photostats. It seemed to me that the files that they turned over to us to read were almost always white on black photostats. I remember finding these transcripts of telephone conversations between the Norfolk Navy Base and the Bureau of Ships in Washington reporting on the difficulties that they were having with the Bureau of Ships landing boats in those tests down there. And we used this to very good advantage in proving that the Higgins boat ought to be given a chance. This was one of the few occasions on which a report of the Truman Committee was classified "Secret", and was never published. I guess it was the only occasion.

Truman and the committee tried by every means they could, short of going to President Roosevelt, to get Higgins and the Bureau of Ships people together. The committee became absolutely convinced that the Higgins

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boat ought to be given a chance. They couldn't get this accomplished. So a report was printed, a very small number of reports, were printed at the Government Printing Office. And a few copies were sent to the Secretary of the Navy, who was Frank Knox. The transmittal letter to Secretary Knox was published and distributed to the press. The transmittal letter simply said, well, it left no doubt about what the committee was going to do, it was going to publish the report, release the report to the press unless Knox took some action. Maybe it was blackmail, I don't know. But the report was never distributed to the press. Until a very few years ago, I had a copy of that report in a bound volume of the committee reports, and then it seems to have become lost. I don't know where it is. I have a full set of the committee hearings, but none of the committee reports. All my committee reports, which were bound, have become lost. But I don't believe you'll find that report in the Archives; I don't believe you'll find it in the Library of Congress. It was not printed on the same kind of paper that reports were printed on. It was printed on galley paper, but it was bound in page proof form, and was sent down to Frank

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Knox in that form. Knox did get the Bureau of Ships people together with the Higgins people, and ultimately the Higgins design was adopted, and it was a Higgins design which was used in North Africa and Italy.

HESS: Mr. Halley succeeded Hugh Fulton in the post as chief counsel which leads to the very obvious question, how would you compare their effectiveness in that post, in carrying out that job?

SPARKS: I would not say that Halley was as effective as Fulton, but he was quite effective, he was quite effective. I think one thing ought to be kept in mind. Halley became counsel in August of '44, and was counsel until September of '45, September or October of '45, and was succeeded by Meader. Now the progress of the war, I think, had an effect on what the committee was doing, how it was doing it, how effective it was, and how effective the staff people were. We were very close to V-E Day in '45 by the time -- as a matter of fact, V-E Day may have come and gone...

HESS: V-E Day was May the 8th of '45.

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SPARKS: During this period of time now the national attitude toward the war had changed. The things that the committee was studying were different. We had started to study things like reconversion, putting plants back into civilian production, renegotiation. There was perhaps a little bit more feeling by the minority members of the committee that maybe a little bit of partisan hay could be made out of something that the committee was doing. I think that it was harder to get agreement by all the members of the committee when Halley was counsel than it was when Fulton was counsel. I think that the character of the times had considerable effect on the relative effectiveness of the committee in the later years as compared with the earlier years.

HESS: During the time that the committee was involved in reconversion matters, did the committee have any involvement with James Byrnes and the Office of Defense Mobilization?

SPARKS: Yes, but I don't recall that there was very much.

HESS: All right.

And the next man on the list is Walter Hehmeyer.

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SPARKS: Walter's principal assignment was as a liaison with the press. He handled some investigations; but I would say that ninety-five percent of his time he was an information man, a man who answered the questions of the newspapermen, a man who went to all the hearings, made certain that the newspapermen got the information that they needed at the hearings, and between the hearings there was often a newspaperman sitting at his desk trying to find out what to write about next.

HESS: That was his principal concern?

SPARKS: Yes.

HESS: Robert L. Irvin.

SPARKS: Bob Irvin, like myself, graduated from law school in the early summer of 1941. He came to Washington; he went to Fulton, as I recall the story, out of the blue. He wasn't sponsored by anybody. I don't know whether Homer Ferguson had come to Washington yet or not. I don't believe so, in February of '42. But he came to Fulton, asked him for an interview, and was hired as a young attorney on the staff. Bob

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worked on a number of the important investigations, I remember that he worked on the Carnegie Illinois steel matter, again a matter of inspections, when the committee discovered, again as a result of a letter from a citizen, that defective steel plates were being turned out by Carnegie Illinois up in Pittsburgh. And the reason I remember that Bob worked on this was because the plant of the Carnegie Illinois Steel Company that was turning out this steel plate was from Irvin, Pennsylvania. So the coincidence always stuck with us that Irvin should be the staff man who worked on that. That was an important matter for that time. There were procedures changed, and there may have been some people who were fired as a result of those inspection procedures going awry up there. The Navy Department took the position that none of the plate that was delivered to the Navy for use in ship construction was, in fact, defective. The committee took the position that the Navy Department didn't really know whether it was defective or not, and that it wouldn't know until a ship broke up, but the inspection reports seemed to indicate that some of the steel may have been

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defective. I never heard of a ship breaking up, so maybe the Navy was right, I don't know. But I know there was quite a lot of disagreement about whether or not the Navy Department was simply talking through its hat when it said "We didn't get any bad steel plate, regardless of what the Truman Committee said."

HESS: Was Irvin a fairly effective investigator?

SPARKS: Yes, I would say so.

HESS: The next man is Donald M. Lathrom.

SPARKS: Don Lathrom was the son-in-law of Arthur Clarendon Smith, who was the founder and principal owner of a large moving and storage company here in Washington, D.C. He was also active in Democratic politics, that is, Arthur Clarendon Smith was. I don't know the circumstances under which Don Lathrom came to the committee. He was not admitted to the bar, most of us were. He had had some law school training, but I don't believe had ever been admitted

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to the bar. He had gone to G.W. law school, and had, I believe, worked in another Government agency before he came to work for the committee.

HESS: He resigned in August of 1944. Do you recall if he assisted in the campaign?

SPARKS: He might have. I don't recall much about the circumstances of Don's resignation.

HESS: The next man is Frank E. Lowe.

SPARKS: Well, Frank Lowe was not really a member of the committee staff. Frank Lowe was, at the time we knew him, was a brigadier general, and was in a position similar to that of Ed Locke as a liaison officer, because he was acquainted with Senator Brewster, he was a man from the state of Maine, he was perhaps a little bit closer to the committee and its operations than our other liaison people -- at least our other liaison people over in the Pentagon. But he was effective as a liaison man, certainly, and

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well-liked.

HESS: What was the nature of the relationship between the Army and Navy Departments and the Truman Committee?

SPARKS: Well, each one had a liaison. Of course, they were not all one department at that time. There was a Department of the Army and a Department of the Navy. I would say that the liaison people in the Navy were usually in uniform, to begin with. Over in the Pentagon, the top liaison man was a civilian, and during a large part of the time that the committee was in operation, it was a man by the name of Julius Amberg, who I believe was from Michigan. He had a colonel on the staff named Miles Knowles, who was almost a full-time liaison for us. Amberg handled liaison for the Hill, I believe. It seemed to me that there was a relationship of respect. The military services were slightly standoffish. I don't believe that the relationship was as close as it was with Nelson, for

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instance, but we usually got what we asked for, and as I say, we carried on this procedure of showing them what we were going to publish before we published it, and I think this was so unusual that it inspired trust in our committee which didn't exist for some of the other committees.

HESS: It's almost five o'clock, do you want to quit for the day?

SPARKS: I think I should. I have an appointment in a little while.

Second interview with Wilbur D. Sparks, Washington, D.C., September 19, 1968. By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Sparks, at the conclusion of our last interview, we were discussing a few of the staff members of the Truman Committee, their backgrounds, their duties on the staff, an investigations that they may have worked on, etc., and the next person on our list is Harry S. McGee.

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SPARKS: Harry McGee came to our staff, I believe, in 1943 and was there for a year or two. I don't recall very much about Mr. McGee, except as a personality. I don't recall what he worked

on. At that time, he was a man in his late twenties or early thirties, I would say, dark-headed, a sort of nervous, frenetic type of individual. I know that when he left the committee, he went down to Florida. I don't know where his home was originally, but he went to Florida and I had a few contacts with him in later years. He was down in the area of Cape Canaveral. I'm afraid I can't contribute anything at all about what he worked on. I don't remember.

HESS: All right. The next man on the list is Herbert N. Maletz.

SPARKS: Herb Maletz is a man that I respected at that time very much and still respect. He was a New Englander, had attended Harvard Law School, had been down in the Department of Agriculture as

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a lawyer before he came to the committee staff. I have a feeling that he came to the committee as a result of some contact he had made with Matt Connelly. He was closer to Matt Connelly and to Mr. Boyle than anybody else on the staff, two or three years older than some of the other young lawyers on the staff, two or three years older than I was at that time, and the principal thing I would like to say about Herb Maletz, now Judge Maletz, was that he was excellent in the area of preparation. It was the duty of each committee investigator to handle an area or areas of subject matter, and when hearings were planned, to outline in a very detailed way, the kind of testimony that might be expected from each witness who was to testify at a hearing. We all followed the practice of talking with people who were prospective witnesses, who were possible witnesses, and making recommendations to the chief investigator and the chief counsel of the committee concerning our feelings about who would present the subject matter

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in a constructive way. This involved going out in the field, it involved interviewing people, it involved obtaining leads on other prospective witnesses, here in the Government departments and out in the field. It involved a lot of rather detailed and sometimes rather boring work. After the information was obtained from these possible witnesses, we came back to the office.

We didn't in those days have the tape recorders that are available to us now to take out into the field, and so we would make notes as best we could, bring them back to the office and dictate these into memoranda which would go to the chief investigator and the chief counsel. Herb Maletz always produced excellent memos for the edification of his superiors on the staff, who had to make an evaluation of his recommendation and sometimes tie these in with the recommendations of other investigators who were working on allied subject matter. The superior then had to make a decision for himself and for Mr. Truman, who would testify, who would

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best present the testimony in the light of all the surrounding circumstances. Well, as I say, the thing I remember best about Herb Maletz is that his memos outlining his preparatory work were always excellent. He was a good thinker, a very logical thinker, a man who in later years became counsel of the Antitrust Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, and thereafter became a commissioner of the United States Court of Claims, and is now a judge. He, from the earliest time that I knew him, seemed to be intensely interested in his work, intensely devoted to the

people that he was working with, the people he was working for, up to and including Mr. Truman. A very public-minded man. In my years since the Truman Committee, it seems to me that my own personality and my own viewpoint on life, has to some extent, to a very considerable extent, been influence by the public-mindedness of the Truman Committee, by Mr. Truman's own feeling that the committee should be a servant to the public and should serve the public first

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and the United States Government second. In later years, during my own private law practice, and during my present period since 1955, on the Antitrust Subcommittee of the United States Senate, I have been guided quite a bit by a feeling that it was a very honorable life to serve the public. I think that Herb Maletz also arrived very early in his life with a feeling that serving the public was an honorable and completely satisfying way of making a living, of living, and a most worthwhile way of devoting one's life. Herb has been a public servant ever since graduation from law school, I believe has never had any other outlook on life than public service. I believe all of his jobs have involved employment by the United States Government, and he's a very fine man personally, and did a good job for the committee.

