

**Richard A. Lester Oral History Interview—JFK#1, 12/24/1970**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Richard A. Lester  
**Interviewer:** Ann M. Campbell  
**Date of Interview:** December 24, 1970  
**Place of Interview:** Princeton, New Jersey  
**Length:** 27 pages

**Biographical Note**

Lester was an economic advisor to John F. Kennedy's (JFK) presidential campaign (1960); an alternate delegate from New Jersey to the Democratic National Convention (1960); and Vice Chairman of the President's Commission on the Status of Women (1961-1963). In this interview, he discusses his work with Senator JFK on labor issues, advising JFK during the 1960 presidential campaign, work as a labor negotiator, and the President's Commission on the Status of Women, among other issues.

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**Suggested Citation**

Richard A. Lester, recorded interview by Ann M. Campbell, December 24, 1970, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Richard A. Lester—JFK#1

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First of Two Oral History Interviews

with

Richard A. Lester

December 24, 1970  
Princeton, New Jersey

By Ann M. Campbell

For the John F. Kennedy Library

CAMPBELL: Dean Lester, I thought that we might begin this morning by my asking you if you recall when you first met John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and what your impressions were of him at that time?

LESTER: I can't be sure of the exact date that I met President Kennedy. I arranged to meet him through Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan], who was one of my former students here at Princeton [Princeton University] and because then Senator Kennedy was on the Senate Labor Committee [Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare] and was dealing with labor legislation and with unemployment compensation. I recall I saw him in his office at a fairly early date during discussions of both of those matters. It must've been after the McClellan committee [Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor and Management] hearings began, dealing with Dave Beck [David S. Beck] and others on improper activities in labor and management [Senate Committee on Government Operations]. We.... I worked a bit with him through Ralph Dungan on the unemployment compensation bill. It was really, I think, heavily an AFL-CIO [American Federal of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations] proposal for reforming the unemployment compensation system and making it more subject to federal standards.

When in the course of the McClellan hearings it became clear that legislation was needed to meet the abuses that had crept up in the control of unions and union activity, for improper purposes... [Interruption] Senator Kennedy had written around letters asking for our views with respect to the kind of reform legislation that might be necessary for labor union reform. These letters were sent to a number of academic people. Here at Princeton we received one. And Professor Frederick Harbison [Frederick H. Harbison] and Dean J. Douglas Brown and I composed a kind of joint letter in response to Senator Kennedy's letter. Following that, Senator Kennedy asked some of us if we would be willing to work as an informal committee to help prepare legislation, reform legislation, for union activities in particular. I agreed to do that. There were also, as I recall it, the following people on that informal group: Professor Archibald Cox of Harvard Law School, who served as a kind of chairman; Professor Wellington [Harry H. Wellington]; and another professor at Yale [Yale University], Clyde Summers [Clyde W. Summers], I believe. Included were professors Charles Myers [Charles A. Myers] at M.I.T. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], and Philip Taft at Brown [Brown University], I'm not certain whether Professor Douglass V. Brown at M.I.T. was also included. We worked and helped draft the Kennedy-Ives [Irving McNeil Ives] bill. And in the course of that there was considerable correspondence. We usually met up at Harvard [Harvard University] or at M.I.T. with Ralph Dungan.

And then, at Senator Kennedy's request, Archie Cox and I testified on that bill before the Senate committee, Senate subcommittee really. Then that bill, although it was passed in the Senate overwhelmingly—I believe 91 to 1—did not get by in the House. And the next year we worked again, not so extensively on the bill, which subsequently became the Kennedy-Ervin [Sam J. Ervin, Jr.] bill. And Professor Cox and I both testified in the hearings on that in the Senate. At that time, if I recall correctly, it was a subcommittee and Senator Kennedy was chairman of the subcommittee. And I remember Senator Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] and I think Senator Cooper [John S. Cooper] were at the hearings the time I testified. I found that Senator Goldwater, although we disagreed with him while he was present at both hearings, was a very gentlemanly person and we seemed to get along fairly well in the hearings.

I also did some work with Senator Kennedy with respect to minimum wage legislation. He knew, I guess, my views on that fairly well. I had written to him on some occasions and talked with him. Occasionally I had talked with him on the telephone on some of these matters. But I generally worked through Ralph Dungan.

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CAMPBELL: In these early years, in the '50s, what was your impression of John Kennedy's understanding of these economic issues?

LESTER: He had a remarkable understanding of them. I don't know really how he got it. He must've gotten quite a bit of it from his talks with the AFL-CIO people because he was on the unemployment compensation side, putting in a bill that was heavily, I'm sure, influenced by them. On the minimum wage side, I think

he had also had considerable discussion with some of the labor people because he knew that I had a somewhat different view from them with respect to the height at which a statutory minimum wage should be put. I believed that the minimum should be increased, but I wanted to keep the increase so that no more than a certain fraction of the total coverage would be forced to raise the minimum, whether that was 10 or 15 percent. I was hoping we could get the support of employers in most covered industries who were already meeting the minimum. I remember we worked on the possibility of an increase, I guess, it was to a dollar an hour. I also knew James Mitchell [James P. Mitchell], who was Secretary of Labor at the time, and I knew that Mitchell was against the dollar an hour increase and some of the grounds on which he was against it. While I felt Mitchell's interest was in keeping the actual minimum lower than I thought it should be, I was not willing to go as high as the trade union people wanted.

I think Kennedy really understood all the issues in this connection. Coming from the state of Massachusetts, he was careful not to expose himself in a way that would antagonize the people in his district and the people in the trade union movement. So we never really had a thorough discussion of the economics of it. But I had written to him so that he knew the basis on which I would have proposed minimum wage legislation. I did favor, in the end, raising the minimum to a dollar an hour. And I believe Mitchell wanted to keep it at seventy-five cents and subsequently came finally to ninety cents. But it never came to really a sharp issue in that connection.

CAMPBELL: Is there...

LESTER: The thing that impressed me about Senator Kennedy in my relations with him was that he was always not only quite knowledgeable but understanding and really a very wonderful person to deal with. He gave you the feeling that he appreciated your service, that he understood your position, and that he would take it into account, even though if for political or other reasons he could not go as far as you might want him to go.

CAMPBELL: Had Mr. Dungan been a student of yours in economics?

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LESTER: Yes. He took my course in labor economics when he was a graduate student in the Woodrow Wilson School. And I had been on close terms with him since then.... He and another student, Michael Blumenthal [W. Michael Blumenthal], who later was in the Kennedy administration, were very close. And Blumenthal later was on the Princeton faculty and worked in the industrial relations section where I was also working, so I knew both of them pretty well while they were students here and later on.

