

April 27, 1978

RITCHIE: We ended the last session talking about your working on the Foreign Relations Committee, and I thought it might be appropriate to start by talking a little bit about the Interparliamentary Union; how you got involved in that; and basically what your role was with the Interparliamentary Union.

ST. CLAIRE: I hope my memory will sustain the facts. Sometime around 1958 or 1959, the United States group had a meeting in Bangkok, which Senator Fulbright and one or two others in the Senate attended. They went to Bangkok on various courses, inasmuch as in those days they traveled individually and commercially. One of our staff members went along with them, and I remember preparing a record which he could take with him for the purposes of keeping accounts and other administrative items during his progress around the world. Having

Page 153

gone that far most of the delegates continued on in the same direction, whether they left by east or west from the United States. That was my first contact with the IPU.

The next year or the year after that the Interparliamentary Union had a meeting in Brussels. At that time there was an executive secretary, whose name escapes me now, who had been a long time executive secretary of the organization, and who also ran what I would consider to be an international peace lobby downtown. For the first time our IPU group was operative under new legislation, which had to do with a greater accountability for the funds that were being expended. Also, Albert Gore of Tennessee had become the elected president of our organization and he was quite active in the Foreign Relations Committee. We held a preliminary meeting of the delegation over which Gore presided. At the insistence of Carl Marcy, who was then the chief of staff of the Foreign Relations Committee,

Page 154

Gore suggested that I go along as administrative officer to help our long-time executive secretary with the United States group at Brussels.

I remember we went by TWA into London, and from London into Brussels. In those days it seemed to me as quite an adventure, to be one of an advance party and to set the group up in its hotel, the old Amigo Hotel in Brussels. We were on hand when the group arrived the morning the conference opened. We put them into a bus and conducted them over to the assembly hall.

Later on, we held some luncheons for the other delegations that were attending the Brussels conference. Generally speaking, I worked to keep the administrative and financial records in better form than they had been, and I would suppose, set up the first administrative organization that would have some accountability to the Senate under the new legislation then in force. I can remember that Albert Gore, after having emphatically told all the delegates that they should not go to a conference

Page 155

and then leave their wives while they returned home or went elsewhere (as a burden upon the group), did that very thing himself. He left his wife in the Amigo Hotel for a couple of nights while he went—I have no idea where.

But the trip was instructive to the point that I learned a great deal about the organization and its make-up, and its mores. Afterward my wife came over to Belgium and we accompanied Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado and his wife down the Rhine, and then came back home from there. That was my first introduction to the IPU. From then on I was put within the organization, on the staff for each of the Interparliamentary Union conferences that followed.

About that time, 1960, the national organization of the Interparliamentary Union took off on a more active program and began holding meetings twice yearly instead of once a year. They set themselves up into a program where they would hold a Spring meeting to prepare for a Fall meeting. For the first three

Page 156

Spring meetings we went to Switzerland, holding one as I recall in Lausanne, Geneva, and Lucerne. Thereafter, the Spring meetings became more detailed and more important to the purposes of the Interparliamentary Union. They have since been held worldwide at the invitation of the host nation, rather than in Switzerland. For a time I was more or less the representative of the staff of the Committee on Foreign Relations on the Interparliamentary Union staff. This was because the Senate leadership had given the Foreign Relations Committee and its chairman the privilege of the recommendations for the names of delegates to go to all international conferences as well as to suggest the staffing of whatever delegation the Senate sent to worldwide meetings.

While I was on the committee staff I also was staff member to the Senate delegates to the Canadian and United States interparliamentary exchanges, and domestically helped out with the staffing and support of the Mexican and

United States interparliamentary exchanges. I also went on two, possibly three, conferences of the British Parliamentary Association, at which we usually fielded Senate delegates as observers, for agenda items concerned with security matters. On one of these, held in 1959 in Australia, I was fortunate to go around the world with Senator Allen Frear. I was also party to an Italian-United States parliamentary exchange, and I think had some hand in exchanges or correspondence between the parliaments of Japan, Rumania, the Soviet Union, and Israel all with the idea of bringing together on a common level members of different parliaments on a bilateral basis, for the promotion of the exchange of ideas, and I suppose in the interests of international security and peace.

We, for instance, were on our way to an international conference of the Interparliamentary Union in Delhi, India in 1969, when we received an invitation to visit the members of the Supreme

Soviet. As a consequence, and after some negotiation, we flew in an Air Force Transport Plane into Moscow and from Moscow to India via Tashkent. I can remember that we were cordially received and conducted about Moscow and also went one morning up to the Kremlin. There the Russians lined us up along a long table, facing them, to be harangued, and that is the word, for more than two hours on such things as the observance by the Senate of Lithuanian Independence Day, and other such arbitrary matters which the Soviets considered insulting to our mutual relations. We had practically no way of responding because we never got the opportunity. This one session we had with them sticks out in my memory because the Soviets addressed us at the top of their voices. I'm certain they wanted to make sure they were overheard on the "bug" that was in the room. They wanted to demonstrate their loyalty to the foreign policy of their country. They didn't want to be misunderstood except at the top of their voices.

And they talked so long and so hard that they ultimately wore down their own interpreter. When he completely broke down, that ended the session. But later they gave us a lunch and we drank ordinary toasts and went on to Tashkent, where we found the people were much better and much more amiable, in the tradition of that section of that country.

RITCHIE: What was the response of the senators to that harangue?

ST. CLAIRE: Amusement. Silence and amusement. They sat there and looked at those men and women addressing us from the other side. Now and then they would say, "Well, can't we change the subject? Why don't we talk about sea beds?" But no one wanted to talk about sea beds. They wanted to talk about Lithuania and Estonia and the Ukraine.

As time went on I became more and more useful to the United States group; I became administrative officer to two executive secretaries. One of them was George Galloway of the Library of Congress, and the other one was a congresswoman from New York.

Page 160

RITCHIE: Was it Kelly or St. George?

ST. CLAIRE: St. George, Mrs. Katharine St. George. After she resigned (and she had been out of Congress by that time for two years), I then became the executive secretary and carried on until the end of 1977. I was carried over for a period in 1977 by election of the organization even though I had retired on April 1 of that year. This time, when they went to Lisbon, in 1978, was the first time I had not been on one of their meetings since 1959. But it was, and I still think, an extraordinary opportunity to see the world and understand the various forms of parliamentary association in the world. I can't call all of them governments, because they're not. To have met, or at least placed under observation, a great number of worldwide figures was a privilege of my time. All of our conferences, I might say, were opened by the heads of state wherever they were held, which gave us an opportunity to see and hear a number of the more prominent people over the past twenty years.

Page 161

Many of the delegations, including our own, had some top-flight leaders along. Gerald Ford was one of our delegates when we met in Yugoslavia back in the '60's. Strange enough he never forgot that. Every time he saw me thereafter, even as President of the United States, he always reminded me of the good times and how satisfied he was with our conference in Yugoslavia. Somewhere I have a snapshot of him and two other members from the House, as I recall, lined up with the chief of staff of the Yugoslav airforce, at a place somewhere near the top of the Adriatic. We wanted to see, he and some of the other members, wanted to see what the Yugoslavs were doing with our security contributions, our arms contribution, under the Foreign Assistance Act. In those days the Yugoslavs were part of our security program and were receiving arms supplies. They were a little reluctant to grant our request, but ultimately they furnished us with an old DC-3 of the Yugoslav airforce, and we flew up to this airport, to find

practically everything, not only

Page 162

their planes but all of their spare parts, warehoused in the open air, because they did not have sufficient covering for them. Of course, this is not true now, but that was in the early days of their airforce, when they were attempting to get something put together in a defensive way. We were cordially received-and drank a hell of a lot of Slivovitz, and came back that afternoon. I lined them all up and took a snapshot, and someday I'm going to find the snapshot and send it to the former President, because I think it was the only one ever taken of that group.

In a sense, I feel that over the past twenty years those delegates that did go to these meetings from Congress accomplished within the maximum permitted them what they set out to do, and that was to promote international relations. One thing that we always remembered, and had to remember, is that the organization was worldwide and had an open membership. Some of the members, like the North Koreans, were and still are our bitter enemies. But

Page 163

in order to create something that had the breadth and depth of the United Nations and the League of Nations, we had to accept their membership and listen to their points of views, not that you had to suffer them in silence, you never did, but it did give you a forum whereby you could hear these opponents of ours in another context, which was to say on a legislative rather than on a diplomatic plane. They even mouthed the same things their diplomats said. But it helped to understand what their driving force was, and what they were attempting to do, and understand what they thought of us.