HESS: Do you recall any of the investigations that he worked on?

SPARKS: First, I should say that Herb Maletz went into

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the army rather early in the period of the committee, the committee's history. I believe he went into the army after he had been with the committee for perhaps a year and a half, no more than two years, I would guess a year and a half, so that during that period he was working on the general subjects. I believe he worked on the question of how the Office of Production Management should be organized during the period when it was in a flux, an evolution from OPM to WPB. I believe Herb worked on that. I came to the committee in October, '41, and he had already been there for perhaps four to six months. I believe Herb came very early in the history of the committee, maybe in May or June of 1941, and I came in October. At any rate, during that period of the committee's history, its approach to investigation was general rather than specific. It was working on large principles, rather than on specific details. I don't remember offhand anything

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else that he may have worked on.

HESS: You mentioned Mr. Truman's attitude towards public service, as well as Judge Maletz's, but do you recall hearing Mr. Truman state in sort of a capsule version what he thought the purpose and objectives of the Truman Committee should be?

SPARKS: I would have to summarize what I felt his beliefs were as a result of this period of service. I don't recall hearing him state it in capsule form. I remember that he once made a speech at a party for the staff. Mr. Truman wrote an article for the *American Magazine*, for which he received \$500, as I recall, and he decided that this wasn't his money, that he should

entertain the staff, the members of the staff with a small party, and the members of the staff and their wives were invited to this, and it was held down at the Statler Hotel. I would guess that this was maybe in 1943. I

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remember that the son of the manager of the Statler Hotel, a man named Kenny, was at that time our office boy, and that was the reason we went down to the Statler Hotel -- Austin Kenny prevailed on his father to give us a private dining room to give us this party and to give us a better rate for the entertainment than we might have gotten otherwise. I recall that for us this was a very festive occasion. It was a most exceptional occasion. I think it was the only time that Mr. Truman ever did anything like this with the staff, and I'm sure that one reason was that his own personal finances were limited, but he felt that this \$500 had been gained because the article in the *American Magazine*, I should have mentioned, was about the work of the committee. And at this meeting he did talk a little bit about personal philosophy. I think that probably what he said there was that the committee should not be a committee on the conduct of the war. He often said this in

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public statements, he said this in hearings of the committee. It often came to his mind that the committee should not criticize the military for their conduct of the war, but should represent the public, should make certain that as long as we have this war to fight, that it should be conducted, that the procurement of war supplies should be carried out in an economical fashion, in a fashion which resulted in as little waste of public monies as could possibly be attained. I don't believe that Mr. Truman ever kidded himself that there was not going to be any waste. I think he was trying to minimize the waste. I think that his statements in subcommittee hearings, in committee hearings, often made this point. He would say that people were human, that the people who were concerned with obtaining war supplies would make mistakes and that he did not expect them to be perfect, but that he thought the committee could serve a useful function in trying to keep them on their toes,

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in trying to influence them into making decisions which were for the benefit of the public in as many cases as possible. I believe that Mr. Truman demonstrated many times that he would not hesitate to go to the mat with administration officials, with people in the White House, people in the Pentagon, with the President himself, if it was necessary for him to bring about the result that he felt the committee was striving for, and that result was a conduct of the procurement of war supplies in as economical a fashion as possible. In this situation, I believe he was being typically public minded. I believe that his feeling from the very outset of the committee, from the time that he went down to Camp Leonard Wood and observed those barracks being put up down there in a slipshod manner, through the time when he drove back to Washington from Camp Leonard Wood, stopped off at camps on the way to Washington, right on up into the period when he was interested in much larger projects, he felt that someone had to represent the public, and he felt that the people

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who were responsible for the procurement of war supplies, being human, wouldn't always represent the public, some of them might represent their private interests, some of them might have preconceived notions which would cause them to make decisions which were not completely in the public interest. I believe that he felt a mission after he got started. I don't believe that he started the subcommittee, or that he proposed that the subcommittee be formed because of a sense of mission. I think that he was himself outraged at what he saw down at Camp Leonard Wood, and what he saw on the way back to Washington, and he was also, of course, influenced by his reading of history, by his knowledge of what had taken place during earlier wars. There were always great wastes, and there were always investigations after the fact when it was too late to do any good about the waste that had taken place. He wanted to prevent these wastes while there was still some hope of preventing them. Before the money was spent he wanted to see that it was spent in the right fashion.

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HESS: The next man on our list is Joe L. Martinez.

SPARKS: Joe Martinez was a protégé of Senator Dennis Chavez, a native of New Mexico, a graduate of Georgetown Law School, a young man of very considerable ability. He came to the committee not too long after I did, a few months after I did. He was married. He lived near the Capitol over on Massachusetts Avenue, in an apartment with his wife, and I don't recall any of the subjects that Joe worked on. He was with the committee for a year to a year and a half, and did a good job. He later became assistant attorney general, and I believe attorney general of New Mexico. I believe that he is practicing law in the Los Angeles area now. His wife was also hired at a later date as a file clerk on the committee, and I believe she has since died. Joe was a little older than the younger attorneys. He was pretty experienced in the political area. I would liken him more to Matt Connelly than anybody else on the staff. I say experienced, knowledgeable,

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perhaps a little cynical, the kind of man that you run into often in the political sphere, a man who is devoted to public service, but nonetheless a little on the cynical side because of the experience that he has had.

HESS: The next man is George Meader.

SPARKS: George Meader, later Congressman Meader, was a classmate of Hugh Fulton at the University of Michigan in what they like to call the class of 1930 and a half. They graduated at the end of summer school in 1930. They went their separate ways. George was a native of Michigan, I believe. He went back and practiced law in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and as I have told you, Hugh Fulton went to New York City. I guess they kept in touch. In 1942, I would guess, I think I mentioned this earlier on this tape, Willow Run, where the Ford Motor Company planned to produce tanks and automotive vehicles for use in the war, was under construction. Willow Run

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was a very large factory facility which was built, I believe with Defense Plant Corporation funds on the northern outskirts of Detroit, Michigan. Willow Run, if it was to get into production,

needed workers, and workers needed housing, and the officials of the Detroit city government together with the officials of Ford, and George Meader, who was, I believe, prosecuting attorney for Ann Arbor, Michigan, came to the committee and complained about the construction of a permanent city near the plant. These people felt, I think both the Detroit people and the people in Ann Arbor, felt that existing housing should be used insofar as possible. I would say that they were following a very natural inclination as city officials who wanted to see their own housing used before any new housing was put up right next door to the plant. I think they felt very honestly, that housing that was put up by the Government for the use of workers at this plant, might become slums in some future era, and might be money down a rat hole. George and others came to the committee

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because George Meader had kept in touch with Hugh Fulton, and when this problem reared its ugly head, I would certainly bet that George thought of Hugh Fulton down in Washington and had kept abreast of what the Truman Committee was doing, and probably they said, "The Truman Committee is a good place for us to go." This was my first contact with George. I worked on that project, went out to Willow Run, talked with the people out there; there were some hearings held, and as I say, I got acquainted with George. I guess it was a year later, the committee staff was being enlarged, and George was appointed as an assistant counsel on the committee staff, I believe in 1943. He worked very closely with Fulton. He had an office over in the Capitol. There was no space in the Old Senate Office Building where the committee was housed, and so he got a room, was given a room over in the Capitol, and he and a secretary worked over there. The office space situation in the Senate Office Building at that time was much like it is today. There was no new

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Senate Office Building in existence. The war had caused the facilities of the Senate to be enlarged, and there was a very great demand for office space. The Truman Committee was scattered all over the Senate Office Building. Our principal staff office was down on the first floor in room 160, actually a little bit below ground level. The chief counsel was up in room 317. The chief clerk was also in room 317 with the assistant counsel. And so we were scattered all over the building. I mention this only as a small detail in passing. Even to this day when I walk past room 160 I think about the days of the Truman Committee. And also when I walk past the office where Mr. Truman was located, which was around on the 440 side of the building, that suite around there has been split up and is occupied by two different senators today. But I think often of Mr. Truman and his people and the room which he liked to call the doghouse around on that side of the building.

HESS: Was it the normal course of events for most of

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the committees to be scattered throughout the building?

SPARKS: No, this was unusual. This was because the Truman Committee started as low man on the totem pole, really. At the time when we started off there was a shortage of facilities and they gave us space wherever it could be found. We were not a standing committee. The standing

committees all had space of their own, and usually the chairman of the committee was located very close to the standing committee rooms. We took it where we could find it. I believe that our first offices were sought by Charlie Clark in the spring of 1941, and that he took whatever he could get. We needed space and it wasn't a question of being able to demand it. Number one, Mr. Truman was still the junior senator from Missouri, and number two, the committee was in a probationary phase. Nobody in the Senate knew anything at all about what might be expected from this new committee, and I think there's some reason to believe that maybe some of the leaders of the Senate

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felt that they could get the pressure off by turning this matter of war procurement over to an unknown, untried group, a relatively unknown senator, and that maybe they could kind of bottle up this pressure for the time being. I wasn't aware of this personally, but it seems plausible to me and some of the people who have written in this area have this, if not a set of facts, certainly this theory.

HESS: Well, Mr. Meader was later chief counsel. I have a couple of questions later on after we finish the list about that episode. But the next man on our list is Franklin N. Parks.

SPARKS: Franklin Parks was a very able man, a relatively recent graduate of Georgetown Law School when he came to the staff, a man who is perhaps two years, maybe three years older than I am, but still a person who came to the committee staff as relatively untried, relatively inexperienced. After his graduation from law school he had taken the bar exams, he had been admitted to the bar, he had gone to work

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for the General Accounting Office, and came from that job where he was an auditor and an attorney over to the committee in the late summer, I believe, of 1941. He hadn't been there very long when I arrived in October '41. Frank was like Herb Maletz, in that his preparation was always very complete. He was a native of Washington, D.C., a graduate of St. John's High School in Washington, one of the old residents of Chevy Chase. He and his family had lived out in Chevy Chase when it was in its land boom days, in the 1920s and early 1930s. We became personal friends and although I haven't seen too much of Frank in recent years, I think we're still personal friends. He is now an attorney and assistant counsel, I believe, for the Atomic Energy Commission and went there after practicing law here in Washington with Mr. Boyle for a short time after he left the committee staff. Frank and I worked together on a number of projects. I remember working with him on the Corrigan, Osborne and Wells matter, late in the history of the committee, after Mr. Truman had left. Frank and I worked together for perhaps six months reading

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photostatic copies of documents on this subject over in the Pentagon.