CAMPBELL: How is your.... Or is it fair to characterize your work in 1960 as a participant in the campaign? Were you that active an advisor in 1960?

LESTER: Well, let me start by saying that Professor Cox of the Harvard Law School and I were again chosen as the two neutral arbitrators in a national railroad wage case of the locomotive engineers in 1954 and again in 1960. In 1954 we spent part of the spring and much of the summer in the hearings in Chicago and in executive sessions on the case in New York. And we became very well acquainted with one another.

We made a decision in that case which turned out, because of the particular way the arbitration stipulation was made, it was not favorable to the union. And then we got quite a blast in an editorial in the *New York Times* because of that decision. And incidentally, I wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*—I was up on Cape Cod—and told him that some of the material in the editorial was not correct. And I got word from him subsequently, right after that, in a letter saying that he had pulled that editorial at midnight when he'd seen it, after the first edition. The first edition had gotten to Cape Cod, although it had not appeared in any other editions. He would publish my letter if I insisted, but he would prefer that I not insist on it. And so I, of course, agreed not to have the letter published.

Well, Cox and I assumed that out of this experience we would not be chosen for another case for arbitration involving locomotive engineers on the railroads. To my amazement, and Cox's also, in 1960 when there was another wage arbitration involving locomotive engineers, we were chosen as the neutral arbitrators again. Apparently, each side put in six names, from what I heard. And Cox and my names were the only two that were overlapping. And we, therefore, began again hearings on a locomotive engineers wage case in Chicago.

Cox, in the meantime had been heading up an academic group to

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supply position papers and other materials, such as speech material, for the presidential campaign, mostly I believe through Theodore Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen]. I had, at Cox's request, prepared some material, not an extensive amount. I think he had been drawing much more heavily on the people in the Cambridge area, such as Paul Samuelson [Paul A. Samuelson], Walt Rostow [Walt Whitman Rostow], and J. Kenneth Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith].

When we were holding hearings in Chicago, an interesting thing happened. In the midst of this we ran into Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] at the Chicago Club where we had been staying, in the cocktail bar, and we talked briefly with him. I had known Adlai since the '56 campaign. Indeed, at one point I had been asked if I would take a leave from Princeton and work a bit with, for Stevenson on the road. I declined. I think John Brademas from Indiana did do some of that.

I had been in a group with the Democratic Advisory Council that had met in New York. We'd met under Bill Benton's [William B. Benton] auspices to some extent, I think, three or four times in New York. I had been also at Harriman's [W. Averell Harriman] house when there was a meeting and ex-President Truman [Harry S. Truman] was there. So I had worked in the labor area and the social security and unemployment compensation area in connection with that advisory council group. So I did know Stevenson fairly well.



And he asked us to lunch the next day, Cox and me. And we assumed that he had something that he was really going to propose politically. We went there to find that Stevenson had forgotten that he'd asked us to lunch the next day. He had made no preparations for lunch for us. He had made preparations for sandwiches, and a piece of pie, and something to drink in his office for the office staff there including Bill Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz]. And because of something Truman had said that morning, Adlai Stevenson was going to make a response to television cameras right after lunch. He was terribly embarrassed; he asked to see if he couldn't get a couple more places set at the table for us. Then he suddenly changed his mind, and after some indecision, we did eat in a lunch room in the building where his office was.

In the course of this luncheon we talked about a variety of things, programs for different problems including, I recall, transportation and other issues. Towards the end, Stevenson did begin to talk about Kennedy. He said that, in the end, that he would support Kennedy if he thought Kennedy could win. But he had advice from people in the field to the effect that it would be very difficult for Kennedy to win because of his Catholicism. We did not really pursue the matter much further. He knew that Cox and I both were in favor of Kennedy

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at that time. And we were not sure in the end why he asked us to lunch except as a friendly gesture because he knew us.

CAMPBELL: Do you remember what month this would have been in 1960?

LESTER: I think it would have been either July or August. We were in Chicago conducting arbitration hearings. We'd been out there quite a long time, and my guess is it would be late in July or early August.

CAMPBELL: Before or after the democratic convention?

LESTER: This was before the convention. I was a delegate to the Democratic Convention from Mercer County in New Jersey.

CAMPBELL: This was before. So it probably would have put it in July then.

LESTER: Yes, it probably was. We finished up our hearings out there. Just as a footnote, we were able this time to get a unanimous agreement on the decision. So that the decision was signed by both the management and union representatives, two from each plus the two of us.

I came back. I did prepare material for a speech that president-nominee Kennedy was to give in New York at some businessman's group. My impression was that relatively little out of the material I prepared was used in looking at the final speech. I did find out from Cox at meetings with him day by day in Chicago that he had not been very effective, or not as

effective as he'd hoped to be, in connection with the feeding of material to Senator Kennedy for the campaign. I think this was largely because—although he didn't give it to me just as plain as that—largely because Ted Sorensen wanted to serve as the person through whom all material funneled. And Sorensen, not infrequently, dealt directly with people who were contributing material to the campaign, particularly from the academics from up around Cambridge [Massachusetts]. And this meant that Cox was kind of shunted aside or left out.

I was a convention delegate from this district at the 1956 democratic convention and also at the 1960 democratic convention. I was very close to Thorn Lord who was the state chairman residing in Princeton. And I did a lot of work for Lord, particularly at the '56 convention, but also, to some extent, at the '60 convention. I had been quite active in local politics, serving for a time on the elected council of Princeton borough.

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CAMPBELL: Surely... [Interruption]

LESTER: I guess I should have mentioned that as an active political participant of the Democratic Party here in New Jersey, I had seen Senator Kennedy speak at least twice here in connection with fund raising dinners: once in Trenton and once in New Brunswick [New Jersey]. I remember in Trenton he came rather late in the program and Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy], I guess, was with him at that time. Yes, she was. This was before the one in New Brunswick. And he had a very good speech. But by the time Governor Meyner [Robert B. Meyner] finished on the long program, Kennedy really read too fast and was not as effective as I had hoped that he would be. In the New Brunswick meeting where he was speaking before the Middlesex County organization—but it was a statewide arrangement—he was exceedingly effective. I can recall that. And as a matter of fact, I have at home a program for that dinner on which he wrote a very nice note for my wife [Doris N. Lester].

This was one thing I think that was always true of Senator Kennedy, he was a very gracious person with people that he knew. He really made you feel his warmth, even though it was combined with a sense of dignity for the office he held, whether he was senator, and especially when he was president.