The abuse of the United States by these people, by our opponents, seemed to run in cycles. One year we would be labored for our stand in Indochina, the next year we would suffer not too silently because of our stand in the Middle East. Then these diatribes would end. There would be peace and contentment and a general consensus about international relations and international comity for

Page 164

a year or two, and after that our enemies began all over again.

RITCHIE: Did the Vietnam War create a lot of tensions for the delegates?

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, it did. Each time we went there we heard about it. But not so much of it really as the wars between Egypt and Israel and Syria. It seems that we were more on the attack and more attacked by our non-friends on the matter of our relations with Israel than on any other subject. I think that's because our opponents understood that they were just as deep in Vietnam, not with combat troops but otherwise as deep in it as we were, particularly so the Russians and their satellite nations. Then again, a good deal of the criticism of the United States had to be tempered, particularly by such people as Poland and Rumania and Czechoslovakia because of their trade hopes, because of their expectations of what we might be able to do for them, independently of what benefit they were getting out of their association with the Soviet bloc. In any event,

Page 165

we went here and there and ultimately (my prime concern was in the finances of it) I finished up in the black with over a hundred thousand dollars still in the bank, as of December 31, 1977.

RITCHIE: Could funds be carried over from year to year?

ST. CLAIRE: Yes. This was something that I really put into effect as a program for the group. The minute that funds were available to us, particularly the forty-five thousand dollars we received and still receive from the United States Treasury for the purposes of financing our attendance at the conferences, when this became available at the beginning of each fiscal year I would put it in the bank. Then I would draw a CD against it that would pay anywhere from 5½ to 6½ percent interest.

RITCHIE: CD?

ST. CLAIRE: Certificate of deposit. So that it would be government funds drawing private interest. In that way I helped increase our take by several thousand dollars. Also in the early days it was quite a

Page 166

scratch. We went from prosperity to poverty when Congress decided to put a limitation upon the amount of local currencies, counterpart funds, that could be drawn by individual delegates, or by the chairman, or even by the staff members. When we first started out it was possible for me as a staff member authorized by the Foreign Relations Committee to go to the embassy and just say I

wanted several thousand dollars for the support of the delegation. I would spend that principally on an embassy reception, or on these lunches that I referred to, or on ground transportation. For instance, for the first five or six years we financed our local transportation costs and even our commercial airplane costs out of local currencies. In those days also I used to shake the tambourine under the noses of our escort friends from the Defense Department. I'd ask them how much they wanted to contribute by their presence. They started out with five thousand dollars, to be contributed to the general fund of the group, but that was narrowed

Page 167

down to maybe twenty-five hundred, and finally that dried up altogether. They ended by giving us support for cars that might be rented for local transportation, and that, too, dried up. Finally, they finished up on our back instead of us being on theirs. They managed to reverse the process, but that doesn't keep them from tagging along and enjoying all the prerogatives of a delegate as members of the escort service.

RITCHIE: Does the military provide a plane for the delegates?

ST. CLAIRE: The military does, yes. The planes are provided by the Defense Department, but you have to request them. They are the special mission aircraft that sit out at Andrews and carry not only members of Congress, but members of the Executive branch here and there to conferences. In the beginning we were very comfortably provided for, in these planes with two rows of two seats each, and a VIP section, totaling forty-eight persons. When Lyndon Johnson came in he immediately reconfigured them so that they

Page 168

would carry one-hundred-plus persons. The planes had two rows of three seats each, plus the VIP section. You could hardly get down the aisle. He wanted to take along with him as many as could go, and he saw to it that the press was there also in force. With the advent of Nixon, however, the planes went back to two rows, two seats, and VIP section again. As far as I know they're the same planes that we had in the early '60's, still operating, although they have had new engines which give them longer range.

In the beginning it was quite a scratch to keep ahead of the game financially, because forty-five thousand dollars would not really carry us through two conferences. We were, in fact, beginning to go to three and sometimes four meetings a year. In the early days any of the funds

which I had left over from local currencies I would bring back and put in the bank. And any funds that I had left over from the escort service I would bring them back and put it

Page 169

in the bank. On a couple of glorious occasions, once in Sri Lanka, another time in Delhi, where we had excess currencies, I was able to finance the whole of our conference expenses, everything, just on the chairman's signature. The excess funds were just waiting to be used, to the credit of the United States in Sri Lanka and in India. It was gravy. But wherever we went we paid our way. I think we paid our way more than other delegations. We never asked the State Department for support, which the State Department has done for many, many of these conferences. As I say, in the end, frugality and watchfulness paid off, because I turned over better than a hundred thousand dollars in cash to my successor in 1978.

RITCHIE: Some of the press accounts, particularly recently, have played up the junket side of the trip, and indicated that some senators, like William Scott, have been abusing the privilege. Do you think that's a fair commentary?

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, I think that's a fair assessment of some of our delegates. I will say this,

Page 170

we have gone to many conferences (I am using the "we" phrase because at the time I was executive secretary) in a round-about way. We either visited in a country before we arrived at the conference, or visited in another country after we left it. Or we visited a third country during the conference. But these all had, I think, certain diplomatic and legislative ends. It was to the benefit of this country, at least to our Congress, and certainly to our international relations, to show up in Portugal, say, on our way to Madrid, to stay in Lisbon overnight to meet with the leaders of Portugal, or to go from Romania into Turkey, or to go from Bulgaria into Athens, or to go from Rome into Tunisia, to make these small side trips. Or even on leaving Australia, as we did in 1977, to visit in Indonesia and Taiwan.

Those nations visited under this arrangement, by extraneous trips I agree, were nearly all members of the Interparliamentary Union. At each stop, or wherever we went, whether we were there

Page 171

only a day or just overnight, or even two days, we were brought into the presence of all the leaders of that particular nation. Their leaders talked to our chairman and other members, who were somewhat within the leadership of the United States Congress. And this is good. I don't know how else you can say it is not good, except that it did help to warm up the debate inside the Soviet Bloc, or it helped to solidify our views with other, more friendly countries.

The visit to the United States twice by the members of the Supreme Soviet was a direct result of negotiations which I early carried on with one or two members of the Soviet embassy here in an effort to set up an exchange of parliamentarians between the two countries. Certainly, Senator Sparkman's decision to take our delegation into Moscow and Tashkent in 1969 had its own effect, notwithstanding the probability we were abused more than amused. Then later on, Congressman Ed Derwinski, as House chairman of our group, flew down to

Page 172

Leningrad from Helsinki. As the consequence of those two meetings and visits and other negotiations the Soviets sent over here a delegation a couple of years ago, which we greeted and entertained and debated on the Hill.

On their first visit, the Soviets sent us some of their really top people. They had been deliberately selected to come here for the purposes of promoting Soviet views, but at the same time they were among the most alert and talented members of their Supreme Soviet you would want. That helped, I think, to clear the air, and as a consequence we also sent a very top level group over to the Soviet Union two years ago. So there has been some benefit out of this Interparliamentary Union between the opponents visiting within the framework of the organization.

But, yes, of course, once our delegates land in foreign places, they do tour. There's no question about that. But this is also true of the diplomatic corps going to these special conferences. And this is true of the President and his

Page 173

family. They never go anywhere but what they don't follow a "woman's program," or they don't follow a tour program. You can't imagine them just going to Peking without seeing the Great Wall. The embassy people are so accustomed and so programmed for these conferences that they automatically assume that you want a visit to the museums, as well as a visit to the heads of state. So it goes. So you see a great deal more than you otherwise would if you didn't go, or if you went as a common American tourist. No, I'll take that back. I think the common American

tourist sees much more of these countries than the delegates who go to them, because they do go there for a purpose. If you are a delegate, you have to parcel out your time, you have to give it some occasion anyway. That means maybe your wives are going to see the museums but you don't.

RITCHIE: Would you have divided the senators who went on these trips into "work-horses," and "showhorses?" Were there

Page 174

some who were more diligent about attending the conferences and others more interested in the tours?

ST. CLAIRE: Well, yes, that's true enough. You do have some who have a hard time getting to the conference hall, have a hard time meeting with group every morning at nine o'clock for breakfast, but they are remarkably few. The rest of them to my mind have always turned to and done their duty and done their jobs. Once they got within the fabric of the conference, once they sat down and began to hear other men speak, this gave them the desire to speak, too. Of course, every man in the Congress is going to want to speak at some time or another, that's why he's there. They might have gone there with the idea of semiparticipation, but you set them down within the body of other men who are attempting to arrive at a consensus in four or five languages, and you begin to hear them talk and present their arguments, then you begin to get ideas to refute them, or to back them. Then you get into

Page 175

it. This is why some of our delegates develop an interest which initially is not there, but which they're glad to express.

RITCHIE: Did you ever get any of the presidential contenders going along for some foreign exposure, members like John Kennedy, Humphrey, Muskie, Eugene McCarthy? Did any of them try to use these meetings?