HESS: What was that project?

SPARKS: The Corrigan, Osborne and Wells matter involved a Lieutenant Commander Corrigan, who was in the Bureau of Ordnance, and he had come to the Navy as a Reserve officer and gone to work in the Bureau of Ordnance. In private life he had been a consulting engineer. He was a partner in a consulting engineering firm called Corrigan, Osborne and Wells. As it turned out there was no Osborne ever. They added this third name to the firm because they felt that it flowed well off the tongue. A well-known consulting firm in New York, Ford, Bacon & Davis, they also had three names and flowed mellifluously off the tongue. Lieutenant Commander Corrigan, finally, under rather severe pressure, admitted that they had added this third name to the firm because of this similarity. Well, that's only worth a chuckle in passing, but it does indicate a little bit about the nature of the firm. It was

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kind of a phony. When Commander Corrigan was assigned to duty in the Bureau of Ordnance he became a troubleshooter (this was shown in the subcommittee's testimony and in a later trial) and it became his practice, when he would go out to a plant which was having production trouble, to recommend rather strongly that they retain the firm of Corrigan, Osborne and Wells to get them out of trouble. It was proven in court trials that he took kickbacks from his former partner as a result of the income which came to his former consulting engineering firm. This took quite a lot of document reading over in the Pentagon, and as I say, Frank and I worked on that case together for a long time. We worked together on the Higgins boat case, and I think we talked about that case earlier. Frank in particular did a lot of digging over in the Bureau of Ships in the Navy Department, digging about the attitude of the Bureau of Ships toward the Higgins boat, and was to a very considerable extent responsible for the spade work that was done by the committee staff in that case.

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I believe that Frank also went out to Lockland, Ohio, when the Wright Aeronautical Corporation was under investigation. I went out there, but I don't believe we were out there together. I think that Frank and Don Lathrom went out there, and did a lot of the interviewing on that Wright Aeronautical case, and I believe that we also talked about that earlier. I don't recall anything else that Frank worked on.

HESS: Did he become chief investigator at the time that you left?

SPARKS: As I recall it, he did. I followed Harold Robinson and Frank followed me, and Frank stayed with the subcommittee well into the 80th Congress. I left in November, 1946, and the 80th Congress, which Mr. Truman criticized so much during his 1948 campaign, began January 1, 1947. Now, Frank was still there, well into that period when Senator Brewster was chairman, and Bill Rogers came down to be counsel for that subcommittee. Francis Flanagan stayed on during that period.

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I don't recall -- I'm sure other people did also. Some people had left. Walter Hehmeyer had left, Bob Irvin had left, I had left. I'm pretty sure that Frank stayed on and took on my job as chief investigator during that period in the early part of the 80th Congress.

HESS: Do you know how long he stayed? The termination date is, I believe, sometime in February of 1948, that is the date of the last report?

SPARKS: No, I can't tell you for sure how long he stayed.

HESS: O.K.

Now the next man is a gentleman that we've just mentioned and have mentioned several times last time, Harold G. Robinson.

SPARKS: This man was called "Robbie." He was a very remarkable individual. I suspect that Harold Robinson had gotten acquainted with Hugh Fulton when Fulton was executive assistant to the U.S. attorney in the southern district of New York. I

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believe that it was during that period that Robbie had worked with the U.S. attorney's office on some very well-known cases. Robbie was a long-time agent with the FBI before he came to us. He had been with the FBI, and you really should try your very best to talk with this man. But he had been with the FBI for ten or fifteen years anyway at the time he came to the committee. He had worked in the FBI on a lot of different kinds of cases, but the cases I remember most vividly about which he told us were the espionage cases. We were at war when I met him and so these had a special fascination for me and for the other young lawyers with whom Robbie got acquainted and became extremely friendly. H.G. Robinson was a man who could look at a person that he wasn't fond of with the fishiest, coldest stare. He could interview a witness that he suspected of stealing from the public with the most cynical sort of look, and he could be the most friendly person to his friends that you can imagine. He reminded you of a big puppydog. He was fat. He always had a funny story to tell you. He seemed to

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have stories catalogued by subject matter no matter what kind of a story you told him, he would have another one on exactly the same subject. He would have made a great standup comic, but he had chosen to become an auditor. He was called at the FBI a "special agent bowlegs A." This was a term that they used for their auditors. They wrote the capitol letter A in parentheses after "agent," and the parentheses produced the bowlegs effect. So he was a special agent, bowlegs A. When he went to the Bureau, however, he became a specialist in electronic surveillance, became very adept at unpleasant things like tapping telephones and putting in bugs and setting up special movie cameras in the days before this became quite as much of a practice to be criticized as it was in a later day. I don't think that anybody ever felt very critical about this practice that the FBI was indulging in then, because as far as anybody knows they were dealing with spies, with espionage agents. The most famous case I remember hearing about Robbie working on as an FBI agent, was the case of

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the radio station which the FBI set up on Long Island through which various Nazi agents communicated with the German government. The Nazi agents were spied on by FBI agents who set up an apartment on the East Side of New York City where they could come in and report to a

person that they felt was their superior in the spy system over here. But the FBI had a concealed two-way mirror arrangement set up in the same apartment and they were able not only to record their conversations, but to take pictures of them through the two-way mirror. Robbie ran the movie camera and later was involved in setting up the radio station out on Long Island. I mention this because it gives you a little bit of background on H.G. Robinson and the kind of a person he was. He was a very public-minded man. He was a man who looked with great scorn on thieves and criminals. I really don't know how he came to the committee, he was often given the jobs that the younger men on the committee would not have been adept in doing. We were very good in reading Government

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files and in evaluating witnesses, industrial types, but when it came to the gumshoe operation this was always turned over to Harold Robinson, and to some extent to Matt Connelly. One of the earliest cases that Robbie worked on was the housing project up at Winfield Park, New Jersey. There was quite a lot of dishonesty on the part of contractors who were erecting this housing for the Government, and this project gave the committee some of its early national publicity. I don't know how we managed, but a *Life* photographer accompanied Harold Robinson to the Winfield Park, New Jersey housing project and took pictures of this horrible, very low quality housing. He took pictures also, incidentally, of Robbie as the model in some of these pictures. If a fireplug was put into the ground so that only the top eight or ten inches would show, Robbie was posed by the fireplug and this was supposed to show how much error there was. In my personal scrapbooks, which you have just handed me, this housing project is shown. As a matter of fact, I see H.G. Robinson's name. "The Truman

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Committee assigned H.G. Robinson, former FBI agent, to make an investigation. Early this month, accompanied by a *Life* photographer, Robinson returned to Linden [meaning in New Jersey] to make an on-the-scene study. Some of the evidence shown on these pages was so damning that when Robinson reported to Hugh Fulton, the committee's chief counsel, he advised immediate public hearings on the scandal. Fulton requested and received *Life* pictures for use as documentary evidence." Those pictures appeared later, I say in passing, in our committee record. The case was turned over to the Justice Department for prosecution, and I believe there were some indictments returned and some kind of a penalty assessed. I don't know whether the people went to the penitentiary or whether this was handled with fines. But as I say, Robbie worked on these cases, on that particular case, and did a very fine job. He impressed me. The Winfield Park, New Jersey case, I believe was studied in the fall of 1941, and that was just about the time that I was coming to the

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committee, and my desk was put down immediately in front of Harold Robinson's in the fall of 1941, and I became very well acquainted with him. I sat between Don Lathrom and Harold Robinson in room 160 at that time. I would ascribe to Robbie a lot of the expertise, such as it was, which I gained as a committee investigator. Robbie worked on a good many cases. It was Robbie and Bob Irvin that went up to the Carnegie Illinois Corporation at the Irvin Works in Irvin, Pennsylvania and talked with the citizen who complained. That was a man who worked in

that plant who disclosed that there were falsifications of steel inspections involved in the papers, involving batches of steel plate, which the Irvin Works were turning out.

HESS: Do you recall how that came to the attention of the committee?

SPARKS: Yes, the citizen wrote to the committee, and somebody on the staff judged the letter to have possible worth. We got large quantities of mail

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from people who were unhappy about the way the procurement of war supplies was being carried out. And most of these turned out to be cranks. A very large percentage of them were checked out as a matter of routine, unless a person's complaint, unless a person's information was so palpably false, so obviously impossible, it was the practice of the subcommittee, and I believe this goes back to Hugh Fulton's original philosophy, it was the practice of the subcommittee staff to take no chances, to check out each allegation. I think I mentioned earlier that it was our practice to write to the agencies involved and to set out the allegation in very honest fashion, and to say to them "We'd like to have your comments on these allegations." We didn't characterize these statements as being true or false, they were allegations to be checked out and the first step that we took to check them out was to ask the Government department, I mean the department that had the relationship with the project. In the case of the Irvin Works, it might have been the Maritime Commission, or the Navy Department, because the Irvin

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Works was producing steel plate that went into Liberty ships and went in tankers which were being produced under contract to the Navy Department in the first case and then the Maritime Commission in the second case. The regular routine would have been, and I'm sure it was followed in the case of the Carnegie Illinois case, would have been to write to the Navy Department and the Maritime Commission and say, "We have the allegations here from a person," we wouldn't want to disclose his name, we would never disclose the name of the complainant, "but from a person who is in a position to know something about it, that inspections of steel at the Irvin Works, at the Carnegie Illinois Steel Company, are not correct, that batches of steel which are lower in quality than the contracts call for, batches of steel are being accepted by Government inspectors, are being passed by Government inspectors and being accepted by Government contracting officers as conforming to the Government specifications. What do you have to say? Do you have any complaints yourself? Have any of your people in the Inspector General's office,

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perhaps, might be checking this out." A similar letter might have been written to the Navy Department, they might have turned this over to the Inspector General's office at the Navy Department and they might be in progress as far as their own investigation is concerned. They would sometimes reply to us and they would say, "Well, give us a month, give us a couple of months until we get this matter investigated and we'll report back to you. We don't know whether this is a fact or not." Or they might report back to us and say, "This isn't a fact and here are the reasons why we don't think this is a fact." Well, in some situations we wouldn't accept that response. We would, in addition to writing the Government department involved, we would start

conducting our own investigation. And in the case of the Carnegie Illinois Corporation we sent an investigator or crew of people, I believe Harold Robinson and Bob Irvin were the two men. We sent them out to Irvin, Pennsylvania, and put them in touch, on a confidential basis, with a person who wrote to Mr. Truman, or the person

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who simply wrote "Truman Committee, Washington, D.C." And they interviewed him. He gave them some leads, and they talked to other people who worked in this plant, and if my memory is correct, there came the time when they walked into the front office and put their identification cards in the hands of the man at the Irvin Works and said, "We're here to look the plant over." And without disclosing what they were there for, they started looking the plant over, and as they came nearer and nearer to the place in the plant where these falsifications were alleged to be occurring, they were in a position to observe the surroundings, to observe the whole situation. I can't take it from there. I can't honestly say that they accosted people in the line and asked them about this. The chances are that they would have tried to get, at that stage of the game, they would have tried to get the names and perhaps the home addresses of other people who were in a position to know, and they would have tried to contact them outside the plant. Until the case was proven, they would have tried very hard

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to protect the jobs of the people who might be informants. There might come a time, and there did come a time in that case, when they had to say to some of those people, "We can't put this case into hearing stages unless you are willing to testify about this." And I think in the case of the citizen who wrote to them, I think they had to get from him a personal diary, which detailed the cases of falsification of inspection. And they put that into the hearing record, and he came down to Washington and testified. I do know this, and I think this may be of some interest, that in some cases where people in an underling position came into Washington and as he was able, he would either try to protect them, or he would try to see that they got employment elsewhere if they were fired as the result of their testimony before the committee. And he did, as a matter of fact, find employment in other war plants for a number of men who came to the committee and testified and who were either about to be fired, or felt that they would be fired, he found them jobs through means of

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his own in other war plants, perhaps by going to the Government departments and saying, "Here are people that we've got to take care of. You've got to do what you can to help us find employment for them in some other nearby plant."