CAMPBELL: Could I ask you a little bit about the New Jersey delegation in 1960? That has been an object of some interest ever since.

LESTER: Well, I was only an alternate. That happened because there was alleged to have been a flipping of coins among the four of us resulting in two becoming delegates and two alternates. I was fairly close to things in the '60 convention; I was in and out of Meyner's office, and not infrequently. The delegation, of course, was badly split. Early on the delegation had made an agreement, as I understand it. They voted that they would, without qualification, vote for Meyner on the first ballot. Some of the Democratic leaders, particularly Dave Wilentz [David T. Wilentz] of Middlesex County, were insisting that we hold to that. Even at that time, John Kenny [John V. Kenny]

had no love for Meyner but he wasn't playing a significant role in the actions at that time. Bob Burkhardt [Robert J. Burkhardt] who was a kind of executive secretary for the delegation as well as secretary of state and executive secretary of the Democratic committee in the state, had two or three weeks before the convention broken with Meyner and was supporting Kennedy. There was no conversation going on between Burkhardt and Meyner; the break had been pretty complete.

In the delegation there were a group, particularly from Hudson

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County and from Essex County, and also some from Middlesex and Mercer and Camden, who were for Kennedy. Vincent J. Murphy, the president of the AFL-CIO, who was a delegate, as well as a group from Hudson County were very strong for Kennedy and were practically ready to break away from the pledge. In the meantime Frank Thompson [Frank Thompson, Jr.] had been very active. And also Ralph Dungan.... Frank Thompson, our congressman, and Ralph Dungan had been given, I guess, by the Kennedy forces, the New Jersey delegation as his area to keep track of. At the convention I did go around and see the people in the Kennedy organization: Ken Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], and others that I knew there.

The thing that happened—and I could see it happen in an amazing fashion—was that when Meyner put up his headquarters, quite a large number of people came to that headquarters to meet him and talk briefly with him. These were just people at the convention, not the top people. But this had the effect on him of making him feel that he had quite a bit of strength, popular strength. It was unfortunate. Secondly, from my conversations with the people around Meyner and the times that I saw Myner with Wilentz, I felt sure that he had been in contact with the Stevenson forces and with Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] forces. And he was spearheading a holdout in the hopes that Kennedy could be blocked. He could see that he had no possibility of being a vice presidential candidate on a Kennedy ticket, but he might be on a Johnson ticket, or some other arrangement.

When Meyner's name was placed in nomination, a part of the delegation went through the motions of celebrating, but there were a large number of the delegation who didn't participate in that performance in the aisles and who, in a sense, were in rebellion. My recollection is that Meyner didn't—and Wilentz, who was a national committeeman from the state of New Jersey—didn't hold any meeting of the delegation until shortly before the nominations and balloting were to begin. And when that happened, if I had been a delegate with power to vote—because of my closeness to Kennedy—I would have gotten up and voted for Kennedy. In this pre-nomination, there was a long discussion. And I remember Vince Murphy got up and spoke. And Thorn Lord, who was really for Kennedy, did too, but as state chairman he was not able to go against Meyner. Dave Wilentz was, most of this time, very close to Meyner and calling the shots in good part. Others were in a kind of rebellion for Kennedy. But Wilentz and some delegates loyal to Meyner got up—and said that there was this iron-bound agreement that the delegation would vote for Meyner on the first ballot and that we had to stick with it. And the implication was that we might be able to have a basis for throwing our weight after voting for Meyner on the first

ballot. Many people got up and said we would be missing the boat. Nevertheless, there was a vote and the vote was on who would be supported after the first ballot of the delegation going for Meyner. And as I recall it—I've forgotten how many votes the total delegation had, maybe forty-two, there were thirty-two and a half for Kennedy on the second ballot, including Meyner himself said that his vote was for Kennedy on the second ballot.

We went into the convention hall at the time of the balloting and Frank Thompson and Ralph Dungan and John V. Kenny were over at the headquarters of the Kennedy people. They had the predictions of the Kennedy people as to how each state would go and if each state went that way, Kennedy would win. Their hope was that they could get New Jersey to change if by the time the voting on the first ballot got near New Jersey, it was clear that the balloting was going roughly as the Kennedy people predicted and Kennedy would win, then they hoped they could get Meyner to release the delegation and vote on the first ballot for Kennedy.

It began to be clear before the voting got to New Jersey that Kennedy was likely to win, but they could not get to Meyner and get him to release the delegation from the pledge. When that did not occur the fellow who was acting as head of the delegation, a Senator Kelly [William F. Kelly, Jr.] up in Hudson County, was a most distraught man. He had to put in the vote for the New Jersey delegation for Meyner, knowing that the whole Hudson delegation was for Kennedy. He felt that he had to go through with it because Meyner would not release him at that point.

Later on in August when we professors met with Kennedy at the Kennedy compound in Hyannisport, Kennedy asked me at the end of our meeting: "How can you explain the behavior of the New Jersey delegation?" I replied that I believed that Meyner, having been bitten by the bug, just would not release the delegation; he hoped still that he might have some possibility of being a vice presidential candidate. He was, of course, close to the Stevenson people through his wife. And he had certainly worked with the Johnson people. And he may have given them some kind of pledge that he would hold the delegates to voting for him on the first ballot.

CAMPBELL: How was your meeting in Hyannisport in August arranged?

LESTER: It was arranged in Washington. It must've been by Professor Cox.

CAMPBELL: Who participated? Do you recall who was...

LESTER: Well, Ken Galbraith was there, and Paul Samuelson.

CAMPBELL: And Seymour Harris [Seymour E. Harris]. He mentions it in his book.

LESTER: Yes. Seymour Harris was there. I was there, and Cox. Now, I think that's it.

CAMPBELL: Was there any sort of agenda prepared in advance, any sort of idea of...

LESTER: Yes. We were allocated certain subjects. I think Seymour was allocated the international area, the balance of payments and that sort of thing. I don't know if Ken was allocated anything. I was allocated the subject of predictions with respect to unemployment and the economy over the next six months. And I don't know whether Paul Samuelson had an assignment.... I'm sure each one had something.

The reason I recall Seymour's so vividly is that he came rather late in his presentation and he took so long in delivery. This was another thing about Kennedy that was remarkable. Some of us got a little impatient with Seymour because it was so long and seemed it wasn't necessary to go into the detail and clutter up Kennedy's mind with so much of these details that Seymour presented. But Kennedy was gracious. He didn't seem uneasy, unhappy as much as the rest of us did.