ST. CLAIRE: Seldom at the Interparliamentary Union. We did have them, I have seen them at other conferences—McCarthy long before I think he ever thought of being a presidential possibility. Certainly Ford didn't have any presidential pretensions when he went to Yugoslavia. Oh, Lyndon Johnson went to Paris for the NATO meeting that I was on, but that was after he had

been elected Vice President with Kennedy. We did have at the Yugoslav meeting Ted Kennedy.

I don't think you would find that they would consider that exposure sufficient for the media purposes back in the United States. You're set down

Page 176

among anywhere from nine hundred to twelve hundred other delegates, all there from different parts of the world. The general debate is just that, generalized and a little endless, and a little boring. Any decisions that are taken generally are in consensus. They include everything. There's not really the opportunity to try out your lance that would otherwise give you the prominence and notoriety you need back home.

Those men who have had aspirations, like Scoop Jackson, have traveled alone, and having arrived at Moscow have gotten themselves into an hour or so with Brezhnev, or gone to Paris and seen the president. This type of foreign exposure is probably the best because it means that you are followed down and followed out by American press people at that end, and they put you on their wire back home. Whereas anything that was ever filed abroad about our participation in the Interparliamentary Union by the AP or the UPI, ended up on the floor of the editor's desk in New York.

Page 177

He just put it out of the file and that's it. I think in the whole time, only in Brasilia once during the Cuban crisis, did we get press coverage.

RITCHIE: To continue with the issue of foreign policy, I'd like to go back and talk a bit more about your work with the Foreign Relations Committee. You described your work with the committee as "clerical in the extreme," and that you were involved as chief clerk in basically the business of the committee, but that period from 1958 to 1965 was a very exciting one, with a lot of international activity. It seems to me, looking back, that it must have been a very exciting period to work with the Foreign Relations Committee.

ST. CLAIRE: It was, I feel. A great deal was done by the committee. The committee had a strong voice in the foreign policy conclusions of this country. I would have to talk about personalities, however, to justify that. To say that Senator William Fulbright, for example, was a very articulate and liberal proponent

Page 178

of our foreign activities, such as they might have been realized in the White House or the State Department, or such as he might have wished to suggest them to the White House. He was an extraordinarily patient chairman. He would hear everybody out, including Senator Frank Lausche of Ohio, who used to arrive one half hour late and then ask the same questions that had already been asked and go over the same ground that had been covered twice, and want to make further admonition to the chairman about what hadn't been done or should be done.

I'm not too sure why Fulbright was a patient man, why he was a tolerant man, because by nature I don't think he was. I think he had many moments of quiet anger, and I've seen him when I thought he was quite an intense man. He, however, was humorous, and very pragmatic, and still has that delightful legal mind. That is something a lot of people very rarely knew about him, that he was at one time a teacher of law, and had practiced law. He was able to arrive

Page 179

at equations and solutions that were remarkable and so well put together that you wondered how he did it in the time that was given to us, especially on the mornings that we had our hearings. He did have a few burdens, Lausche was one; Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin was a burden—even to himself; and Senator Green, even though he had slipped away from active participation, also had to be catered to, even after he surrendered the chairmanship.

Primarily as staff members on policy and administrative matters, we would work with the chairman, very amiably and very agreeably with him. We found him to be a very decent man to talk to, to make suggestions to. Essentially, if he said yes, or if he said no, he would say, "Well, but check that out with Bourke."

Bourke Hickenlooper was the number one Republican sitting right next to Fulbright. These two men had the same amity that Connally and Vandenberg had in the earlier days. Hickenlooper and

Page 180

Fulbright between them ran the committee, made the judgments, arrived at the accommodations, and I think, angled the committee toward a very useful life and very useful existence. I can't tell you how much influence they had downtown, I don't know. They did what they could.

The only thing I can fault them on is that the committee itself, and this, of course, is second judgment and I suppose the senators who were then on the committee would want a second judgment too, the only thing I can fault them on is the conduct by this country of the Vietnam war, under the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations. I was not there for the

Nixon administration, but I can remember well how Dean Rusk and (Robert) McNamara and Allen Dulles and others would come to the committee with armloads of optimism and all amount of facts and figures, to justify our participation in what was in the next month or so going to be the complete solution, if not a victory, for the

Page 181

United States forces in Vietnam. It would make extraordinary reading, I'm sure, for anybody who goes back over their testimony. They always appeared together, McNamara and Rusk, in the days when anyone who really knew the facts as they existed, knew there was only one way out of it, and that was the way that Nixon ultimately had to take.

The committee was never, never, never critical of these men, or with Allen Dulles. The only time I ever saw Allen Dulles taken on was by Wayne Morse; Dulles thought that Morse had put something insulting in the *Record* of him, and Wayne Morse went after him. McNamara's and Rusk's command of information put them at the advantage over senators. I wouldn't think that Senator Fulbright or Senator Hickenlooper or any of the rest of them had even been denied any of the information they wanted. It was more probable that it wasn't volunteered to them. Again, I suppose, there might also be another Congressional conviction: let George do it.

Page 182

"These people are in charge, if they make a mistake we'll criticize it, if they don't make a mistake then we haven't criticized what they're doing in order to obtain successful results." This might have been part of the psychology of the committee, that they were mostly unwilling to argue with these men, to question them, to even send anybody into the field to find out if they were getting the truth. They were getting the truth all right, but the truth has many forms. Yes, I would fault the committee on that point, and I think that those men who sat there would now fault themselves that they possibly didn't inquire as vigorously as they could.

RITCHIE: Looking also back at that period, there were a number of crises that came up in international affairs, like the U-2 affair, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile crisis, the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. Did that crisis atmosphere ever permeate into the committee rooms and to the staff?

ST. CLAIRE: No. I wouldn't say that it did. I, of course, was out of the country in

Brasilia at the time of the Cuban crisis. I was on the committee during the Bay of Pigs. Again, that was a question of: "Well, the President is the President, and perhaps he knows what he's doing." I wasn't privy to how much advance information the committee received, for instance, on the Bay of Pigs. I can't remember it ever coming up as a matter of controversy in the committee. It may have. The only thing I do remember is that Senator Aiken and Pat Holt (I was told this and I hope that it's probably true), visited the staging areas in Central America before the Bay of Pigs invasion. They went down there because they had probably obtained private information. They came back and attempted in some way to stop or question that operation. I don't know if they ever thought it was going to fail or succeed, but they had some qualms about it, and these were evidenced, either to the chairman of the committee or to the White House, of course without

any result, as you know. That was what I was told. What was the other?

RITCHIE: The U-2 was the earliest.

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, the U-2 did excite a great deal of controversy in the committee, and that I can testify to. I had just come on the committee staff. There was this investigation. Was it a joint investigation by the Armed Services and the Foreign Relations Committee? In any event, we met over in the hearing room of the Foreign Relations Committee, after having it thoroughly de-bugged, and having drapes put over the doors, and swearing everybody to secrecy. We pulled in members of the CIA and the State Department, as I recall, and they were rather closely questioned about the whole matter of it.

The security part of it was such that we only had one or two reporters, maybe more, who did the transcription right there in our own offices. These transcripts were then reviewed jointly on the spot, ad hoc, by Richard Helms and Chip Bohlen. If there was any

controversy between the two of them I was supposed to resolve it. There was never any controversy, except one, and I think I voted with Chip and that was the end of it. Meanwhile the hearing went on. Yes, that excited quite a bit of national attention, and I know we used to have the reporters hanging around outside. But to be honest about it I don't recall what conclusion

came of it. They probably said that it was just a lost bet, let it go at that.

The committee basically, I think, found itself like all the other committees on the hill as sort of an addendum to the declared policies of the executive departments. Not that they didn't try, and didn't succeed, many, many times in making their views known and have a great deal to do with maybe the modifying and reshaping of some of the executive policies and judgments. You see, they sat in judgment on the executive departments, rather than initiating anything. But why go into that? This has been argued by all manner of political

Page 186

scientists in the past as to what the actual relation of Congress is to the White House, and the White House is to the Congress. You can read hundreds of books on it. But just basically to me, here were men, the senators, so hagridden by their own priorities, most of which had to be referred back to their state or initiated from their state, trying to find time during the day for not only the Foreign Relations Committee but the other committees they belong to, to meet their constituents and still make the reception that they're here at that night at a downtown hotel.

They had to come to rely upon their ad hoc conclusions about what was given to them, or said to them, and of course they have to lean particularly upon their staff to give them any reshaping they might wish in the matter of their own conclusions or accommodations, particularly if they were to make speeches. As a staff member, I was primarily concerned with administrative matters, but as a staff

Page 187

we used to serve committee members evenhandedly. I wrote speeches for opponents and proponents, and considered it a bounded duty to do so. At present it seems quite different. The committee staff has expanded and it's been segmented. Every senator has his own person on there who has to make his daily report to the senator and who might be in a position to tug him away from the general line, what you might call the bipartisan policy. Again, here we are, I'm lamenting the old days.