HESS: Did the situation arise very often, do you recall?

SPARKS: It probably didn't arise very often, but if I had to make a guess, I would say it may have arisen ten or twenty times in the period of the committee's life when Mr. Truman was there.

HESS: How were letters of complaint from private citizens handled? Was there any one person on the staff in charge of reviewing them and seeing which letters had merit and should be followed up?

SPARKS: They came to the chief investigator. The mail would be opened each day by a file clerk in room 160 and she would bring all the letters, she would stamp them as being received, and

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would bring all the letters to the chief investigator, and this stamp had a space on it which provided for the entry of a date and provided for the name of the investigator to whom it was to be assigned. And also perhaps the name of a subject. When a complaint came in, on which there was no previous correspondence, this rubber stamp would be left blank. If there was previous correspondence, she would fill in the subject matter, if she could tell, and send it back to the chief investigator. If there was no previous correspondence it would go to him in blank form and he would read it over -- I did this many, many times -- he would read it over and try to make an assessment of its worth. Whether it was the hottest letter in creation or whether it was a crackpot letter, it was assigned to an investigator for acknowledgement. All letters were acknowledged. I believe that this practice goes back to Charlie Clark. One of the earliest pieces of instruction that Mr. Clark gave me as a fresh, green investigator

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was, "We're working for the public and if they write us, they are at least entitled to an acknowledgement from the committee that the letter has been received." And those letters never gave assurance, that anything would happen other than that the matter would be studied. This was a matter of policy, I believe this was Charlie Clark's policy of "Don't promise them anything except that we'll look it over carefully," I believe was Charlie's motto. Well, the chief investigator would assign it, perhaps on the basis of his knowledge, perhaps he would think of an investigator who had some special background in the area that was the subject matter of the complaint. Perhaps he would assign on the basis of the investigator who had the lightest load to carry at that particular moment. There might be other factors. But he would assign it to an investigator, and ask that investigator to take the usual routine steps. The follow-up for the time being would be left to the investigator. The chief investigator

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would retain a tickler copy of the acknowledgement of this letter. A chief investigator would keep a tickler copy on this. If he felt that there was any follow-up demanded, if it was a simple acknowledgement and there wasn't likely to be any additional action by the committee, then he wouldn't retain the tickler, but if there was a particular reason why there ought to be some follow-up at a later date, he would retain the tickler and put it in the right date location so that on thirty days hence or sixty days hence he would come upon that letter in his tickler file, and he would be able to go to the investigator if he hadn't heard from him and say, "What's happening on this now?" He would hope that in the meantime he would have some sort of communication from the investigator, but in a few cases, he might not have any word at all. The investigator might have written to one of the Government departments and there would be no reply in thirty days or sixty days, and at that point, he would say to the investigator,

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"Well, let's shake them up a little bit over there. Let's write them a follow-up letter, or let's call them on the telephone, and find out what they're doing, why haven't they replied, what are their problems," and this was the usual manner in which these unsolicited complaints, unsolicited pieces of information when they came to the committee would be handled.

HESS: Do you recall any other major cases that came to the attention of the committee in this manner?

SPARKS: Well, the Wright Aeronautical Case is certainly one that came to the committee in that manner. I believe the Winfield Park Housing Case came to us in this manner. Now, I'm talking about letters from citizens, letters from people whose only motivation was the public interest. Now, we also got a lot of letters from people in industry, people who had an ax to grind, people who had a special interest. These I would not put in the same category. We got a lot of those. I worked on, for instance, what

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we called the farm machinery case. This was a matter which occupied a part of my time in 1942 and 1943 and was based on the fact that WPB had issued an order, a limitation order. (There were several kinds of orders issued by WPB, but it rationed basic materials to fabricating industries, it rationed the amount of steel that went to the farm machinery. This was why these orders were called limitation orders.) They limited the amount of basic materials, whether it was steel or copper or whatever it was that could be used for given products, and all manufacturing, of course, was governed by these limitation orders, whether it was manufacturing for war purposes, or manufacturing for civilian purposes. Well, the farm machinery case evolved out of a complaint from companies in the farm machinery industry who felt that they had been dealt with lightly by WPB in allocating steel to the farm machinery industry. WPB said, "This is not a tank you're producing, this is a harvester, or this is a

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thresher, or a plow. Therefore, you may not have as much of our limited supply of steel as we can give to the people who are producing tanks, the people who are producing automotive vehicles for war purposes."

Well, the farm machinery companies took the position that our food supply was just as much a war product as our supply of tanks, and if they didn't get the right amount of steel, they couldn't produce the proper amount of farm machinery, and therefore this would hamper the ability of the American farmer to produce food for the war effort. Well, as I say, I worked on this case. It went into hearings. Ultimately the farm machinery industry received a larger quantity of steel for the production of farm machinery. That is an example of a case which came to us not as a letter from an individual citizen, but as a letter for a special interest group, namely the farm machinery manufacturing group.

You wanted to know about other cases that came out of letters from a citizen. I know that the Corrigan, Osborne and Wells case came out

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of letters from a citizen. I believe that the Erie Basin Metal Products Company case came from letters from a citizen. The Erie Basin case involved dishonesty on the part of Government contractors, and there was later proven to be dishonesty on the part of Congressman Andrew J. May of Kentucky. There, I believe, the case came to us from an employee, a man named [Allen B.] Gellman. Gellman was a partner in the Erie Basin Metal Products Company, and I believe that the employee wrote to us, and I think did not disclose the direct dishonesty involved, I'm sure he didn't as a matter of fact, he simply disclosed some suspicions. And this made us suspicious and so we followed up on the case.

HESS: Are those the main ones that come to mind right now?

SPARKS: Well, I don't think of anything else right now, no.

HESS: On the general subject of the position of chief

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investigator, did you hear any comment around the committee that at the time that Harold Robinson came to the committee that Hugh Fulton wanted him to replace Matthew Connelly as chief investigator at that time?

SPARKS: No, I never heard of that. It would be a very natural feeling on Fulton's part but no. I say "natural," I mean this: Matt Connelly was there before Robinson came in. Matt Connelly was an unknown as far as Hugh Fulton was concerned. Robinson was a known quantity. Fulton, I would guess, had very great respect for Robinson's ability, and he didn't know what to expect from Connelly, so this would lead me to think that he might have been in favor of it. There's another factor to keep in mind and that is that when Fulton agreed to take the job as chief counsel, I believe, based on things that I've read, more than things that I've heard Fulton say, I believe that his understanding with Truman was that he would be able to choose his own staff. I never discussed this question with

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Fulton, and I never heard him complain about it. If there was any such disagreement, it was at a level above me at that time.

HESS: Robinson did succeed Matthew Connelly after Mr. Connelly left. Robinson became chief investigator. Did they carry out the duties of that position in any noticeably different manner?

SPARKS: I can't say so, no. Really not. They did the job in about the same way.

HESS: Anything else on the subject of Mr. Robinson before we move on?

SPARKS: No, there's a little bit of additional background on Robinson as an individual that might be of interest to the historical record. When Robinson left the committee staff to take charge of a Washington office of what was then the law firm of Fulton and Walter, the law firm had been formed by Hugh Fulton and Henry Walter when Hugh Fulton left the committee staff in

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August of 1944. Henry G. Walter, Jr. was Hugh Fulton's first law partner. They had been associated in the firm of Cravath, deGersdoff, Swaine, and Wood in New York prior to Fulton's taking the position in New York as executive assistant to the United States attorney. Fulton and Walter formed a law firm and it was to be and did become a New York-Washington firm. They got offices in 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York and at 1411 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, where the Occidental Restaurant occupied the ground floor. This was an old hotel, the Occidental Hotel. When the law firm moved in there and still when I joined the law firm in 1946, a few floors of that building were in use for the hotel, and the desk clerk was still adjacent to the restaurant cashier in the downstairs level. That hotel had some interesting history. There were some famous poker games involving big name politicians that took place in the backroom of the 7th floor, back around the turn of the century.

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HESS: Who was that?

SPARKS: I can't remember for the moment. It escapes me.

HESS: That is right next door to the Willard Hotel?

SPARKS: Right next to the Willard.

HESS: Above what is the present Occidental Restaurant.

SPARKS: Yes. The owner of the Occidental Restaurant was a man named Gus Buchholz. The Occidental Restaurant was well-known for its food and Buchholz lived with his family on the 7th floor of the hotel, and in a rear room, which later became the conference room in our law office, the Fulton, Walter, and Halley Law Office, was the place where these poker games had taken place. I heard people associated with the restaurant who had been with the Buchholz family for many years, talking about these poker games. I can't go beyond that, but it was a slightly romantic element in the space which we occupied up there.

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Well, Robinson took charge of this Washington office. Then when I joined the law firm in November of 1946, I was the senior lawyer in that office. Robbie was not a lawyer; Robbie was an auditor, and was in charge of the physical facilities and did a lot of the law firm's leg work in Washington at that time. I would guess that he stayed with the law firm for about a year. He and his wife moved to California, and he went to work for Governor Earl Warren as a part of his State Police Investigating Squad. Judge Warren Olney was attorney general of California at that time, later to become a judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals here in Washington, and Robinson and Olney worked very well together. Robinson stayed in California in various capacities for a good many years, and is now living out in, I believe, Burlingame or Sacramento, California, retired. As I say, somebody from the Truman Library should interview him.