It was an interesting experience. We, as you perhaps know, sat around in the living room and began these conversations—there was an agenda. There was a series of subjects that we were supposed to go through. I don't remember the order in which they were taken up. I know that Seymour's discussion was last. I remember that Ken Galbraith made a strong statement for Kennedy to make an appeal for the public to accept some necessary sacrifices. The British elections had just been held and the winner over there had appealed to the nation to accept some sacrifices in order to come out of their difficulties. And Ken very shrewdly indicated that Kennedy should in the campaign emphasize that. Appeal to the American people, the willingness to sacrifice if they could see gains from that. That was one thing. I remember I had this question of what would the economy look like during the campaign period. I had various bases for trying to project that. And it did look to me as though it was going to continue without much change, about the way it had been and might get just a slight bit worse. After I'd presented my reasoning, Paul Samuelson did also say quite a bit in which he seemed to agree. I think he may have had presented an even better basis for his analysis than I did. I was not sure why

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I was given that subject—the forecasting of the economy—because I was not an expert in forecasting, although I'd done a great deal of work on unemployment and some on monetary policy.

Seymour, on the international side, painted a fairly black picture. One trouble with Seymour in general is that he has a little difficulty in systematically developing something and coming to a conclusion that way. And he cluttered up his presentation, as I've indicated, with a great deal of detail which didn't indicate very well what the situation would be in the end. How you added all the facts and figures up and came to a net conclusion and what should be done about it. In the course of our discussion in the living room there was a call from then Senator Lyndon Johnson to Kennedy, presidential nominee. Kennedy went out and

talked with Lyndon for a while on the phone and then came back. Kennedy indicated the gist of the conversation. But I confess, I don't really remember it now. It was some issue, some problem. Somebody was not behaving correctly. I think it had to do with the South actually.

We then went out on the *Marlin* and continued our conversations. Actually Seymour's presentation was out on the *Marlin*. Mine, I'm pretty sure, was in the living room before we went out. And we had lunch on the boat. After we finished these formal talks and discussions of the subjects on our agenda, we had a pleasant general discussion about all kinds of things with respect to the campaign and with respect to individuals. And then after the meeting at Hyannisport, we went back to my summer place on Cape Cod. It was on the way home for most of them. I have a place on the South Shore which is between Falmouth and Hyannis—and had some snacks and liquid refreshment.

CAMPBELL:      What was your recollection of Senator Kennedy's—or could you determine his major concerns about the economy at that time?

LESTER:          Well, he asked us a lot of questions and what the implications of certain things would be. But he, I think, looked on it in part as a briefing session and in part as a basis for trying to figure out how to play the issues and what kind of a position he should take and how his speeches should be oriented. Now, I was sure at that time that Galbraith was doing a significant amount of speechwriting for Kennedy. And I don't know about the others. Samuelson, I would say, was the most impressive fellow in his analysis. It was quite clear that Kennedy was impressed with Samuelson at that meeting.

CAMPBELL:      And subsequently, I believe, Kennedy offered him

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the chairmanship of the Council [Council of Economic Advisers].

LESTER:          I think he did. I don't know that for sure. I have the impression that Kennedy had maybe not met Samuelson before. But I did get the distinct impression out of that meeting that he was very impressed with Samuelson's ability.

CAMPBELL:      Did you consider joining the administration at any time?

LESTER:          Well, I did, yes. Ralph Dungan asked me about that. Two things happened to discourage me from wanting a full-time appointment. The Sunday after the election, in a way that I cannot explain, I ruptured another disc in my back. I first ruptured a disc playing tennis at Haverford College in 1937. And I had difficulty with that ruptured disc off and on, maybe a couple of times a year until '49. Then it got so bad that when I got up in the morning I couldn't even... [Interruption] ...sit down to shave with my electric razor. I had an operation in the fall of 1949 at the University of Pennsylvania

hospital in Philadelphia. It turned out I had two ruptured discs. And the operation was a rather severe one for me. After I got home I had muscle spasms and intense pain. I had to go back to the hospital and learn to walk all over again. And then it cleared up. They told me—the doctors—that I should not play tennis anymore. I used to love to play tennis. The Sunday after the election in November 1960, I was out knocking leaves out of our hedge and hurt my back again. I didn't feel it until later on that evening. Apparently, I had ruptured another disc in my back. So I was undergoing that problem a bit, and didn't feel that under those circumstances I ought to take on an administrative post in the new administration.

The second thing was that having been in the federal government in the 1930s and 1940s—I was not sure whether I would be most effective in a regular position, depending a bit on the position. I noticed that there were remarks in the newspapers, perhaps based on what correspondents dreamed up or what had been given out by some people in the Kennedy administration; I was mentioned for both the Council of Economic Advisers and the Secretary of Labor. The Secretary of Labor job I wouldn't think I would have been especially good for at that time. I might have considered the council job. I had talked with Ralph Dungan a number of times during this period and had told Ralph those two things: that I had ruptured a disc and I didn't know what the situation would be over time; and secondly, that it was possible that I could go on the three-person council, but that I did not feel I should take a large administrative position. And my guess is—and

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this is only a guess—that some people, I don't know who it would have been, felt that as an economist, my area of labor economics and manpower was not quite in the mainstream. The Council's problems would be heavily monetary, fiscal, and international. And for that reason it might be better not to have a labor economist on the council itself. And once having selected Heller [Walter Wolfgang Heller], the emphasis was more on the monetary-fiscal side. That's just a suspicion on my part.

CAMPBELL: You, very quickly, however once the administration was underway, became involved in the airlines labor dispute of 1961. Did you feel that the commission approach was the most appropriate way?

LESTER: In that one? Yes. We probably did as well as could be done in that area. I don't know. The President got the strike stopped. It was a very difficult thing to work out because the flight engineers [Flight Engineers International Association] were really not necessary in the newer planes. It was a kind of feather-bedding arrangement. And the flight engineers saw that if they took the pilot training and they really became pilots, that their organization and that their separate craft, if you could put it that way, would disappear. And although there were some people in the flight engineers—particularly those on American [American Airlines] who were willing to move in that direction, the fellow who headed the [Eastern Airlines] division in the flight engineers and the president of flight engineers, decided they could not make any kind of a compromise. They wouldn't sit down with the pilots and talk. And although we worked along and kept the

thing going, it was quite clear that no satisfactory arrangement could be worked out as long as that fellow, whatever his name was, was the head of the Eastern flight engineers and Brown [Ronald A. Brown], the president, continued in place.