RITCHIE: You said at one point that you had the committee room "de-bugged." Did you ever feel that there was a possibility that the rooms were bugged?

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, we had them swept. We'd have the people from the Defense Department or CIA come in and sweep the room, before Allen Dulles, for instance, gave his annual summary of the world. Everyone thought it was a very good condensation of the *New York*

Times. Again and again we felt that we were being palavered and creamed by these appearances of these

Page 188

people, that they only wanted you to hear what they wanted you to hear, and if they had anything really of any deep significance they would keep it for the chairman in his office. Yes, we would have these rooms swept before we had the appearance of these people. If there were to be even a more deep-dyed hearing or session, it was held in the back office.

There was a time when Carl Marcy and I thought that we were being bugged. This came about this way: he and I had had a conversation concerning about the then Secretary of State. Carl Marcy made a remark to me, and I said, "Yes, that's right." A few days later, Carl Marcy was talking to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State used the phrase back to Carl Marcy that I had agreed with. We thought that our phones, Carl Marcy's phone, was bugged. He wasn't on the phone at the time, he was in his office, talking.

I think that we were all under suspicion at one time or another by

Page 189

the White House or by the State Department for leaks which, candidly, came from the senators and not from us. We had one senator, who's still now in the Senate, who sent over for four top secret folios and they were to be kept in his office and returned to me. He signed for them. They not only showed up at plane side out at Andrews, but a good deal of the information goes into one or two newspaper columns. We know that the senators were responsible. We just shrugged it off. But the staff took the blame for it initially, until we could convince the chairman where the top secret transcripts went.

I think that the window beside my desk was possibly opened to intrusion. I used to check this out now and then with the State Department, and they told me yes that it was possible to put a beam up against it, it was possible to tap the committee room from the outside, or someone could come in and put something the size of a quarter which would have broadcast ability. None

Page 190

of this have I ever checked out. I always lowered the metal Venetian blinds down on my window and on other windows when somebody like the King of Jordan was coming. In that instance I closed my blind and left the committee room. On my return, the King of Jordan was talking and that blind had been opened. It had been changed from the inside, but I was never able to discover

by whom. I know that all my suspicions always seemed to end up in somebody's wastebasket.

I was called, and this is a matter that someday probably will be used, but I was called down to see an FBI agent in the private office of Senator Hayden, and in the presence of Senator Hayden's AA, Roy Elson, who is still alive, and still my good friend, was asked by the agent how our transcripts were reported and typed up and sent back on receipt to the committee. After he had left, I said to, Roy Elson, "What is this all about?" He said, "Well these transcripts are showing up on one of the bloc embassy's radios at 6:00

Page 191

o'clock on the same night." The testimony that was given that morning was on the radio (of course, we had broken the code) that night going back to their home office. Later on the same FBI man called me and asked me about certain things having to do with foreign aid. He asked me the same questions that had been asked by me from an embassy, which I took to be the Polish embassy, and he repeated the same questions to me that this Pole had asked me on the telephone about foreign aid, and which I had not been able to answer. I had said, "Please call Pat Holt, he's the expert on this, I don't know anything about it." I realized then what this FBI guy was doing, he was getting a voice recording of me on the phone. That's what he wanted.

Then the CIA would come in, years ago, and sit down with the two transcripts that had been given in hearing by Allen Dulles. They went through them and put marks on the transcripts with paperclips. I would say, "What the

Page 192

hell are you doing?" They'd say, "We're just checking it out." What they were checking out is that they had probably intercepted somewhere some uses of Dulles' transcripts. They probably thought we had a leak in the office. I don't doubt there might have been a leak in the office. I know it wasn't me, I'm sure of that. But I think I came under the same suspicion, I'm sure I came under the same suspicion, as others might have.

Here came the Secretary of State, followed by his man, one afternoon. They walked through the office and the man had a briefcase with him. As he was going by, there was a "sing" coming out of the briefcase. It was probably an apparatus to see whether there was a "bug" in our office, or an apparatus to pick up what they were going to talk about. The chairman of our committee had a bugging apparatus bought for him by the Sergeant at Arms, so he could wear it at times. It's all part of the business. Ultimately, I

Page 193

think they ended up by taking all the CIA transcripts and putting them back in the CIA vaults. I could never see, to be very honest with you, anything that transpired in that committee room, even though it might have had a top secret category, that would be of any conclusive use, really, to any foreign agents, because our executive people simply would not tell us. This does not mean they would not tell the chairman or the ranking Republican, or would not have members of the committee come downtown, which I'm sure they did. But up there, on the Hill, it was more of a show. There was just an idea of showing ones' self, making a record, then walking out and being put on television for the purposes of the evening news. They would get that media exposure. That's all they ever used it for. They never told us a God-damned thing they didn't want us to know.

RITCHIE: In 1965, you left the Foreign Relations Committee and became Chief Clerk of the Senate.

Page 194

ST. CLAIRE: Yes.

RITCHIE: And then Assistant Secretary of the Senate.

ST. CLAIRE: Well, they changed the title.

RITCHIE: What was the reason for the change of title?

ST. CLAIRE: Well, Francis Valeo thought it would be a better idea. I frankly didn't care for the idea of changing it, because the Chief Clerk was the old familiar Senate term, and had been since maybe the Second or Third Congress, and up until that time there had only been about five or six Chief Clerks till the time I took the office over.

RITCHIE: What were the functions, basically, of the job of Chief Clerk and Assistant Secretary?

ST. CLAIRE: When I first moved into the Secretary's office he worked on the floor. He was a reading clerk. He was legislative clerk, and reading clerk, and tally clerk all rolled into one. He had some administrative duties inside the office, but they were not many. In fact, they were almost non-existent. The staff was so small then that the Secretary made all of the

decisions, right down to how

Page 195

many phone calls you paid for and could have. That held true through the other Chief Clerks that succeeded the man I'm talking about (who is "Uncle John" Crockett, as we used to call him). He was from Iowa and I think I've told you he was an old tent Shakespearian actor, he and his wife, before they came to Washington. He didn't want to make many decisions and conclusions. I was working on patronage for Senator Hayden and most of the administrative conclusions in the office were made between myself and Edwin Halsey.

I came on under "Skeeter" Johnston, Emory Frazier was still Chief Clerk. Later on, I was schooled for floor work, and I was supposed to do it, but frankly it just wasn't my bag. I found I could not call roll calls. I called several of them. I think ultimately I would have gotten to where I was proficient at it, I had no trouble of the rest of it, reading and handling the bills and keeping the leadership advised from time to time as they came

Page 196

up and asked me. I did quite a bit of desk work in the early days, but more and more I wanted to pull myself out of it, because of my ongoing interest in the Interparliamentary Union. So it was easy enough to expand the Senate desk force, to find substitutes, and make my job primarily administrative. That's the whole story.

RITCHIE: What type of administrative work did you do then?

ST. CLAIRE: Personnel and a good deal of policy decisions having to do with ironing out problems that occurred, for example, with the official reporters. That was the initial problem. Val and I had that to solve. There was quite a bit of personal jealousy among some of the reporters, and we had to work that out. Then we effected reorganization of some of the Secretary's other departments. I can't say that the problems were great, or that they demanded too much executive ability, but it seemed to me that we were constantly busy. Val and I were constantly talking about solutions within the

Page 197

organization, and what could be done to improve it, what could be done to give it a more non-political flavor.

I had, I suppose, been as much responsible along with Felton Johnston as any to bring what you might call "career people" into the organization, into the Secretary's framework. When I first came there the whole office practically, with the exception of the Chief Clerk and the Parliamentarian, changed when the majority shifted in the Senate. I was a patronage employee and everybody except the Parliamentarian and Chief Clerk, was a patronage employee. As I worked with Felton Johnston and with Valeo afterwards, as we were able to make the decisions for Senator Hayden first and afterwards for Mike Mansfield, we ran people into the outfit who had some promise of staying on, and we knew would give it the old career try. That's what we left, and I think it's to our advantage and also to our praise that we saw that initially maybe ten, fifteen years ago, Johnston,

Page 198

myself, and Val, were able to hand over to the new Secretary in 1977 an ongoing and, I think, efficient administration. He's shown that by the fact that he's left it alone.

RITCHIE: Did you deal mostly with the staff, or did you ever deal with senators' problems as well?