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HESS: The next man on our list is Haven Sawyer.

SPARKS: Haven was a protégé of Senator Owen Brewster, that is, he was recommended to Mr. Truman and Hugh Fulton as an investigator by Senator Brewster, who was the senior minority member of the subcommittee. Haven Sawyer was at that time an elderly gentleman, a mining engineer, white-headed, I think had financial means of his own, who came to Washington to be of some help during the war period. His principal occupation during the two or three year period that he was with the subcommittee -- he might have been with us four years -- his principal occupation was to keep track of various problems involving strategic materials. As a mining engineer with qualifications in the area of geology, he was quite qualified to keep the members of the subcommittee staff and also the members of the full committee informed on problems that came out of the fact that we were short in some strategic minerals. He kept a very detailed file, several file drawers full, of up-to-date materials

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about the procurement of strategic materials, and whenever there was need for information in this area, Haven Sawyer was the man to go to.

HESS: All right, the next man is Hendrick Suydam.

SPARKS: I really can't tell you anything that he worked on. Hank Suydam was a man who had worked, I believe, in housing, in Washington, in the Federal Housing Administration. And it sort of runs in my mind that he had worked with Matt Connelly in some previous job position, but I can't tell you what he did with the committee. He was out of the city quite a bit, and I can't really say that I ever got well-acquainted with him.

HESS: And the first of two ladies: Marion G. Toomey.

SPARKS: Marion was a law school graduate. She served during a large part of the time that she was with the committee -- I keep saying subcommittee, because for seven or eight years I have been using the

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the term subcommittee in my present employment, the Subcommittee on Anti-Trust and Monopoly. She was with the committee as a personal assistant to Hugh Fulton. She took shorthand, she helped him on every committee report that was written as an editor, as a follow-up investigator. She stayed in the office, she did no field work. She was a very able young lady. I don't know how she happened to come to the committee. She did awfully good work. She was a native of Washington, D.C.

HESS: And Agnes Strauss Woolf.

SPARKS: Agnes Strauss came to us unmarried. She became married while she was on the staff. She had some connection with the Strauss family of New York City, who own Macy's and who have a lot of financial connections in the New York City area. She was born in California. She

came to us as an intern first. She was still going to Vassar College and she came to us as an intern and then after she had graduated she came to us

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as an investigator. She stayed with the committee well into the 80th Congress. She married Alfred Woolf who was an employee of the Foreign Economic Administration, I believe, at that time, and who is still employed by the Government in the area of foreign operations. It seems to me that he's with the United States Information Agency or with AID at this time. I'm not sure. She was a very able gal. She worked as a junior in all situations. She was a young lady and not exactly prepared to go out and interrogate people in industry or people who were accused of wrongdoing. She stayed in the office most of the time and did the job that she was assigned to in a very able fashion.

HESS: Another of the investigators that I did not have on my original list, Tom [Thomas F.] Flynn.

SPARKS: Tom was a graduate of Georgetown. He and Frank Parks had been in Georgetown Law School together and I believe they both knew Charlie

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Clark in law school. Charlie Clark would have been a year or two years ahead of him. But I believe that both of them knew Charlie over there and that this may very well have been the route which they followed in coming to the committee staff. Tom was a native of Cleveland, Ohio, went to John Marshall College in Cleveland, Ohio, and when he came to the committee was a contemporary of mine, came to the committee a month or two before I did, in August or September of 1941, and stayed until he was drafted, I think, in 1942. He went into the counter-intelligence corps, and after he was discharged, he went overseas with the Army and after he was discharged came back to Washington having married in the meantime, and came back to the committee staff, and stayed with the committee until after I'd left. He is now an employee of the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior, living here in Washington, and has responsibility for all of the companies and individuals who manage -- there's a word I'm searching

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for

HESS: Concessions?

SPARKS: Concessionaires, who manage concessions in all the national parks, the hotel operators, the camp operators, the restaurant operators, all of the people who as a matter of private business as a result of contracts with the National Park Service, provides services and food products and so forth in our National Park Service.

HESS: The item on Harry Vaughan in the 1952 *Who's Who* has the following statement:

Liaison officer of Truman-Mead Committee, 1944.

Just what were General Vaughan's duties in relation to the Truman Committee?

SPARKS: Well, I'm a little bit surprised by the date. I guess this was after he came back from overseas.

HESS: He was in Australia. I think he came back about

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that time.

SPARKS: Yes. I would say so. I would say that the date indicates that for a brief period after he came back from the service he was on the committee payroll, and was designated as our liaison officer. Now ordinarily "liaison officer" meant the military officer in the Pentagon or the Navy Department who served as our liaison with that particular department. General Frank Lowe did this for a while in the Pentagon, Colonel Miles H. Knowles did it over in the Pentagon. Usually these people had civilians working with them. Now, when I came to Washington in 1941, Harry Vaughan was serving as Senator Truman's secretary. Really at that time, he was acting in a kind of liaison capacity between the Senator as chairman, and the committee. I believe that he participated in some of the investigations, probably representing the Senator. I think that note means that he was not on the committee payroll until he came back from the war. I can't tell you really what his functions were. I don't

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recall that when he came back from the military assignments abroad he came into the staff office and occupied a desk there. I'm certain that he did not. I believe he occupied a desk up in Senator Truman's office. And the fact that it says "Truman-Mead Committee" may mean that during the period when Mr. Truman was Vice President and Harry Vaughan was working in his office, that Chairman Mead and Vice President Truman agreed that there should be some liaison between Truman and the operations of the committee, and that Mr. Truman asked Harry Vaughan to carry out this liaison.

HESS: You mentioned that he went along or was interested in some investigations before he left for the military. Do you recall which investigations?

SPARKS: No, I don't, I really don't.

HESS: What other gentlemen worked on the staff that we have not covered on my list, and I should add that it is just a partial listing?

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SPARKS: I can't think of any other people who worked on the staff.

HESS: All right. Of the four gentlemen who held the job of chief counsel, Hugh Fulton from March of '41 to August of '44; Rudolph Halley from September of '44 until September of '45; George Meader, October 1 of 1945 to July the 1st of 1947, and then a gentleman who came in

after you left, William P. Rogers, from July the 1st of 1947 to the termination of the committee, early in 1948. Would you give me just a little bit of comparison between the first three men that you worked for as chief counsel: Hugh Fulton, Rudolph Halley, and George Meader. Did they carry out their duties in any noticeably different manner?

SPARKS: I would say there was some difference, yes. They were different individuals to begin with, they were different personalities. Fulton was the most imaginative, by far, of the three.

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Fulton had no difficulty in seeing ramifications that might follow from a simple letter to the committee and could start assigning people to work on a case almost as soon as he read the original complaint. His mind was very quick. Halley had a quick mind. Halley was a little bit more inclined to stop and think about the problem before he started the staff to working on something. Fulton would start immediately. This is not because, I feel, not because he did it precipitously. He just moved faster. His mind was like a steel trap. Fulton was a very deceptive individual. He made good copy as far as the newspapermen were concerned. He looked like a cherub. He was very chunky, you'd have to say. He had pink cheeks, starting to get bald, and was very adroit at leading a witness into a trap before he knew it.

Halley, as I think I mentioned earlier, had a lisp which nobody noticed five minutes after he met him, but for the first five minutes

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it was kind of disconcerting. Halley also had experience as a prosecutor and had a good mind. He was inclined, more than Fulton, toward the flamboyant, I would say. I wish I could think of a good example, I can't. But Halley had a feeling for a case which would result in worthwhile publicity for the committee. I wouldn't want anybody to think that publicity for the committee was not sought. The committee certainly did seek publicity for its investigation. I think this was Mr. Truman's intention, that the committee could be most effective if it could put under a spotlight the policies which needed examination, that it could thereby put pressure on the administration, or on the people in the war agencies involved which would result in getting a bad policy changed. He relied on publicity. As I've said, both Fulton and Halley were very sensitive to this, but I think Halley was the more so. Meader was and is today methodical, a slower moving man, a good thinker, a public interest type, a man who afterwards

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became a member of the Congress from Michigan, a man who interested himself in reorganization at the state level before he came to Washington, and participated in a reorganization project in Michigan that was conducted by a group that may have been called a Michigan League of Cities or something like that. He was very active in making city government and state government more efficient in the State of Michigan before he came down here.

We were speaking about George Meader and I was saying that he was a very methodical individual, a man who was very well-organized in his personal habits, in his office habits, a man who became convinced, partly as a result of his work on the committee, that Congress needed a better staff, better information with which to work. Meader was responsible, I believe, for the

first and only extended trip outside the country that the investigating committee took, and in 1946, several members of the committee and one or two members of the staff

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took a trip around the world visiting military installations, visiting various points at a time when this was quite uncommon. In the prewar period, part of the reason for the isolation of the country, George felt, and I certainly would agree, was because most members of Congress didn't really know much about what was going on outside the United States. It was uncommon for members of Congress to travel outside the United States in those days. This was one of the first trips that was taken by a congressional committee outside the United States. I really don't know what the history of it is. It might be interesting to pursue this to find out whether I'm right. But I had not heard of very many trips taken by members of Congress prior to that time. He did this because the committee was interested in the disposal of military surplus, and that was the subject of the trip. Military surplus was not brought back from overseas after the war. It was considered by the people who were responsible for this, that

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it was more economic to dispose of this surplus overseas to sell it to our allies, to sell it to people in the localities where it was located, than it was to transport it back to the United States. The question was, "Were the policies correct ones, and were they being executed well?" The policies regarding the disposal of military surplus. This was why Senator Mead was chairman of the committee, and I know that Mead took the trip because he wrote a book about it called *Tell the Folks Back Home*. My memory may be failing me on that. He may have written that book a little bit earlier, and it may not have been about military surplus at all. One's memory does that. But at any rate that Mead book had to do with the activities of the committee, and with his thinking about the activities of the committee. At any rate, Meader was responsible for the planning and carrying out of that first and only trip of the committee overseas.

HESS: Even though you had left the committee, do you

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have any particular recollections of the fourth and last counsel, Mr. William P. Rogers?

SPARKS: No, of course, I know that he later became Attorney General of the United States, and I had met him at the time he came on the staff. He had been on the staff of Mr. Dewey in New York. I think that while Governor Dewey had been the racket-busting, special prosecutor in New York, Bill Rogers had worked with him up there in the late thirties, and then also worked with him during the period that he was Governor of New York. When the Republicans elected a Congress in 1946, which gave them more voice in Washington, quite a few Republicans came down to Washington and Senator Brewster hired Bill Rogers and two or three other men from New York, one of whom was Jerry [Jerome S.] Alderman, who is still working up on the Hill for the Permanent Investigation Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. Jerry would be a very good man for you to talk

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with about Bill Rogers. After Rogers left the committee he went down to the Department of Justice and later into private law practice and has been very successful in private law practice for the last fifteen years.