Pan American [Pan American Airlines] flight engineers also were a pretty good group. A combination of the TWA [Trans World Airlines] engineers, who were in the mid-west, and the flight engineers of PA, if they could have gotten together, might have been able to work out something. We even spent a whole week in Aspen [Colorado]. And we had the flight engineers group in one hotel and the pilots in another hotel. But we never were able even to get them to go to a cocktail party together. We did have a cocktail party which a couple of the flight engineers did attend. But it was just that things were so bitter between them that it wasn't possible.

An interesting thing, when we met with the President at one point in our proceedings. I was then rather affected by this ruptured disc in my back and I was wearing a brace. I talked a bit to the President about my back trouble. I had not

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realized then that he wore a brace. It must've been a kind of beaverboard or something similar because when he slapped it, it resounded. He said to me—I think he meant it seriously—that he had this lady doctor for his back. Her name began with T.

CAMPBELL: Travell [Janet G. Travell].

LESTER: Travell. He said, "Well, what you ought to do is see Dr. Travell." Well I never followed that one up.

CAMPBELL: In the process of your work with the airlines groups, who did you work with most closely in the administration?

LESTER: I should have added that after that summertime that I got a disc operation at Columbia Presbyterian in New York City. And one week after I got out of the hospital I was down in Washington in a hotel room—I didn't go out of the hotel room, but they had a special hard bed brought in for me. And we worked on the final report. And at that time we worked very closely with Bill Wirtz.

CAMPBELL: I see.

LESTER: We were still in negotiations while working on the report. Nate Feinsinger [Nathan P. Feinsinger] as chairman, was providing much of the leadership. I think we had about a week while we were working on the report the same time we were mediating. I know that we worked with Bill Wirtz. I saw him frequently. I remember, one night we were working on the report he stayed up to 2 o'clock with us. And he went over, I believe, the actual draft of our report before it was released.



CAMPBELL: I noticed that there was your group formed and then there were several sort of satellite commissions that seemed to be concerned with merely one dispute. Was that a problem for you? There would have been a commission formed, perhaps, to deal exclusively with Northwest Airlines.

LESTER: Yes. That was a problem. Paul Guthrie [Paul N. Guthrie], a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was the chairman of that, a fellow I knew quite well. I knew him because I was on the War Labor Board [National War Labor Board] during the war [World War II] and saw him some then. We did actually meet with his group during the course of the

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time we were in Washington, not to try to make it their decision and our report the same but to try to make it so that there wouldn't be a conflict and to let each other know what we were thinking.

CAMPBELL: I noticed that twice your commission came out very strongly urging a merger between the airlines pilots association [International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations] and the flight engineers. You did it first in May and then subsequently again in October. I wondered...

LESTER: It was quite clear to us that that was the only solution.

CAMPBELL: The only way. I wondered if something had happened between May and October that led you to believe in October it would be favorably received or...

LESTER: Well, yes. There were some things that were happening in the flight engineers. In these hearings that I held in New York with the Pan Am people it was quite clear that the leader there, who subsequently became president of the flight engineers actually, Bill something, was really good to work with.... They were all quite good people. And they really, I think, understood that that was going to be necessary. And they were very worried that they would get frozen out. You see, the flight engineers had lost out on Western [Western Airlines]. They'd had a strike and they'd lost out on Western. And they were against this fellow on Eastern who may have had almost a death wish. Brown was not a strong guy and it wasn't clear where he was going. He was fluctuating a bit back and forth. He was having real difficulty in figuring out where his political balance should be. So he—he actually, to some extent, talked with us fairly frankly. And so we did have hopes. They were no more than hopes because we didn't think that Brown could do it, but we thought this might provide him with a basis for saying to some of the others, "Well, they've looked into this and what they say, I think, is what they really feel after looking over the facts. And we have to take that into account."

I don't know if you know Nate Feinsinger. He's a very straightforward fellow and leveled with them, I think, and so did Keith Mann and I. I think it got across to them that we really had their interest in mind and that we were trying to do what we thought would be best and work out what we thought would be best for them and that we weren't, in any sense of the word, the tools of the airline pilots. But I'm afraid that Brown felt himself in such a box that he could not move

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as we thought maybe he could.

CAMPBELL: Was the fact that it seemed necessary to form your commission and the several other smaller commissions evidence of failure or as sort of a breakdown of the National Mediation Board?

LESTER: Yes. I think, really, it was a breakdown. But I think the trouble was that only over an extended period and only, perhaps, by people from outside, was there hope of trying to work things out for the flight engineers. They had a distinct feeling that the mediation board was pro...

[END SIDE 1, TAPE 1; BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

...airline pilots. They didn't have confidence in the mediation board. And I think the hope was that they might have in the end confidence in us and we could convince them. We were not really successful in the end. I think there was a chance that we might have been successful if Brown could have been toppled or moved as we suggested. I don't know, within the union, all the cross currents that pressured him. But it was evident to me that the Pan Am people might have been able to work things out for them; the TWA people were a possibility; and in American there were some stirrings. Maybe that wasn't enough. And the flight engineers were so concerned that their craft would disappear, and they had a lot of people who were on the ground, who were ground crew in addition to those who had been promoted from the ground crew into flight engineers. They were afraid that all of those people would be blocked, those in planes were afraid they would be swallowed up because it would be a small fraction of the total of the pilots.

CAMPBELL: I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. I noted you have a most interesting book out on unemployment compensation. At the same time you must've been preparing the book, the Kennedy administration introduced some proposed changes to social security along those lines. I wondered if you were involved at all? Had you made any input to the administration's proposals?

LESTER: I don't remember doing a great deal on social security. I did not work at the White House level on unemployment compensation. I did work very

much with a group that was working with Bob Goodwin [Robert C. Goodwin] in the Labor Department. I had many frequent meetings, many meetings on unemployment compensation and correspondence on it, not as effective as I would have hoped because there was a great suspicion by the

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state administrators of the Kennedy administration people on unemployment compensation. They were worried that this was, our proposal was, a means of federalizing them. They were against federal benefit standards and so on. We did spend a lot of time and we had a lot of background papers worked up. And we did work out a bill that had some compromises in it. It was, I think, a fairly good bill. I don't remember too much about it. There were hearings on it. I did not appear at any of the hearings, as I recall. But it's conceivable that I may have.

CAMPBELL: Let's talk about the President's Commission on the Status of Women. I wonder if you were consulted very early about this. Were you involved in the early planning, the idea itself through the commission?