ST. CLAIRE: I had mostly staff problems. And for some reason there were many, I don't know why. Principally, because everybody, I guess, thought he was underpaid, and I think some of them were. My senatorial associations primarily had to do with the Legislative Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and whatever appearances were necessary, of course, before the Rules Committee. Some Secretaries had great personal association with the senators, like Leslie Biffle and Felton Johnston. Others had satisfactory ones but nowhere near the political associations that were evidenced by Biffle and Johnston. Once you left the floor you lost your communication with every member of the Senate.

Page 199

If you sat at the desk they understood who you were, and they were quite friendly with you if they saw you. This is not to say that I didn't have a great number of friendships among the senators, I did. I suppose I knew at least half of them very well, and they knew me very well, from working on the Rules Committee, from my Foreign Relations days, and from the brief time I put in on the floor. I can't say though that there was much that you could give them as senators, except the services that were accorded them by the Secretary of the Senate's office.

But Val and I always seemed to have problems, there was always some weekly problem

somewhere. It wasn't much, but it was enough to keep us busy, and required conferences, and required patience, particularly in the personnel area. I hope that those that follow after me will not have the temperamental attitudes that Val and I seemed to run into. We inherited a great number of types. We were always constantly

adjusting to them, because the people we were dealing with in our area were efficient, and valuable to us, and there was no reason why we should have to get huffy with them. We just couldn't—shouldn't rather, we could have, but we did not.

RITCHIE: How would you evaluate Frank Valeo as Secretary of the Senate?

ST. CLAIRE: By his initial statement about the office to me—"if it works, let it alone." That's the way he looked at it. He was a most pleasant man and a very able man. In fact, I think he was, and I say this advisedly, the first scholar, the first student knowledgeable in political affairs and international relations, who ever held that job. In a way I think he might have been a little odd to the job, because he had come to it not as a politician but as a man who was useful in the foreign relations field to Mike Mansfield. Mike and Marcy and Val, when I was on the Foreign Relations Committee staff, would have luncheon every Saturday in the Senate Restaurant. This

went on for months. Mansfield, I think, at that moment was gauging between the two of them to see who would be the most useful to him. But he probably also was sifting for ideas between the two of them, since Mansfield then and now was very much oriented toward inter-national relations.

Then when the Bobby Baker thing broke, Mansfield had to have somebody who was not within the political area of the Senate. He deliberately went out of his way to find people who had no political associations whatsoever or any economic associations whatsoever with any of the senators—and he found Val. So he made him Majority Secretary. This is not to say that Val wasn't the most useful to him in that job. He took it over and he did a bang-up job of it, but one of the conditions that Mansfield put upon himself, I think, when he was trying to select people around him was that they would have no ties back to the former leadership. I've been told this and I think it's true. He also had

great faith in Val, and Val of course, was of great utility to him, not only in the matter of the Majority Secretary, but also phrasing things for him, as he did in the matter of domestic issues, and getting up speeches on foreign relations. He continued this right into the Secretary of the Senate. He was so much on Mansfield's carpet all day long, and in his office, that Val pleasantly enough turned everything in the way of the administration over to me and told people in the office that they should talk to me if they wanted to talk about administrative matters, which gave me great confidence and showed great loyalty, and Val was a man of great loyalty, and still is. He's a great friend. He's a friend to everybody he's a friend to.

RITCHIE: I came across a little piece in one of Jack Anderson's books in the late '60's that it was a great surprise to a number of senators when Frank became Secretary that the "well" dried up in his office.

ST. CLAIRE: That's not true. The well did not dry up. The well was very much there and

in evidence and anybody who wanted it could go in and get it. I think there's no question that Val was congenial, but he was never congenial with them in the way that Leslie Biffle was. Val accepted them as senators and I think treated them with respect. I think inside that office they were not used to it. I know personally that it cost him a great deal of money to keep that well going. He gave me a figure one time, probably could break me to keep up the amount of whiskey that was drunk. And even at that time the number who were going in there had cut back from the early days when Felton Johnston had it. The place was filled for lunch and was filled in the evening, and was filled when Les Biffle had it. Harry Truman, once he answered his roll call headed right back for Biffle's office and a drink. This later became Biffle's strength in the Truman Administration, it was just as simple as that.

Val sat and talked with them, but I don't know that, and of course I never

sat with Val too much inside the office, but I never thought that Val was pre-pared to equate himself with them. Maybe this was the trouble. If you start to drink with these men you start to equate yourself with them, and you begin to tell them the jokes that they later think were their

own. You've got to be part of a hail-fellow-well-met operation.

In the early days, again in the '40's, the Biffle lunches in the Truman administration had great utility and were very useful to the executive departments. The executive departments openly attempted to utilize them and participated in them for their own purposes. This was because Biffle, whether he paid for these lunches or not (and I don't think he ever did), would set up a table in the back room that always had the Vice President at its head. He would have the Secretary of State come up, bring in his people, and sit down with four or five senators, and really hash things over and do a good job of it. This

Page 205

got them to know each other on a man to man basis, on an arms-length basis, and this was good. These lunches went on day after day after day. They were a tradition, an operation, and were damned useful to Truman, but they were also useful to Biffle because he at the same time was the secretary of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. These were the days before we had great responsibility in the matter of contributions and expenditures of finances. And everybody knew this. So that back office was a different operation altogether.

It fell away slightly under Mark Trice, and it fell away markedly under Carl Loeffler. It might have been reinstated, but I think as senators got busier, and as they had less and less time to have longer lunches, they had to commit themselves more and more to committee work and to their offices. As the demands of their constituency grew they couldn't find the time to come in there and sit and hash things

Page 206

over, they had no time to walk in and sit down and talk with one another in the Democratic and Republican cloakrooms. They used to do this in the '30's, you'd find them sometimes in the cloakrooms all day long. So it wasn't particularly that the well had dried up (and the well didn't dry up), but the emphasis had gone off of it.

RITCHIE: Although the same reference indicated that some of them found that (Sergeant at Arms) Joe Duke's office was providing a convivial place to go for a drink.

ST. CLAIRE: Well, Joe set up his own operation in opposition first to Biffle, believe it or not, and then he kept it up in relation to Felton Johnston. But Joe Duke never got the senators that really counted. But he did set it up. Of course, there was also a new well established in the Majority Secretary's office, and a new well established in the Minority Secretary's office.

Dirksen also had his own well. If you were invited down to Dirksen's well afterwards you were made. The Republicans began to flock down

Page 207

there while he was alive. You really were part of the inner circle if you were invited down to have a drink with Everett Dirksen.

RITCHIE: I don't think that Robert Byrd is the type of person who had a great drinking crowd.

ST. CLAIRE: No. I don't think that of [Robert] Griffin, although he did have that office just off the floor. It's a form of life, maybe, that's not gone out entirely, but again I believe that the emphasis has switched to where senators are finding that those hours after five o'clock are the ones, when their constituents have left their offices and gone back to their hotels, that they can do the best work they want to with their own staff, before they head downtown for a reception. There isn't a senator who can't go downtown every night for a reception, if he wants to.

RITCHIE: Well, Valeo as Secretary spent quite a bit of time working directly with Mike Mansfield . . .

Page 208

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, he was his right hand man, no question about it. I think he did both, a great deal of his speeches and probably advised him on it. But this doesn't mean, of course, that Mike Mansfield wasn't his own man. He was very receptive to advice. If he had confidence in you he would take anything you suggested. In fact, he liked to have people come to him and help him, he wanted it. But that didn't mean that Mike Mansfield wasn't his own man. If he had a commitment or a persuasion, he was willing to follow it through, and he was very stubborn about many of his persuasions. I thought he was a good leader because of his tolerance, because of his attitudes towards people. He was sort of a corral boss. You have to be that to get along with those temperaments, those individuals that you find on the floor, where every man is individualistic in his reactions and his attitudes. He was good at that. Right now Robert Byrd and Howard Baker are very much on top of their job. They get the grudging respect that

Page 209

Mike Mansfield never solicited. He did everything, as I understand it, by negotiation, by attitude, by accommodation, and did what he thought he could possibly do. So you very seldom find him angered in the *Record*.

RITCHIE: He seemed to be a natural reaction to the type of leadership that Johnson had given the Senate.

ST. CLAIRE: Oh yes, he was the natural reaction. That's a very good statement. That's true. He was the antithesis. Now we have Byrd again, so we have not quite a Johnson but a man who gives the job the tremendous vigor and personal attention that Lyndon also gave it. You couldn't do anything on your own when Lyndon was around. If you tried it and he found out that you did it, he'd just chew the hell out of you, no matter how minor it was. He wasn't going to surrender anything at all, in his office or out of his office to anyone, unless it had been cleared with him first.

RITCHIE: Do you think the Senate could have another Johnson as a leader, do you

Page 210

think they would tolerate someone like that again?