HESS: How would you rate the first three men who served as chief counsel, the three that you served under?

SPARKS: In effectiveness?

HESS: In effectiveness.

SPARKS: No question but I would rate Fulton first, Halley second and Meader third.

HESS: Some of the information I have on this list I took from a booklet that was put out by the committee in 1946, that is in the records of the committee in the National Archives. Are you familiar with that booklet?

SPARKS: I am familiar with that booklet. I was responsible for putting it together. I did this

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partly for my own edification, but partly because I felt that this was a job that needed to be done. In the fall of 1946 before I left the committee, I asked Mr. Meader and the committee clerk, for permission to gather by personal interview and by reference to the clerk's files, as much information as I could about the individuals who had worked for the committee. I made a list of the professionals and another list of the clerical personnel. I might say that in years since then I have referred to that a good many times. It's had one very interesting usefulness. A lot of people, I would say between fifteen and thirty people who worked for the committee during the period that I was there, have been subsequently investigated by the Civil Service Commission or the FBI in connection with their seeking other employment in the Federal Government, and often these agents have come to me and I have been able to pull this listing out and say "Well, so-an-so worked for the committee from such a date to such a date,"

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and it's been a means of confirming, I'm sure always confirming, the statement that the individual made to the employment agency. But I didn't foresee that it was going to be as useful to me personally as it has over the years.

HESS: Well, I found it very useful too when I was making up the list.

SPARKS: I think maybe I had kind of a sense of history when I put it together. In the first place, I was among the last of the original staff people on the committee at that time. Frank Parks was still there, Tom Flynn was still there, and I think nobody else maybe who had worked for the old committee. A new breed had come in, Bill Rogers, Francis Flanagan, even George Meader, and so I felt that it might be useful to have a record of who had worked with the committee and something about these individuals. I can't say I did it for the history books, but I did it because I felt that there ought to be something in the files. At that time,

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I might say, the arrangements had already been made for a good part of the Truman Committee files to come to the Archives. A man named Harold Hufford, who was responsible for liaison between the Archives and the House of Representatives and the Senate for getting files of committees and files of Senators down into the Archives, had been detailed to come to our committee and to organize these files in preparation for their going into the Archives. I had gotten well acquainted with Harold Hufford. He and I struck it off very well. He's now deceased. He did a very remarkable job in getting those files ready. He indexed them, he had some help, but he did a great deal of it himself, and I believe probably there isn't any doubt that the purposes of history have been well served because Mr. Hufford and the Archives were allowed to work with those files while there were still some people around who had some knowledge of them.

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HESS: How did Mr. Truman handle his relations with the committee staff?

SPARKS: How did he handle his relations? Well, number one, he was always very friendly with the committee staff. As I indicated once before today, he didn't have very many relations with the staff as a whole. The party at the Statler with the \$500 that he got from the *American Magazine* was an unusual occasion. Now staff parties were not an unusual occasion. But staff meetings were; staff meetings almost never took place. First, just let me say a couple of remarks about staff parties. It will give you a little flavor of what the staff was like in those days. Then I'll come back and answer your question a little more directly. Many of the men and women who were working for that committee were young, and some of them, as I think I indicated, ultimately became married to each other. It was not uncommon to celebrate a birthday or a wedding anniversary in the staff office in room 160, after the office was closed

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in the afternoon, not at all uncommon. Somebody would go out and get a case of Coca-Cola, a cake with some candles on it, and we would close the doors, and celebrate the birthday. Now, Mr. Truman would often hear about this and he would wander in and shake hands with the honored guest, and maybe say a few words, and would excuse himself and leave. Now that's the first kind of a relationship that he had with the staff as a whole. He didn't socialize at length with the staff as a whole. He didn't give any other parties other than the one that I mentioned for the staff as a whole. I think Mr. Truman liked to go home to his own family in the evening. He liked to talk politics with people like Sam Rayburn, and other people of his own generation. And so I say that staff meetings were not held. Fulton and Halley and Meader were not great believers in full-fledged staff meetings as you find in some congressional committees, and in many organizations. They dealt with individuals, and Mr. Truman dealt with individuals. If we were

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preparing for a particular hearing or a particular report, Fulton, or Fulton and Mr. Truman, would very likely have the investigator that was working on it sit down in an office for an hour or two hours or four hours and get ready for this hearing, and Mr. Truman would sit there and listen and participate in the staff preparation. In passing, let me say, he did not participate at length in the actual interrogation at the hearing. I think you'll find that it was his very common practice to ask

a few questions at the beginning of the hearing, and turn the hearing over to Hugh Fulton, or to Rudy Halley, and then ask a few more questions at the end of the hearing. Now, if he got particularly exercised about something at any time, he would interrupt. And of course, I think one of the most famous interruptions that he was ever guilty of was in the early days of the hearing, when we were hearing the people from Standard Oil and he used the words that led to a newspaperman asking him a question that got him a lot of headlines. He interrupted a witness to ask him at some length about the

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reasons why Standard Oil had engaged in an arrangement with a German company involving some patents on petroleum and rubber, which arrangement had extended into the actual war period itself. This was a pooling of patents and an exchange of patents. And after the hearing was over, a newspaperman asked him whether or not he felt something like this was treasonable. And he said, yes, he did feel so. This was an interruption. He interrupted the witness on that occasion and indicated he was quite exercised about this arrangement between Standard Oil and the German company. But ordinarily he didn't interrupt during hearings. He let the counsel carry out the interrogation. I think I have indicated about as much as I can about his relationship with the staff. His relationship was with individuals, but the feeling that the staff had toward him as a result of his coming into these little social parties, was very friendly, they admired Mr. Truman without exception, not because he was the boss, but because they felt he was

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doing important work and they were helping him do it.

HESS: Regarding that Standard Oil matter. Wasn't that the time that it was charged that they had failed to turn over to the U.S. Government the same patents?

SPARKS: Yes, that's right, that's right. A man by the name of Frank Howard was vice president of Standard Oil who was on the stand at the time, and they were being very evasive about their relationship with the German company.

HESS: That was I.G. Farben, wasn't it.

SPARKS: That was I.G. Farben, yes.

HESS: Do you recall how that worked out?

SPARKS: I don't. Of course, there wasn't any charge of treason ever placed, but I think that the Department of Justice or the Alien Property Custodian took over some of those patents, some of those Farben patents, and the

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matter wasn't disposed of until quite a long time after the war was over with.

HESS: One other question on the staff, do you recall if there were instances, or evidences, of rivalry between Hugh Fulton and Charles Patrick Clark in the early days?

SPARKS: No, not really. These two men were so far apart in ability that Mr. Clark may have felt that he was a rival, but I don't believe he was really. Mr. Clark's services were valued by Mr. Truman, there isn't any doubt at all about this, but his services were valued for what they were. Mr. Clark did not write any committee reports; he participated in a very small percentage of the interrogation in committee hearings. I think he was regarded, and rightly so, as a good organizer, as a man who was good in supervising the mechanical side of the staff. I really don't believe that during the period before he left the committee -- when you get down to it, he wasn't with the committee for more than

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a year of its early existence, I believe he left in February or March of '42, something like that. But at any rate I don't believe that he was seriously regarded as an equal of Fulton, and therefore they couldn't be said to be rivals.

HESS: Were the various staff members assigned specific areas of research and investigation?

SPARKS: Well, the process that I've already described, to begin with, resulted in a certain subject matter area being blocked out. For instance, I was the investigator who got the first complaints about farm machinery. I became known as a farm machinery specialist for the staff, and from that time on as long as I was with the staff, whenever a letter came in on farm machinery, why it was routed out to Sparks, he knew about this subject, he had had some experience, he knew the people in the industry, so I became the farm machinery specialist.

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HESS: In what other fields were you the specialist?

SPARKS: Well, that leads me to a little joke. I was going to tell you anyway before you asked the question. I became known as the "peppermint oil specialist" of the Truman Committee. It may have been after Mr. Truman left, but this was a subject of a good deal of humor around the committee. Senator Bailey of North Carolina asked the chairman of the committee, whoever he was to look into the, I guess it was allocation, of peppermint oil as a food product, and see if it was being properly handled. No, it was while Mr. Truman was still there, because Fulton gave me the assignment, I remember that very well. Peppermint oil came from peppermint plants, of course, and the principal places where this was grown was in North Carolina, in Michigan, and in Oregon. I didn't make any field trips as the peppermint oil specialist, but I spent the better part of a month, I recall, over primarily

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in the Department of Agriculture, finding out just what was being done about production, finding out what the production was, and where peppermint oil was being used, and trying to come to some conclusion as to whether or not the Government regulation of the production of peppermint oil was good or bad. I concluded it with a twenty or thirty page memorandum on the subject, and got a great deal of kidding from people like Harold Robinson and Frank Parks and Hugh Fulton about being the peppermint oil specialist.

HESS: Were you a specialist in any other fields?

SPARKS: No, I don't think of any offhand.

HESS: The article that you probably wrote yourself in the booklet, said that you "joined the staff of the committee as an investigator on October 1941, placed in charge of the committee staff office in April of 1944, and appointed chief investigator in October of 1945." Is that correct?

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SPARKS: Yes, that's correct.

HESS: Just what were your duties as chief of the staff office, "placed in charge of the committee staff office?"

SPARKS: We had a little bit more space at the time that Harold Robinson became chief investigator. Robbie chose to move into this space which was outside room 160. I was asked to assume the responsibility for hiring and firing the girls that worked in that office. At that time I did not have anything to do with assigning correspondence, but I decided who should work overtime when there was need for overtime. It was purely supervision of clerks and stenographers.

HESS: Was there any member of the staff who was in charge of the speechwriting chores?

SPARKS: Usually the chief counsel.. I don't recall.

HESS: Were there very many speeches that had to be written during these days? Did Mr. Truman

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make very many speeches? Did the other committee members make very many speeches?

SPARKS: I don't recall about the other committee members, but I think Mr. Truman made a fair number of speeches, and I would say that in addition to the chief counsel, that Matt Connelly and Bill Boyle, when Bill was there, participated in the speechwriting. I would say that Connelly and Fulton probably did more of it than anybody else. I believe that Mr. Truman made a fair number of speeches. The press clippings might bear this out. The collection of press releases that I've mentioned to you might bear this out. I have a feeling that he made a fair number of speeches -- a lot of these would have been on the floor of the Senate. Now, let me discuss this for just a moment. Whenever a committee report was submitted to the Senate, was filed with the Senate, for public relations purposes, it was almost always Mr. Truman's practice to make a speech at the time

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the report was filed. This would get the report much more attention than if you simply filed it. He would take up some of the Senate's time and make some of these points and I would guess that in almost every one of those reports he made a speech to accompany it. I suspect that isn't the kind

of speech you were asking me about. You were probably asking me about speeches outside Washington. He made a fair number of these also, I think.