LESTER: It must've been either November or December when this first was brought to my attention. I was asked if I would be willing to go on it. And Esther Peterson [Esther E. Peterson], whom I had known a little bit but not well, talked with me. I guess it was fairly early because she and I went to see Mrs. Roosevelt [Eleanor R. Roosevelt] in her apartment in New York. It must've been about December sixty...

CAMPBELL: '61.

LESTER: ...'61. Right. It may have been even before that because I guess by then Mrs. Roosevelt had practically agreed, if not agreed, to be chairman. And I remember we talked about the work the commission would do. We talked about people. I'm pretty sure that at that time the commission had not been appointed. And Mrs. Roosevelt, of course, was acquainted with a great many of these people, much more so than I was. And she had some very acute things to say.

CAMPBELL: She then was actively interested and involved in the selection process.

LESTER: She was. She was tremendously so. We spent, we had lunch there and spent, I would say, at least two hours, maybe even a little longer.

CAMPBELL: At that stage, do you recall what your expectations were, and the expectations of Mrs. Roosevelt for the accomplishments of the group? Did you hope to sort of pinpoint the problem and highlight the problem? Or did you really hope to generate specific legislation?

LESTER: I don't think we talked about the legislation quite so much then. We had talked about the areas where work needed to be done and the way the commission ought to operate in terms of committees, something on the timing, and heavily of people. And question of the Equal Rights Amendment and the influence that the proponents could or should have. And of course we got a great deal into the economic aspects, equal pay and, of course, equal rights, too. But at that point we were talking pretty heavily about people.

CAMPBELL: I have a list here of the commission members. I suppose the members of the Cabinet are easily understood, but it was interesting, for example, that Senator Aiken [George D. Aiken] was chosen as a commission member.

LESTER: Well, I think President Kennedy was fairly close to Aiken. And we wanted a Republican. We wanted it bipartisan. And, Aiken actually turned out to be quite good. He had a person on his staff whom we dealt with mostly. But he attended meetings. And we found Aiken quite good. He really went along in the end more readily than one might have expected. And I think he understood some of the issues all right.

CAMPBELL: Do you have the list in front of you now? I wondered if you glanced down that list what you might recall about the selection process for some of these people. I know that Mr. Nicholson [Norman E. Nicholson] was there, simply as Mr. Kaiser's [Edgar F. Kaiser] representative.

LESTER: That's right. Norm, he was Kaiser's man. Most of these people really represented something. Henry David was there, I suppose from the Columbia University Conservation of Human Resources Project, that was established when Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] was president there, and later the National Manpower Council.

CAMPBELL: The New School for Social Research?

LESTER: Yes. David was president there at the time he was appointed to the Commission. Here is a book edited by Henry David in 1960 in the National Manpower Council series. Henry got on the Commission for that interest. You see if you look at these names, Margaret Hickey [Margaret A. Hickey] was on this National Manpower Council. I'm sure that's how Henry got on the Commission because of the work that they'd done. They published a book entitled *Woman Power*.

CAMPBELL: Had you, by the way, been interested particularly

in that?

LESTER: I had been a consultant to the National Manpower Council and had been at some of their meetings. And I think, I did work a little bit on the *Woman Power* book because I met Miss Hickey there. I had met her before the President's Commission on the Status of Women was set up.

CAMPBELL: What do you recall about how Mrs. Boddy [Sarabeth Boddy] who was on the commission?

LESTER: Well, that was a very interesting.... She was Lyndon Johnson's person, Mrs. Roosevelt handled her quite well. When Boddy first came on the commission, she had all the prejudices of a Texan who comes from a fairly well-to-do environment. She used to get up and give examples of people who were, you know, getting more than they deserved from government and the ill effects of the minimum wage and other labor legislation. Mrs. Roosevelt handled her quite well. She let her talk some. And then I think Mrs. Roosevelt actually told Johnson of the troubles that we were having with her. And I think maybe Johnson said something to Mrs. Boddy.

I remember we went to Vice President Johnson's house. He invited the commission members out to his house—Lady Bird [Claudia Alta “Lady Bird” Johnson] was there—to a kind of cocktail party or reception. I was there with Mrs. Roosevelt when we shook hands with Vice President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. We talked a bit about the commission and something was said about Mrs. Boddy and Mrs. Roosevelt said something like, “Well, I think she's learning things. We've had some problems. But I think she's coming along.” It may have been a little more cutting than that, but I'm sure Vice President Johnson got the point.

Subsequently we arranged for a conference in a large room in the building next to the Department of Labor building. We arranged to have Johnson, Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] and Bill Wirtz on the panel of speakers. We had people in from industry and from the unions. The room was filled. There must've been two hundred and fifty representatives there. We had them all in for a one day conference on what we were doing and getting their advice.

For some reason or other Mrs. Roosevelt could not be there to serve as chairman so I served as chairman. And Lyndon Johnson had flown up all that night to be present there to give a talk. As I said, we had Lyndon; Bobby Kennedy; and Bill Wirtz; and, perhaps, a fourth. And Lyndon was really quite good. I think Liz Carpenter [Elizabeth S. Carpenter]

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had kept him in touch with what the commission was doing. He gave a very good talk, made it rather personal because he referred a couple of times to his daughters, to the extent to which he tied up the questions of equal opportunity and ability to work out a career or whatever other type of life a young lady might wish to engage in without being restricted by outmoded traditions or legal holdovers and so on. That meeting went much better than we

had anticipated, partly because of what Johnson said. Even at that time, I think he had influence with the business people and with the people, the southern representatives that it was helpful for us to have.

CAMPBELL: You mentioned discussing initial organizational plans and things there with Mrs. Roosevelt that day. Would you have been the person responsible for, perhaps, making most of the decisions about how committees were to be broken up and things? Just who did carry the ball?

LESTER: No. I would say, of the three of us I was less knowledgeable of the people in this area. And I'd say Esther Peterson, of those currently in question, was probably the most knowledgeable. Mrs. Roosevelt had a knowledge of people who were in public life, or people who were in trade union movement, or people who were in the equal rights movement. It was probably as great as Esther's, probably more. Although Esther had worked for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers as a lobbyist with Congress and had been down in Washington a lot, Mrs. Roosevelt knew a lot of people and knew them well.

CAMPBELL: Was the commission organization, as it worked out, effective?

LESTER: On the whole, it was. But, of course, a different group might have been equally effective. And, of course, the Cabinet officers were represented for the most part by people on their staffs.

CAMPBELL: Who of the commission members did turn out to be most active in commission affairs?