ST. CLAIRE: No, having been through him, I don't think they would. I think he was a creature of his times. Then again, hard times may demand hard leaders. If you get into one sometime again then you may find the senators falling in behind somebody who is aggressive and hard, demanding, who would point the way to results.

RITCHIE: The turning point in Byrd's career, in moving up to be leader, seemed to be his defeat of Edward Kennedy in 1969 . . .

ST. CLAIRE: Yes.

RITCHIE: For the whip's position. What was the story on that? How did he manage to dump Kennedy?

ST. CLAIRE: Well, those men who have decided that they want to try for the leadership have always evidenced a concern in the Senate's proceedings, particularly around 5:00 o'clock at night. They were willing to take on the yeomanry that is demanded of a person, to sit for hours at a time to get the Senate acting and to get the

Senate closed out. I saw this done by E. W. McFarland, who was willing to come in and do the chores for Scott Lucas, when Scott Lucas was far too busy to do them; McFarland would show up at night or in the lean hours of the afternoon to manage what had to be done in the way of the small things that must be done before the Senate adjourned for the evening.

This is what Bob Byrd did. He wanted to make sure that everyone understood his interest in the procedures of the Senate, and so he set out not only to show himself on the floor at all odd hours, and long hours, but if he was challenged in the absence of Mike Mansfield he committed to his mind, and he has a very bright mind, a very great mind, the procedures and the parliamentary maneuvers of the Senate. Certainly he understood what the Senate was doing more than anybody else.

Byrd also understood more than any other man that the Senate is an

organization that enacts legislation by unanimous consent. Everything that gets done in the Senate is done practically by unanimous consent. He is the one who began to formulate these long lists of bills that could be considered under this extremity and under that extremity, under this condition, under that condition, and to pay attention to the amendments that the senators have to the unfinished business with the idea of accommodating them for media purposes, knowing full well that if he accommodated them for four hours they'd only take two on their amendment, or be accommodated for the submission of five amendments, they'd only bring up one. He and his staff undertook the accommodation that was necessary from the Senate, which is a parliamentary body without limitation on debate, to enact legislation and to accomplish his day's work within the very spare hours that are allowed him, knowing full well that if he operated the Senate like old Joe T. Robinson

operated it, or Scott Lucas operated it, he would never get much done. Or even if he operated it like Lyndon Johnson did, nothing would ever be done. You have to start by amending and cutting your legislation to fit your time, and that's exactly what he'd done. He's the first to realize this, and that's why he's been probably the outstanding Majority Leader of the Senate's history.

Lyndon would go off to Perdenales for four days, five days, and nothing would be done. He'd tell Bobby Baker he didn't want anything done. And Bobby would show up in the back of

the chamber when Mike Mansfield was standing to his feet trying to get something done, and do like this (gestures negatively). This was true. Because he knew that Lyndon didn't want anything done unless Lyndon was there. What Lyndon was doing in Perdenales you tell me, I don't know. Breaking in a new secretary. He'd come back and then there would be this instant rush towards judgment on the part of Johnson, "We've got to get

Page 214

this damn thing done tonight." And so by letting everything pile up, the dam ultimately would accommodate it and spill some of it over, and this is what happened. Instead of trying to sluice it in a decent way as Byrd does through the dam, he would let everything pile up behind the dam and then some of it would spill over. Then at the end of every session he would get out a list of the accomplishments of the session, mostly accomplished despite him. He was a very poor leader. Thank God he did become Vice President.

In any event, Ted Kennedy, had become the deputy leader but was not giving the job its due. He was not paying any attention to it. He was not showing up at night and filling in for Mansfield when Mansfield was away. Byrd was there, so he just credited Byrd. Byrd would get up, "I move, Mr. President . . ." and so on, and he'd get the things done. When Kennedy realized what was being done to him, by his non-existence on the floor, when he

Page 215

realized that he had not accomplished his chores, he started coming in, he did try to get the floor away from Byrd. But by that time Byrd had the floor, by that time Byrd had the job.

RITCHIE: When Kennedy went into the final vote, though, he thought he had the votes to get reelected. He thought he was going to win by some three or four votes.

ST. CLAIRE: I read that, I don't know.

RITCHIE: There wasn't any scuttlebutt at the time?

ST. CLAIRE: The Republicans told me at that time, they said Kennedy was a young man, very brave, able, who would come in on the floor, make a speech, and a good speech, and then immediately leave the floor before anybody could question him. It may be that in those formative years for him as a senator, even before Chappaquiddick, or afterwards, he was finding that he did not want to stay around. He is a man even now who has a reputation for extraneous

activities, and I'm not too sure that he had been a vigorous senator in his time. Now he may be turning into one. Certainly when he goes after

Page 216

something and supports it, he has the best research done, the best reasons. He is a very forceful speaker on matters that interest him, one of the best, to my way of thinking. He probably does have a very fine future. But Byrd's utility to the Senate was his realization that the Senate simply had to put itself into a strait jacket in order to get things done in the hours permitted to it by the clock. His formulation of these long procedural agreements is the best thing that ever happened to the Senate.

RITCHIE: One other point I wanted to ask about was the role of the Secretary's office in the whole Watergate question. Was there any administrative assistance given to the Ervin Committee? And what about when the Senate had to face the question of having an impeachment vote, were there any preparations made?

ST. CLAIRE: Not so long as Sam Ervin's hearing was ongoing, not so long as that operation continued in the media and on television. We only began to think of an impeachment

Page 217

trial when the hearings of the House Judiciary Committee were scheduled. Then we began to realize that possibly we might have Nixon and his managers in on the floor of the Senate. At that time I went in to Val and told him that I thought we should begin to get the literature together. I think at that time also that the Parliamentarian may have privately begun to work on it. We could not say anything publicly, even to each other, because we did not want the Republicans or Nixon's friends to think that we were getting an inquisition ready. But we did go into, I did some research on it, I'm sure the Parliamentarian did some re-search on it. I know I got together all the literature that was in the Senate Library and took it home with me. We began to think of it as a security problem as well. To that end I went to Balfour (jewelry firm) and asked it to resubmit to us the specimens which they had submitted to the Senate earlier for service pins for both senators and staff, to let us look over them and see what we

Page 218

might need in the way of lapel identification on the floor. The Secretary as I understood it, and I

think I may be correct, becomes the officer of the Senate at the time of an Impeachment trial, and he has many judgments and decisions to make. One of them of course, an early on thing, would be the security part of it. So we picked from Balfour's file a lapel pin, with a Senate seal on it with some field around it, and sent off an *order for it. Well, by the time we got the order and got the pins back, Nixon had resigned, so those pins are somewhere in the area of the Senate. I don't know what happened to them at all.

RITCHIE: They do give a pin to senators, don't they?

ST. CLAIRE: Yes, each senator gets a pin with a chip diamond in it, and the Senate seal with the field around it saying "United States Senator." But it was really not until those pins were designed, or until "We the People," I think, picked up the Senate seal and they went about painting one on the ceiling of the

Page 219

Secretary's office, did the seal have any coloration in it at all. It just existed as a flat black-and-white thing, in the resolution that created it.

RITCHIE: When did they originate the idea of a pin for senators?

ST. CLAIRE: That came on just before I joined the Secretary's office, I don't remember when it was. There had been a resolution of the Rules and Administration Committee looking into it, and judgments on it were made by the Committee on Rules and Administration on the recommendations of Bob Brenkworth and Emory Frazier. Even then, there's a flaw in the seal that's given to the certificate. I pointed this out several times, but apparently no one bothers about it. But you will notice that there's a shield and on either side there are two branches, one is an oak branch and the other is, I think, a laurel branch. If you look at it you will find that either the oak branch or the laurel branch is pulled away from the shield so that the seal itself is off balance. It was not

Page 220

artistically drawn as it should have been. I asked Balfour if they would have their artists re-do it, but it's never been done, so there it stands.

RITCHIE: The first time I ever saw anything about the pin was in the *Post* on Sunday,

they had an article on the Senate bureaucracy. Senator [Edward] Zorinsky was quoted as saying that he rejected the pin, that he didn't need a diamond pin in his lapel.