HESS: What was the nature of the relationship between Senator Truman and the other senators on the committee?

SPARKS: Naturally, he was more friendly with the Democrats than with the Republicans. Mr. Truman was always partisan in his choice of friendships, but he was perfectly friendly with people like Homer Ferguson, and Joe Ball, on the minority side. His closest friends, I would say, were Harley Kilgore, and Mon Wallgren, Carl Hatch

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was a good friend of his in the early days and of course the story is told in the history books about how the B2H2, the Ball, Burton, Hill, Hatch resolution calling for greater participation by the United States in world federalism was hatched in the doghouse in Truman's office with Truman's blessing and assistance.

HESS: What do you recall about that?

SPARKS: I don't recall very much of it at the moment, but I remember very clearly that the men who wrote the history, even feature writers at the time, put Mr. Truman in the middle of this process. Right at the moment, I can't quite tell you what the exact subject matter of this Ball, Burton, Hill, Hatch proposal was. The Hill, of course, was Lister Hill, Carl Hatch, Joe Ball, and Harold Burton, and they were all internationally minded. I believe that the subject matter called for maybe postwar participation by the United States in the United Nations or something like this.

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HESS: Is this one of the earliest instances when senators got together with this idea for the United Nations, disregarding the League of Nations?

SPARKS: I think that's possible. Of course Arthur Vandenberg had made a famous Senate speech in which he called, as a leading minority senator, in which he called for participation by the United States in a world organization. But if I'm not mistaken, that was the subject matter of this resolution, and it was considered a very important action in the Senate in those days. The United States had by no means convinced itself that it wasn't going to return to its isolationism in the 1930s. I think Mr. Truman was by no means an isolationist, he felt at this time when he was chairman of the committee that there was going to have to be some cooperation between nations after the world war.

HESS: Why do you think Mr. Truman, a man from the Midwest, which is usually, traditionally, isolationist, would have feelings of internationalism, and international cooperation?

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SPARKS: I think because of his knowledge of history. I suspect that in his early years there was a time when Harry Truman was isolationist in his thinking. He never stopped reading, he never

stopped reading, he never stopped reading history and biography. It would be my judgment, not based on anything I personally heard him say, but it would be my judgment that he came to these conclusions because of his analysis of the lessons of history.

HESS: Let's mention a few of the people who served on the committee, if you could tell me about their particular relationship with Mr. Truman. What about James Mead, a man who later took over the committee?

SPARKS: Senator Mead was an Irish politician from upstate New York. He had been a railroad man in his early days. I don't believe he had much if any college training. He became active in New York state politics and so I think that he had quite a bit in common with Senator Truman.

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Their origins were not too dissimilar. At the same time he was not a man of the breadth of Mr. Truman. He was not particularly interested in reading history or biography. He was a man who was first and foremost a politician, a man who liked to keep his finger on the pulse of the people back home, a man who had a tremendous load to carry as senator from New York State. The correspondence load and the burden of people in and out of his office every day was something that Mr. Truman for instance didn't have to carry. A large state such as New York, before the Reorganization Act of 1946, a large state such as New York, didn't get the kind of assistance in terms of additional personnel and additional salaries that the senators from New York get today. Mead and Truman were on good terms. Mead was the next senior to Truman on the committee in terms of seniority in the Senate, and therefore succeeded to the chairmanship when Truman resigned in 1944. They were on good terms. I don't believe they were on the close personal

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terms that Truman was with Wallgren and Kilgore. These were his closest, personal friends on the committee. These were his bourbon-drinking buddies, the fellows who liked to sit around and talk about political problems and Government problems, after hours. I believe they were his close friends. Mead was not such a close friend.

HESS: Harley Kilgore was the next chairman, we've already mentioned him, and then Owen Brewster was the final chairman of the committee. What was his relationship to Mr. Truman? He also came to the committee on March 8, of 1941.

SPARKS: Yes, he was one of the original members. Well, I think I said that one of the keys to the success of the committee lay in Mr. Truman's ability to persuade the members of the committee at a very early date, from the very outset of the committee's history, that all actions that the committee would take should be unanimous. Now, he could not have gotten this agreement

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if it had not been for Owen Brewster, and in those early days he was called Ralph Brewster. If it had not been for Brewster's willingness to make this agreement -- now, I think I've also said that this agreement probably could not have occurred if we had not been in the midst of a frightening war, and I think that during Mead's period, and Kilgore's period, this agreement slightly

deteriorated. There still continued to be the unanimous reports, I believe, but Brewster, in particular, during the last part of the war period, and especially during the postwar period, was guilty of some partisan sniping at the committee's efforts which he never would have participated in when Truman was there and when we were in a midst of fighting a war. I feel like it was because Brewster adhered to his agreement which he made with Truman, that their relationship was as friendly as it was. I think Truman undoubtedly went out of his way to court Brewster and the other Republicans on the committee to make sure that they

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were agreeable to the things that the committee did. I know that reports were written and rewritten and rewritten until the members of the committee all agreed on every word in every report.

HESS: On the subject of Mead, Kilgore, and Brewster, how would you compare their leadership and administrative ability to that of Mr. Truman?

SPARKS: I can't rate any one of the three as high as Truman, and I believe that I'm being objective in this, although it may be that we tend to be influenced by later history, and by the fact that Mr. Truman became President, in making an assessment like this, but I think that history is going to show that Mr. Truman himself in his very philosophy in going about his job as chairman, in hiring personnel, in selecting his topics for investigation, in working out the arrangements with other Government departments, in staying clear of disagreements which might lead him into controversy with President Roosevelt,

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all of these things lead me to the conclusion that he was, for his time, at this time, undoubtedly rated lower than he should have been; I think only in the light of later history do we begin to truly appreciate what Truman did with his committee. It is true that he got a lot of praise from FDR, right down to the man in the street for the things that the committee was doing, but I believe that later history showed that this was a quite remarkable accomplishment that had a substantial effect on overall history in the long run.

HESS: Some historians point out that relations were pretty cool between FDR and Mr. Truman during Mr. Truman's first period up here. As you know, Mr. Truman was spoken of as the "senator from Pendergast." But when 1941 came and the senator started the Truman Committee, relations between FDR and Senator Truman began to improve to some degree. Do you agree with that, is that true?

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SPARKS: Insofar as I know it. Of course, I wasn't in Washington until 1941. My knowledge of the relations between Mr. Truman and FDR in the thirties is limited to my reading of the news papers at the time, and my subsequent study of history, but I think this is reasonable. I think this was undoubtedly the case, I think it ought to be pointed out that FDR was essentially a patrician, and this would not lead him to an early, close relationship with somebody like this farm boy, this country judge from Missouri. I think that FDR's personal contacts were here in the East, and that

he had many of his more important assignments with people that were known quantities to him. I think this is another reason why probably his early relationship with Truman was not the best.

HESS: Of course, I mentioned the name Pendergast, but did you ever hear Mr. Truman during these days say anything about his connections or associations with Tom Pendergast?

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SPARKS: No. And of course, I was aware that there was a connection. During our first talk here, early in the first tape, when I was telling you about my own origins, I mentioned that my father was a county central committee chairman in Andrew County, Missouri in the 1920s and '30s. And I heard my father defend Tom Pendergast on more than one occasion, in something of the same manner that the historians say that Harry Truman defended him, that he was a man who never went back on an agreement, that in his time he did a lot for the poor people of the city, took care of people in a time of need, so that I was certainly aware that there was a connection between Truman and Pendergast. No, I didn't hear him discuss Tom Pendergast or his earlier relationship with Tom Pendergast, but I think that was essentially the kind of loyalty that ought to be ascribed to him.

HESS: I have a list of the men who served on the committee. I have them listed alphabetically.

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We needn't go through them all. We've just mentioned the first man: Joe Ball. Did Mr. Truman and Mr. Ball have a pretty good relationship?

SPARKS: Yes, I would say that they did have. Ball was a Republican; he was a newspaperman.

HESS: He was one of the originals, too, March 8th.

SPARKS: I think their relationship was perfectly good. As I've indicated, I think it's probably better, the relationship was a better one with Ball than it was with Brewster, for instance. Harold Burton was another man toward whom Mr. Truman felt a very friendly feeling, I think.

HESS: How about Styles Bridges, another Republican?

SPARKS: Well, Bridges was on and off the committee before I came.

HESS: He left in March of 1942.

SPARKS: Well, then I'm wrong, because I came in the

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fall of '41. But Bridges was not, to my way of thinking, very active on the committee, and I don't think of him as a member of the committee except for its very early period. I didn't have any contact with him.

HESS: The dates I have are: appointed November 27, '41, resigned March 16, 1942. And Tom Connelly, a Democrat of Texas, one of the originals.

SPARKS: Yes, Connelly almost never attended our hearings, but studied all our reports, although I don't remember any specific report, I know that there was at least one to which he made rather strong objection and which had to be written two or three times. We changed it around before it would meet his agreement. So it wasn't a matter of not being interested in the work of the committee. He was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee at the time, and very much occupied with that. But he did maintain an interest in the committee as long as he was on it.

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HESS: I believe we mentioned that this was probably one of the cases that showed how the Truman Committee got the unanimous report by rewriting certain portions to suit the various senators.

All right, Homer Ferguson, Republican, we've mentioned. Was he a pretty good friend of Mr. Truman's?

SPARKS: I think they were friendly. Ferguson had made his mark as a prosecutor in Michigan. There was a procedure in Michigan in those days which was called "the one man grand jury." And this allowed a prosecutor, as I recall, a prosecutor to discharge the functions by himself, the functions of the grand jury and return indictments, if he felt there was adequate evidence on which to base an indictment. Ferguson was quite a crusader, and came to Washington with this behind him with some national publicity as a result of this, and was assigned to the committee, I think because of this reputation -- a crusading Republican on this now well-known, active, investigating

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committee -- would probably be a pretty good thing.

HESS: And Carl Hatch, Democrat of New Mexico.

SPARKS: I think Truman was fond of Hatch. I think that in the period that he was on the committee, he was active and attending a good many of the hearings.

HESS: Clyde L. Herring.

SPARKS: Yes, he had been Governor of Iowa, but I don't know much about him. I don't believe he was on the committee very long.

HESS: November 27th, 1941, and his term in the Senate expired January 3, 1943. So, he wasn't there too long. There are a good many here that I'm skipping because they came in after both you and Senator Truman left. Mon Wallgren we've mentioned. He was a very good friend of Senator Truman's, wasn't he.

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SPARKS: Very close, personal friend.