LESTER: Of the Cabinet people and the Congress people.... It's hard to say because they had their staff people. Now the staff person for Robert Kennedy was quite effective. The staff person for Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman] was quite effective also. We didn't get so much from the staff person for Hodges [Luther H. Hodges]. Of course, Willard Wirtz had Esther Peterson there. HEW [Department of Health, Education & Welfare] wasn't so influential. Senator Aiken's man did more behind the scenes.

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Now, Senator Neuberger [Maurine B. Neuberger] did participate a great deal. She was quite effective. Edith Green [Edith S. Green] was too. She was a person that you felt you had to cater to a bit. She had her own views that she asserted very vigorously. John Macy [John W. Macy, Jr.] did participate a great deal, as did the people he had in the civil service commission whose names I can't all remember now. One was Catherine East [Catherine Shipe East]. But there were people over there that did work very closely with us.

CAMPBELL: A lady named Harrison [Evelyn Harrison], I believe.

LESTER: Yes.

CAMPBELL: Evelyn Harrison.

LESTER: Evelyn Harrison was probably the one we worked the most with. Mary Bunting [Mary Ingraham Bunting] was a very effective person. She did a great deal. At meetings she was very effective. Mary Callahan was all right too. She represented her point of view. But I wouldn't say she was highly effective. Henry David, in his own way, was quite effective. Henry was quite willing to assert himself and was very effective in bringing people together. Dorothy Height [Dorothy I. Height], I think we all had a considerable respect for her. She was very effective in presenting the problems of the people that she represented. Margaret Hickey, of course, was really one of the outstanding people in her participation, her interest, and her ability to work things out. Viola Hymes [Viola Hoffman Hymes] was quite good. On the whole, she was active and had a great deal of knowledge. And could present her point of view fairly effectively. Margaret Mealey [Margaret J. Mealey] was not one of the most influential members. Norm Nicholson, he didn't have much to say. But he went along and was helpful. Marguerite Rawalt in terms of her special interests which were legal, was quite insistent. In that sense she had quite an influence. William Schnitzler [William F. Schnitzler], whom I had known slightly before this, with the trade unions movement back of him had significant influence. I don't think it was so much in terms of his own thought-out views as what he represented. He had staff people who worked with us further down the line. Caroline Ware [Caroline F. Ware] certainly asserted herself. I think she had, if anything, the problems of a person who had made up her mind some time ago and was asserting those opinions now. She was quite able and persuasive. Cynthia Wedel [Cynthia Clark Wedel] was good and she represented a group that was quite important. All of the commission members, I would have to say, did work fairly hard, did the best they could. I think they all deserve a great deal of credit for the way things worked out.

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Mrs. Roosevelt was a remarkable person. She could conduct those meetings very effectively. She knew in advance where the problems were. She could work around them, get by them pretty effectively. And I think she had the respect of all and, particularly, the ladies on that group. If it was necessary to get an agreement on something or to get people to move along and cease pursuing a special point of view which really didn't have much support, Mrs. Roosevelt was very effective in handling the situation with grace. She really was exceedingly effective in chairing the meetings in view of the time she could give to working on the problems of the commission.

Esther, of course, gained the affection and goodwill and respect of pretty much everybody there. She worked very hard. They knew that her heart was in the right place. She

was, of course, in contact with many people and she really did a great deal in the way of managing things.

CAMPBELL: Did you feel that the support from the administration was adequate?

LESTER: Yes, it was. There was no doubt about that. I think the President gave us all the support we needed. He had a great deal of respect for Mrs. Roosevelt. And when I went over to the White House with Esther Peterson, I think there was a great deal of respect there for Esther Peterson. Presumably the President felt that this was something that was highly desirable to do from the point of view of the problems that the government would face. Problems that he and his administration would face politically if the commission was not successful.

CAMPBELL: There was some movement during the time the commission sat. There was a decision by the Attorney General and a subsequent order by the President to enlarge employment opportunities for women in the federal service. And then in June of 1963, the equal pay bill passed. But also during those years the President issued an executive order on equal employment opportunity and managed to leave out the question of sex.

LESTER: Yes. Well, I think some of the staff people like Miss Harrison and others working with John Macy were able to have the commission contribute quite a bit in the area of federal employment. Commission members were also influential in working out and passing the Equal Pay Act.

CAMPBELL: You chaired, I think, one of the committees, the committee on private employment. And in your

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recommendations, the committee recommendations, recommended an executive order putting the good faith of the government or something behind equal employment opportunity for women...

LESTER: That was about as far as we thought we could go then.

CAMPBELL: Well, you've anticipated my question. It was a mild proposal, I thought.

LESTER: Yes. Looking back, it was. That was about as far as we thought we could go at that time. Now you see, looking back, it does look too mild. But even to go that far was difficult in some cases because we had a lot of discussion with the people in the trade union movement. They had agreements which were in violation of that. There were others who were worried about any weakening or repealing of state protective legislation and what any attempt at movement for equal employment



opportunities would do where you had state weightlifting legislation; where you have hours legislation, which the trade union movement had supported and had gotten built into these laws. Of course, some of the state protective laws, such as house legislation, included men in the coverage.

In 1964, much to our amazement, a congressman on the rules committee [Senate Committee on Rules and Administration] from Virginia, included women in a civil rights bill.

CAMPBELL: Judge Smith [Howard W. Smith].

LESTER: Yes, Judge Smith put that into the civil rights bill in '64 on the assumption that that would sink the bill, that it would get so much opposition then by putting that equal rights in, equal employment opportunities by putting sex in there, that the trade union movement and others would secretly lobby against it. It didn't work out that way. And that was a tremendous advantage. We didn't dream that we could get anything like that in legislation at that time.

CAMPBELL: Do you have memories of the back and forth that might have gone on when your... [Interruption] ...if you recalled serious negotiations about this report.

LESTER: There were a lot of controversies, you know. But I suppose memory is good at separating out and neglecting the problems and recalling the gains and satisfactions. We had some difficulties in my committee, on the matter of equal work rights and also on state

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protective legislation. And we had controversy on the Equal Rights Amendment. For practical and other reasons, many members of the commission were opposed to pressing for an equal rights amendment to the Constitution. You will note that the report is silent on that subject.

Also there were difficulties on some legal matters, although they were not very serious. They involved state laws with respect to equal right to service on juries; equal rights in terms of the communal property; in terms of serving as an executor of an estate. There were a number of those things. There was some conflict with Caroline Ware on some items.