ST. CLAIRE: The House I think also has one. One time they called me from the House Rules Committee and asked me to bring a senatorial pin over, and sit there at a public hearing on a resolution by a Honolulu Congressman, which would have created a lapel pin for House members. Mind you, if you go to Russia they have all manner of Soviet flags all over their lapels. The bloc countries, for instance, are great on identifying the members of their assemblies and their parliaments and anything else, with lapel insignia. I went over there to the Rules Committee, and there was

Page 221

this congressman, who I think now is a senator from Hawaii (Spark Matsunaga), arguing with the Rules Committee to see if they would give him a rule on his resolution to create a pin, or to create a commission to set up a pin-process, for the House. There was an old Mississippi congressman, he's no longer in the House, red hair, who, after Matsunaga had made his presentation, looked around and said, "Well, gentlemen, sometimes I don't know whether I want to be identified as a House member." He said, "That reminds me, about those tags they give us for our cars. You put them on your car and you take 'em home and you go in some coffee shop and have lunch and come out and there are fifteen people around your car." He said, "I can remember when they wanted to give us licenses for our cars saying we were members of Congress, and I said Hell, I don't want to be driving down and here's some woman changing a tire and I drive by and can't stop because I've got a speaking engagement, but

Page 222

she sees my license." And so they put the rule aside. Maybe they have one now.

RITCHIE: Did you happen to read that article in the *Post* on Sunday?

ST. CLAIRE: I read it, but I'm not sure I remember much of it.

RITCHIE: It's very critical. A number of the younger senators in particular feel the Senate has become too bureaucratic and doesn't get things done quickly enough.

I'd like to ask one final question, a retrospective question. Your career with the Senate

spanned more than forty years. How does the Senate today compare to that Senate you first came to in the 1930's? What kind of changes have you seen taking place over the years?

ST. CLAIRE: Well, in the nature and characteristic of a senator, I suppose. Those I remember from the early 1930's were products of what I would call small town politics. They were men who had come out of their legislatures, or had been country attorneys, or local representatives in their legislatures, had

Page 223

been early identified as young men in their party structure and perhaps at their party conventions, who had read law rather than studied it, who had polished their speaking and oratorical skills—many of them had "outdoor voices," before the P.A. system in the present call—and who in their manner and dress were, I don't like the expression but you might say "courtly."

Two examples, were my two senators. Carl Hayden was a sheriff and a member of the House, not a lawyer, but had worked in the vineyards of the party during the early 1900's, gone to a couple of conventions, identified himself with the people who ran his party. The other one was Henry Fountain Ashurst, who had been a young lawyer, a rather brave orator, was known for his platform presence and had polished his speaking presence. He was very good at it, had an extraordinary amount of reference stories, tribulal stories, stories that he could recapture in an instant, and had made his reputation on the hustings of his state and in

Page 224

the local politics and small towns of his state. Sometimes running for office you stood up in front of a car, and if it was evening they turned on the car lights, and you addressed the people, and maybe fifteen or twenty came to hear you. Or you just hired a hall and got thirty people to come out. Or you went along the streets. You knew every one of the local editors, and your local newspapermen, and your local businessmen, you had friends everywhere. In fact, you didn't get where you were in those days, particularly in the far West and the South, unless you were friendly and were known to the people who went out on the Tuesdays and voted.

There were many men like these people: Tom Connally of Texas, Alben Barkley of Kentucky, all of them you could equate with Henry Fountain Ashurst in their attitudes and in their abilities. Their education had been of a different stripe than I guess it is today. You had a classical education, you didn't have to know too much, but what you knew you

Page 225

learned later, what you acquired you acquired after you left school; the foundations were Latin and the rest of it that you got in school. They were a different type, I guess, than the education you get today. These were men who were movers and shakers in a sense. There were a great number of them: George Norris, Borah of Idaho, Johnson of California, Jim Reed of Missouri, and the other Reed (David Reed) of Pennsylvania, Simeon Fess of Ohio. Give me a directory and I can bring them out to you. They could rise and speak, probably on any-thing, and were very nimble in debate, particularly Barkley and Connally. -

These men had come out of their own legislatures and their own country attorney offices. They had started on flat bed trucks in their states. This was the day before television, this was the day when they had to like you, they had to know you, and they did know you, at first hand. Joe T. Robinson, to my mind was one of the greatest. Hell, Huey Long, just to pick him up for a

Page 226

minute, he's the greatest example of all. He sold from door to door in his early days. He was that type of man. Senators of those days would jostle each other, they would go after each other, yet they had pride in their talking. They'd come to the floor to speak and to be heard. Those were the men of the '30's. So now we say to ourselves, well they don't have the speakers like they used to have. And that's right. Pastore was our last orator. They don't have the speakers, but you don't need them.

Let me tell you what it is. It was phrased to me by Brien McMahon. He went home to run for office from Connecticut, and he said afterward to me, "Darrell, I found out something that I never thought was possible. If you sit in front of that TV camera, you come through that screen just like this, and you've got 'em." He said it was the damndest experience in the world to see yourself coming through a screen like that and you know you're in

Page 227

maybe thousands of homes. You're pushing yourself on them. He said, "That's never been possible in politics before television. And that's exactly where it's going to lie, on TV right there." I paraphrase him, but he said, "There's a new medium, and you master that medium and you've got 'em."

What's the name of the evangelist? Billy Graham. Years ago I listened to him, he was in Madison Garden, and here he is out there on a raised platform. He was as effective a speaker as he could possibly be, the only man you can really compare him to is Huey Long. He's out there giving God to these people and they pick him up on another camera with an overlay and put his

face while he's talking on the upper right hand part of the screen, so that his profile is there talking superimposed over his figure down below. You're looking at God: That's the point, this ghostly figure superimposed over the other, is talking to you. In the beginning Brien McMahon began to know

Page 228

what the television could do. Now they are accustomed to it, acquainted to it, accredited to it, and part of it. The whole emphasis is gone from the back-roads to the TV studio.

Do you have a different man now? I think you do. I think you have a man who has to know a hell of a lot more about everything than his predecessors of the '30's did. He's got to be much more sharp with the press and television. He knows that he can't correct the tape, whereas he can correct the *Record*. He knows that the television prompter is not going to give him the benefit of the doubt that a newspaperman going back to his office to write up a story is going to give him. It's put a different breed into the Senate. I think it's all due to the media exposure. But then again, maybe it's history. It's history to the point that our country is not the country it was forty years ago. It's been through several wars, and has doubled in population, and things that bother us today just never bothered

Page 229

these people in the '30's, just never occurred to them. They didn't have the political problems to face that these people have today, which is why we have so much more alert people today, and why they are less senators in the classic tradition. They can't be any-thing else.

I once went to Goldwater and said, "I wonder if you would help me out, some person has been to me and wants to know if you'll go on one of her question and answer programs." He said, "I'll think it over." Then he called back and said, "No, the trouble with those is that you have to prepare for them." He said, "every time you go on any of these things you have to really case yourself up." That's the whole privilege of the modern-day senator, he's got to be really a man of all seasons, much more so than these great orators we had in the '30's, and a hell of a lot of them are in the hall of fame today. Go look and see, you'll find them there. If they haven't got the statue in the

Page 230

hall of fame, they've got statues to them at home or they've got bridges named after them, lakes, dams named after them, it's all there. Because their impression on their times was tremendous.

You got the idea that when they rose to speak they got up to lead you. You would follow them anywhere after they got through.

Well, that's it. Thank you.

RITCHIE: Thank you, very much.

APPENDIX

You asked for my comments on the book by Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear*.

For the period of 1949 through 1955, I was the Chief Clerk of the Rules and Administration Committee, and as such had contacts and cognizance with what Griffith calls the "unhappy committee," i.e., the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections.

My memory of the five members on the Subcommittee relates quite well to the roles and attitudes which Griffith gives them in his book. Senator Gillette was weak and ambivalent, and Benton and Hennings strong. Hennings in later times became a victim of his own drinking, Margaret Chase Smith at the time was a very strong character and not the picayune character which she became later in her political career. Hendrickson was not particularly bright—a product of the anonymity of machine politics in his State. Hendrickson had studied art in his youth, and his doodles in the committee meetings were artistic, clever, and sought after. He did have courage, however, and a strong reserve. His well-known family fortune assured him a certain independence in what he did, but he was not one to spend it on himself or particularly on his political career.

Page 232

I remember at one time, he called me to his office in the Old Senate Office Building to show me where an overloaded electrical plug had burst into flame destroying some mementos of his on a wooden table and a United States flag. In the early days, the electrical circuits in the Senate Office Building were hopelessly overloaded because of self-installed coffee machines, dictating equipment, additional floor lamps, etc. Senator Hendrickson presented us with a bill of particulars for what had been destroyed notwithstanding the fact that most of them were mementos on which one could only put a personal, not a dollar value. We still paid the bill.

At all times, Senator Gillette retreated when he could have stood, and compromised when he could have prevailed. His word was of little use, and as a consequence was never sought. My memory of him is that he resisted almost everything which went through the Rules Committee that in any way benefited Senate employees such as retaining staff members on the roll of senators who had died, of setting up an automatic system for the payment of a gratuity to the estates of Senate employees who died in office, and any improvement of the annuity and retirement system on the floor. Yet,

Page 233

apparently he never qualified for retirement, from what I suspect was a disinclination to have any

contribution taken from his salary. It has to be noted that he returned to the Senate rolls after his defeat, as a Senate employee for a twelvemonth, in order to qualify for the annuity which he would have denied others. As Griffith says, he was handsome, statuesque, and had all the human warmth of Carrara marble, with a constant, valueless smile.