HESS: That's the last. We've skipped several, but they came in after both of you had left the committee. That's what I have on that particular subject.

Do you recall anything in particular about the relations between the committee and General Brehon B. Somervell?

SPARKS: Well, the committee criticized General Somervell on some occasions. I'm going to be hard put to think of a specific example, but of course General Somervell was the commanding general for what was then called the Services of Supply. This was the first attempt, I shouldn't say that, it was an early attempt made to coordinate the supply services of the Army, Navy and the Marine Corps, and it was primarily in the Army the Quartermaster General, the other supply services were all coordinated together and put under General Somervell. One of the earliest things that General Somervell did, of course, was

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to be in command of the building of the Pentagon. He was the military contracting officer on that site over there. He became very well-known during the war period for his role as the chief supply officer of the Army. I do recall that he was responsible for some of the decisions made on the Canol Project. The Canol Project was the pipeline and oil well drilling project which took place at Fort Nelson in -- what is the Canadian province nearest Alaska, it's north of Saskatchewan. Well, it doesn't make any difference. There was known to be oil up in that area, and the question that arose was, could it be gotten out, refined, and used for tanker fuel on the northern route between our west coast and Vladivostok where we were trying to get supplies into the Russian hands over there for carrying across Asia into Europe. Somervell and Admiral King of the Navy, were very much for putting this oil well down and building a pipeline, a large pipeline from Fort Nelson down

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to -- it may have been Juneau, it may have been someplace else on the coast in Alaska. Donald Nelson was much opposed to the use of the strategic materials necessary for the building of this pipeline. You have to remember that pipelines in and of themselves were uncommon at that time. The building of, for instance, the "Big Inch" from Texas to the east coast was quite a momentous occasion. This was a good sized pipeline, a product line, that was built from Texas up here during the war, and it was really something to transport petroleum products any way other than by a tank car or by sea, by tanker. Well, the building of the Canol Project was important for that purpose also. Nelson didn't want to use these materials, and the committee got into this, and the committee kind of -- well, the committee did back Nelson and Harold Ickes and Secretary Knox of the Navy, all of whom were opposed to the project. But the project was authorized by the joint chiefs of staff. General Somervell sold the project to the joint

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chiefs of staff. It was finally determined that it wasn't economic, it was ultimately closed in 1944. By that time, I think, the handwriting was on the wall -- the need for these products wasn't as

great at that time, but the committee was quite critical of General Somervell in connection with that. I do recall that.

There were other times also, I'm sure, when he was the committee's whipping boy on this project, or that project.

HESS: Did the committee have any problems with military secrecy in its investigations?

SPARKS: The committee had one interesting encounter with military secrecy, and that was the problem of the Manhattan Project.

HESS: What do you recall about the information they came across there?

SPARKS: Harold Robinson was the man who ran across this out in the field, as I recall the story.

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He was looking into another matter down in Tennessee, and he began to hear stories about the construction of a very large project of some kind at the place we later came to call Oak Ridge. I said Tennessee, but I believe it was out at Hanford in Washington. I believe it was out there that Robbie was working on a case. I'm almost sure that it was now that I think about it. He came back from Washington and sent a rather routine inquiry to the Pentagon asking about this project, and the next thing that happened was that Senator Truman got a call, either from the White House or from the Secretary of War, asking him to come over for a talk and there they explained to Senator Truman something about what was going on. There was by no means a full disclosure, but they explained enough to him so that he did in fact call off any further study of just what this project was by the committee, and the committee didn't ever go into the matter.

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HESS: Do you recall if Fred Canfil might have had a hand in the initial discovery of the project in Washington?

SPARKS: He might have, I don't know.

HESS: Were there any problems of information being leaked to the press, information that the committee might not have wanted to be known -- press leaks during this time? We have pretty well covered the value of the press to the committee.

SPARKS: None that I know of, to answer your question directly, but there's an interesting sideline here that I might mention. There were no intentional press leaks that I know of either. Press leaks twenty-five years later have become a very common thing in Washington. Truman and Fulton adopted an arms length relationship with the press. They didn't have favorites. They had an information man on the committee staff, Walter Hehmeyer, whose job it was to fill

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in the press insofar as he could about activities that were on the record, but Walter had instructions I believe to limit his information function to subjects that had been covered in hearings that were the subject of a press release that was put out for all to study.

HESS: Did any other staff members help him in that process?

SPARKS: This was pretty much his job. There were no other people who worked on that. As I say, there were neither, to my knowledge, either intentional or unintentional leaks.

HESS: We've discussed many of the big cases, the Curtiss-Wright case, the question of the tank lighters. Are there any other cases that come to mind that we have not discussed? Any other valuable information that we are leaving out?

SPARKS: Oh, I don't think so. We've gone into this pretty thoroughly. I don't recall whether we talked about the aluminum contracts or not.

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These were important in the early days of the committee. Of course, aluminum was a relatively new commodity to be producing in large quantities. Alcoa was the only producer of aluminum in those days, and Alcoa needed funds for the production of the plant that it was going to produce more and larger quantities of aluminum with. Alcoa went to the Defense Plant Corporation and entered into a contract. Now, the committee got into it because, as I recall, it was felt by somebody, I don't know whether it was somebody over in the Defense Plant Corporation, or who it was, but somebody felt that the rights of the Government were not being sufficiently protected in this plant construction contract. This resulted in hearings, I think in the fall of '42, that were very important for that period in the committee's life. I don't know. We talked about the Higgins Boat Case at some length. This was pretty important for the time, and if the Navy files on this, I would say, are ever put

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together, showing the complete story of how influential the committee was in getting this decision made to adopt a Higgins design, this is going to show the committee was very influential.

No, I don't think of anything else.

HESS: What in your opinion was the most significant accomplishment of the Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program -- to use the full title?

SPARKS: Yes, I'm thinking that the answer to this has to be a general answer. I wouldn't want to say that getting a better contract for Alcoa, or finding deficiencies in the Winfield Park housing, or even such a significant contribution as giving Igor Sikorsky backing for his helicopter at a time when he was being buffeted around from pillar to post, was the most significant accomplishment. I think that the most significant accomplishment has to be the committee's gaining of acceptance, from the White House down through all the agencies of

Government and out to the people. The committee's gaining of acceptance as being unbiased, public minded, willing to work, willing to work

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together, willing to work through a dedicated staff, producing an end product; the end product is a conclusion in any given case. A conclusion that a certain set of facts that were in the public interest or were not in the public interest. Now the accomplishment, I say, was the gaining of the acceptance. If the committee had not gained this acceptance, it could never have influenced the administration or the people in the administration to do a better job. The committee's goal was not to get publicity, or to get its individual members reelected, or to provide glory for the members of the committee or certainly for the staff. The committee's goal from the very beginning, was to obtain the procurement of supplies for the carrying on of the National Defense Program to bring about a condition which would allow these supplies to be procured in a more economical fashion. Now, Mr. Truman didn't know very many tricks about how to bring this about, but the steps that he took, which brought about the acceptance have to be rather important historically.

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The first step that he took as I have said, was to get a good staff, and I don't include myself in this, but I include some very important people, first and foremost of which has to be Hugh Fulton. To get a staff, not of people, again, who were glory seekers, but who were believers in what they had been assigned to do and believers that they were making a contribution to the war effort. Some of these people on the staff had attempted to see military service, and had not been accepted or had been rejected. Some of them felt that they were making a worthwhile contribution -- all of them felt that they were making a worthwhile contribution through the Truman Committee staff. So the first important thing that he did to go about getting this acceptance, was the gaining of a worthwhile staff. The next thing that he did, as I've said before, was to get an agreement among the members of the committee, that the reports were all going to be unanimous, and that there was to be no partisanship in the committee

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effort. There was remarkably little partisanship. I think that history may very well show that never before or since has there been a congressional committee which conducted itself in such a nonpartisan manner over a period of two or three or four years. I personally have no knowledge of a committee which acted in this fashion either during or not during the war. He got this agreement from the committee, and I guess maybe the final thing that he did was to himself pursue these goals with devotion and dedication in a rather bulldog fashion, a fashion which made it very clear that he was personally dedicated to bringing about the achievement of this committee's goals, that he was a lot more interested in the committee than he was in himself personally. He always was very modest about his own role in the committee's effort, and of course what got him more press attention than anything else in the world was that modesty. I think all these things together and undoubtedly other factors that I don't think of helped to gain for the committee this

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acceptance which made it the powerful weapon that it proved to be during the war.

HESS: What were your thoughts on April 12, 1945 when you heard of the death of President Roosevelt?

SPARKS: Well, my thoughts were first of grief, for the loss of our President, and then perhaps my thoughts were of caution and wonder. I'm sure that like the rest of the country I was beset with doubts as to whether or not Mr. Truman would be a good President. I was riding in an automobile in Rock Creek Park by myself when this happened, when I got the first word, and I remember pulling the car off to the side of the road and listening to the newscast and thinking about it. And of course, since I felt closer to Mr. Truman than many, many other people, I felt very strongly that Mr. Truman would be an honest President, a man who was devoted to the public interest, as he had been in the past. I wasn't at all certain that he

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would be a good President, but I felt that he would do the best job that he possibly could. I don't think that anybody could have forecast that he would do the kind of a job and he would make the contribution to the welfare of the country that he did. And I think that history is going to be very, very kind to Harry Truman, that he's going to be recorded as one of our great Presidents in the long run of history.

HESS: After Mr. Truman became President, did you ever assist in any of the operations at the White House?

SPARKS: No.

HESS: You've already answered my last question. In your opinion, how will Mr. Truman be regarded by historians one or two hundred years from now?

SPARKS: He will be regarded as a very great President. I think he made many decisions, and it isn't my

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role here to discuss what these decisions were, but he made many decisions which history is going to regard as world shaking decisions, decisions which set the United States on a course, which was 180° from what it might have been had another man been in the White House. Another man might have led us back to isolation, might have led us to a lack of understanding of other countries in the world rather than to an attempt at understanding, another man might have led us away from being the prosperous country that we have been in the last twenty-five years. The country just could be so much different than it has been and has proved to be very heavily because of leadership Mr. Truman gave us as our President.

HESS: Do you have anything else to add on the Truman Committee or on Mr. Truman in general?

SPARKS: I don't think of anything, no. I appreciate the opportunity to have made a small contribution

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to a greater understanding by historians and by people in the future who are interested in Mr. Truman as an individual, and who are interested in the work of the committee while he was its chairman. I make no claim to having any special knowledge other than that gained as a member of his staff. I was not personally close to Mr. Truman. I do think that it's a rare privilege for someone to engage in a project such as this oral history project, and I'm grateful to the Truman Library and the National Archives for inviting me to be a part of it.

HESS: We're grateful for your participation. Thank you very much.

SPARKS: Thank you.

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