CAMPBELL: I believe she dissented to the mild proposal for the executive order. I think she dissented and felt that it should have been stronger.

LESTER: That may be. I just don't remember that.

CAMPBELL: Did you get indications as your committee work went on and then when you presented the final report, of President Kennedy's views of what you

did?

LESTER: No. I did not. You see, we knew pretty well how the Cabinet people and the congressional people felt. Edith Green, I'm sure that Esther Peterson had to do quite a bit of working things out with Edith Green. But we had the support of those people. There was one other question that we had some problem with in my committee. Esther and I went over to the White House on that and met with Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman]. That was a proposal; and I don't remember now for sure just what happened to it. It was a proposal to insist on equal treatment of women in the state employment agencies. That for job openings that came up, there would be no discrimination in terms of traditional notions about where women should work and where they shouldn't work. And I remember that somebody had said, "Well, there're certain jobs that women ought not to have that involved traveling, let's say, a traveling salesman." And Mrs. Roosevelt made some remark that was quite humorous at the time, which I can't reproduce, to the effect that she couldn't understand why women couldn't travel. She thought she'd done about as much traveling as most other people. We went over there and I remember that Mike Feldman really quizzed us. He was very concerned about whether we had worked this thing all out and what would happen in the South and what did we really mean by this. And there were political problems since those employment agencies, although paid for by federal funds, were technically state agencies and what power did we have to control those offices which were really state offices?

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I confess that we had not worked the whole thing out in great detail and it was not possible to do it fully because it varied from state to state. And it was a question of just what kind of an order would be put out; what you would do if there were violations by the state agencies. And I think this is the sort of thing that as a general principle, it seems clear that it's desirable and ought to be done. And yet, the practical working out of how you could do it and enforce it in many areas, was something that really troubled us.

We also learned some of the problems in application from the meeting in Washington held with representatives from companies in various industries. I remember I worked on the list of those to be invited to attend. Many of them had attended one or more of the annual conferences that our Industrial Relations Section at Princeton had for years conducted each September for industrial relations executives. And I had also helped to select some of the people on some of those committees, one or more from industry, because I knew them pretty well. The people that we had there, many of whom I had talked with there or corresponded with afterwards, were quite favorably impressed. We had a lot of goodwill with the larger companies. But the question of how you could use that goodwill and apply it to the state employment services which these large companies were not favorably disposed toward. They wanted to do their own employee recruiting, their own hiring for the most part, and felt that the state employment services were too tied up with unemployment compensation and often got what they called the bottom of the barrel, the people who were the last to be employed and the first to be laid off. These were the problems that were difficult to work out. To some

extent they were in the area of public administration and the relationship of the federal government to the states.

CAMPBELL: Do you recall—I believe it was in October of 1963 that the report was issued—at that time were you generally satisfied with what the Commission had accomplished?

LESTER: Yes. I think we felt that we'd accomplished quite a bit. Perhaps, it was about as far as we could go at that time. I was a little surprised actually that, in the end we had no dissenting opinion. I had a suspicion that Mrs. Boddy would come along in the end, which she did.

I thought it was possible that Caroline Ware might put in a statement. I didn't think that Schnitzler would, although he expressed some reservations from time to time.

CAMPBELL: Why was the decision made and by whom to continue

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practically the entire membership of this commission on the subsequent Citizen's Advisory Council?

LESTER: I don't know who made that decision. After the report was completed, I was not down to Washington so much. I suspect that Maurine Neuberger, Margaret Hickey and Esther Peterson may have done that.

I think there were people, certainly many people on the commission who felt that this was a start, but you needed to have a kind of continuing oversight of the developments, and that things in the report wouldn't get adopted unless you had people who were continually raising the questions with the President and with people in Congress and in the states. I believe that Henry David wanted to continue it, and Marguerite Rawalt, I'm sure, did. Mary Bunting, I presume did.

I felt at this stage—I didn't have a great deal more to contribute. And I couldn't follow things very closely because I had other interests and was heavily occupied here in the University. There was need for some follow up, but I wasn't sure that it should be done by much the same group. Many states had already established commissions on the status of women. I had been asked to go on the one here in New Jersey. I decided that I shouldn't really, even though I was close to people in the state government. I felt that at this point the effort ought to be largely in the hands of women, that they ought to keep pushing. I didn't really represent any constituency. At this stage, it was really political pressure and other kinds of pressure that needed to be brought to bear.

CAMPBELL: Well, I've come to the end of my list of questions. Is there anything else that you recall about your association with President Kennedy or...

LESTER: Well, I would just say, looking back on the whole experience on the

Commission on the Status of Women that it was really basically an enjoyable experience. I learned to know and respect a great many people, certainly I value my experience with Mrs. Roosevelt. And I think none of us will forget the experience at Hyde Park [New York] when we had our meeting there for two days, when she met with us and had us over to her cottage. We saw how effective and how able and gracious she was. Certainly I enjoyed meeting and working with some of the Cabinet officers and with Maurine Neuberger, Mary Bunting, and other members of the Commission. It was a very worthwhile and valuable experience.

With respect to the President, I want to say how much I have

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enjoyed working with and for him. My wife and I were invited to the White House to a dinner that was slated to occur right after his death. The [Vice] Chancellor Erhard [Ludwig Erhard] from Germany was to be there. I happened to be in New Haven [Connecticut] recruiting people for Princeton's faculty at the time that I first learned of the assassination. I think the thing that really, in a way, was the most impressive to me about President Kennedy was how much respect and affection for him most of us had who had any close association with him. I recall that the day that we turned in this report, my wife and I were there with Esther Peterson. And there was the ceremony with respect to the stamp in commemoration of Mrs. Roosevelt in the morning. Somehow it happened, I cannot tell just exactly how. Going out into the Rose Garden, we walked right through the President's office, Esther, and I and my wife. And it was just as natural as anything. And President Kennedy came over to see us. My wife had not met him before. Later on in the afternoon, we had this ceremony in the Rose Garden and my wife again met the President. I think everyone who met him in that kind of informal situation really was pleased and impressed. And I was impressed at that meeting with the things he said on reviewing our report. Now, we had briefed him. We sent over material he could use and a draft statement when the report was accepted. He had apparently used a little bit of that material, but the talk he gave was completely his own. There was nothing canned about it. I think you've got an impression of this combination of a kind of shyness, and a sort of humorous part about him as well, and yet, the ease and ability with which he was able to accomplish things was amazing, and at the same time he made you feel that he really appreciated the things that you did for him.

CAMPBELL: I think he did.

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