I began reading the book in Chapter 5, and my comments are addressed primarily to incidents related therein and the memories which they arouse.

Sometime before the Maryland investigation, I went to Senator Hayden and pointed out to him that we had on the books of the Senate restaurant, two bills more than a year's outstanding. I do not remember the amounts, but the two senators were Chavez and McCarthy. Senator Hayden instructed me to write letters for his signature flatly requesting the payment, which I did. Chavez paid his bill at once without comment. We got a check and a not too pleasant letter from Senator McCarthy. Shortly after this, the man who had been designated to read telegrams for their official content for the Sergeant at Arms, sent to me a telegram

Page 234

that had been sent from Senator McCarthy's office to his Milwaukee office, giving my background in the Senate and the State Department. Part of the telegram was critical of a case on which I had sat as a member of the Loyalty and Security Board of the State Department while I was in its Legislative Liaison Office under Secretaries Burns, Marshall, and Acheson. I had conducted the hearing in this case as Acting Chairman and had with one other member of the Board (there being three on it) voted two to one that the person charged before us was not a security risk. All three of us agreed to his loyalty to the United States was not in question.

Shortly after I filed this decision with the Secretary of State, as required by the Department's security regulations, I came to the Committee on Rules and Administration as its Chief Clerk. I later learned that the complete records in the case had not been before our Board at the time of the hearing, and was advised informally by a person who had been one of my colleagues in the Department that I should recall my decision, but without informing me why. This I declined to do. Meanwhile, I had received a letter from the Presidential Loyalty and Security Board asking for an

Page 235

explanation of my vote in the matter. This annoyed me and my letter back set out that I made my judgment based on the evidence before us, that I was satisfied with the judgment, and pointed out that the Board if it did not concur in our findings, it could by law, reverse me or remand the case to a new Loyalty and Security Board in the Department. This the Board never did. In fact, it

made no finding on the case whatsoever, which essentially amounted to a concurrence of the decision. I later learned that the whole case was taken before a D.C. grand jury, as were many of the security cases at that time, and that no bill was returned by a grand jury. I will say here, however, that had the complete record been in my possession at the time of the hearing, I am sure that I would have judged differently. In passing I had to practically threaten the Department in order to get a look at the complete record but only after the McCarthy attack.

This is the case, however, which found its way into the office telegram going out to Milwaukee, and I regard the attack which he made on me in a speech before the American Legion, a veteran's organization, the next day was his answer to Senator Hayden's dunning him for his \$300 bill.

Page 236

Sometime later I was on a Convair out of Chicago and seated next to a man who identified himself as an official of a large Wisconsin corporation. After we had started a conversation about the hot characteristics of the Convair, he learned that I was on Senator McCarthy's committee, and told me the following. He said that Senator McCarthy, as a Naval officer, had regarded himself as quite a heavy poker player and hearing of this game on another island, had himself flown over to take part in it. My seat mate was also a part of that poker game, knew McCarthy, and took something like \$2,800 from him, and for this he got an IOU from Senator McCarthy. He then told me, "if you can get it from him and know him well enough to do so, I will give you half." I am not sure that the debt was ever paid.

I recall going through some of the Secretary's Reports of those days and coming upon an item of \$800 for hotel expenses which had been vouchered and paid as reimbursement to McCarthy, while that Committee was under a Republican Chairman. The item was patently against all expenditure rules, but there it was.

Griffith's description of Senator Benton is completely on target. I remember him as a

Page 237

viable, cheerful and industrious Senator, of course, having been associated with him at the State Department and later as United States senator and member of the Rules and Administration Committee.

In the debate referred to on pages 170 and 171, I recall that on that day I was in the office and was told by telephone that an attack was being made. I don't recall ever reading what McCarthy said, and to this day, I doubt very much if I ever read it. Apparently, I had helped draft the Maryland report and that I had leaked the report to the left wing press and that as member of

the State Department Loyalty Board had once cast the deciding vote to clear one of McCarthy's accused cases.

All of McCarthy's information on the referenced case, it later developed, came from one of the employees of the Presidential Loyalty and Security Board. It was later in the newspapers that this person had confidence in the Chairman of such Board, and had passed a number of the files on the cases to the Senator in her position of trust from patriotic motives. She later resigned from the Commission. I can well suppose she might have had something to do with the letter to

Page 238

me asking for an explanation of my vote, and of course, would have documented my reply.

To continue with Griffith, it is true that McCarthy had himself placed on the committee in order to keep a firm hand on the Maryland campaign investigation. Though he was nearly always absent, he did attend that meeting at which the report was considered for its nine to three acceptance vote. In my memory, it was on this occasion that he told Senator Wherry, "I don't need your protection, and I don't want it. I can take care of myself (Page 164, Page 156)." Wherry indeed at that moment attempted to help McCarthy in his objections to the report. In particular, I think, like McCarthy, Wherry had doubts about the mention of Jean Kerr in the report and her role in the campaign. It was well known that Jean Kerr at that time was in McCarthy's office, that their friendship was close, and they probably had intentions of marriage. I do remember that McCarthy's objection to the report was quite bitter in its illusions to her.

However, when McCarthy said, "I don't need your protection, etc.", Wherry flushed and shut up. A nine to three vote followed at which McCarthy got up and went out into the corridor. Wherry, knowing

Page 239

that newspapermen waited outside the committee room, immediately suggested that they adjourn so that McCarthy did not get the jump on the committee's side of the story by talking first to the newspapermen outside. I was later told by Wherry's liaison woman with the committee that Wherry went back to his office, and was inside his private office and told her, "if I ever do anything again for that son of a bitch, I hope you kill me."

The description of the floor action at the time of McCarthy's attack, and that he deserted the floor without waiting for replies, is accurate to my mind. My memory is that several senators rose to my defense, among them Senator Humphrey. I know I made a point to go around the next day and thank them for their support. Additionally, several of the senators, such as Hickenlooper, approached me personally to say that they had been disturbed by the allegations.

There were two fallouts from this attack. First, the *Baltimore Sun* reporter in reporting the debate the next day in the *Sun* confused the couple in the case with my wife and I, and had Senator McCarthy describing my wife

Page 240

and I as the cited couple in the State Department hearing which I chaired. When this was pointed out to me by a friend, I wrote the *Baltimore Sun* and a retraction was printed on the front page of that paper. I sometimes wish I had seen an attorney, but in politics, you do the expected thing. Secondly, in those days, we were paid in cash by the Disbursing Office. I had stepped on the elevator next to the Secretary's Office and because I was counting the cash, did not see who else was in the elevator.

I heard a voice behind me say, "I will take \$20 of that." I turned—it was Senator McCarthy. I think my reply was, "The hell you will" or "No, damn you, not after what you said about me on the floor." It was a good humored comment, but his response was even more wonderful. He said, "Are you St. Claire? Good God, I had you confused with somebody else on the staff," and then named the committee counsel who had been added to the staff on the recommendation of Senator Monroney. We continued to talk on the way down to the underground subway, where we met Senator Eastland. Senator McCarthy volunteered to Eastland, "I said something on the floor about Darrell which I take back. I had

Page 241

him confused with somebody else and charged him with being a left winger" or words to that effect, whereupon Eastland said that I was no Communist. Coming from the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Internal Security, I thought by then I had obtained clearance.

Thereafter, I ran into Senator McCarthy several times, and was twice invited to a cocktail party at the house of his Administrative Assistant at which McCarthy and Jean Kerr were present. Each time McCarthy shook my hand, loudly bused my wife. She and Jean had been sorority sisters at George Washington University, and I understand from another source that Jean had told McCarthy that whatever he had to say about me on the floor, he had been mistaken.

And so it had ended. I once had McCarthy characterized to me as a prize fighter, the kind who would belt the hell out of you, but only professionally and without rancour. But I don't know. Like a prize fighter, he had no compunction or conscience for the pain he caused, or for the people flattened. He was not good to his staff. There was a story at the time, which I cannot vouch for, that McCarthy had employed a man presumably for his knowledge of Communism, but also actually

was a member of the international Communistic underground, and had been planted in McCarthy's outfit by what means I cannot say. The man was described to me at the time, it was said he had come from Europe, and that his presence, becoming known to McCarthy, had contributed to McCarthy's loss of balance and good sense at the end.

One of those close to McCarthy told me that McCarthy had been "betrayed," but that is as far as the story, which I think has no real foundation, went.