

John G. Feild Oral History Interview – JFK #1, 1/16/1967
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Field (1922-2004) was a government official, and the Executive Director for the President's Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity from 1961-63. In the interview Feild discusses the 1960 Democratic National Convention, 1960 Presidential campaign, the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, and Plans for Progress, among other issues.

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John G. Feild – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

With

John Feild

January 16, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we begin, Mr. Feild, by my asking you when did you first meet President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] or any members of his staff?

FEILD: My first acquaintanceship with President Kennedy occurred in 1959. I came to the Senate as a staff member working for newly elected Philip A. Hart from Michigan. We were rather rapidly drawn into associations with Senator Kennedy and his staff, Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman] and Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], on a variety of legislative matters before the Senate. So my original relationship stems from that period. That was the beginning of 1959. Going on from then...

STEWART: Do you remember what particular piece of legislation you had...

FEILD: Well, we had a number of bills of interest to us. I was working also with two committee staff members that were close to Senator Kennedy: Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] on the Labor Committee, and there was another staff member working for Senator Douglas [Paul H. Douglas], Bob Wallace [Robert Ash Wallace], who was also working rather closely with Senator Kennedy because he had been instrumental in sponsoring what was at the time called distressed areas legislation and later became known as the Area Redevelopment Act. We were very

concerned about economically distressed areas; we had very high unemployment in Michigan in 1958. We were working very closely with Senator Douglas, and because of the New England situation on which Senator Kennedy had given so much leadership, we were very close to him.

Later on, as that particular session of Congress wore on, we also had occasion to be very closely involved with him on the labor legislation, the amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act. He became the floor leader on that legislation. We, of course, were very much involved in that in part because Senator McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara] from Michigan was very much identified with that

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legislation and with the problems involved in it. So we had almost daily relationships with this staff and with him and with other key personnel that he brought down to help him with that legislation. The later Solicitor General Cox [Archibald Cox] was very much involved in that labor legislation at that time.

STEWART: What were your impressions of Kennedy's office at that time, the operations of the staff and so forth?

FEILD: Well, they were very selective about the issues in which they became involved. Once they became publicly committed to an area of interest, whether it was distressed economic area legislation or labor legislation or, to a somewhat more limited extent, some of the foreign affairs debates, they proceeded to deal with this in great depth. The amount of homework, the amount of backgrounding, the amount of collateral involvement that they solicited from persons who they felt would be competent was, to me, surprisingly extensive. I hadn't known the Kennedy group before that experience, and I became rather quickly impressed with their focused concern about those issues that they were involved in. Beyond those, they seemed to have practically no interests.

We had great difficulty in the early part of that session in getting Senator Kennedy involved in our deep concerns about civil rights legislation. He did not feel this issue sharply; he did not have great pressures on him from his own constituency; he was very quick to say so. He was generally sympathetic, but it was not an area upon which he was prepared to make any extensive commitment. He preferred to leave those areas as grey, sort of undetermined areas. One certainly could not say that he was hostile to this area or anti; one would have to say that he was interested, but not very much interested.

STEWART: Did people on his staff speak openly about picking and choosing these issues in relation to the campaign that was coming up because, of course, by 1959 there was no doubt as to where he was going?

FEILD: Yes, they were very conscious of this. They were very conscious at all times of the national import of any particular legislative item. None of these items were ever viewed parochially. I mean, there was to some extent a New England identification, but more frequently they were looked upon as what

bearing they would have upon national constituencies and national groups.

STEWART: Could you briefly describe your role, and I assume the role of Senator Hart, politically before the convention in 1960?

FEILD: Well, let me just give you a little piece of background from my perspective. We all were from Michigan. We had

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come out of a party situation where in 1948, which was ten years prior to Phil Hart's going to the Senate, every major office in that state was held by a Republican. In that year only one statewide Democrat was elected, G. Mennen Williams. In the succeeding ten years, the Democratic Party situation in Michigan had been transformed into one in which every major statewide office was held by a Democrat. So we had come from a party with great solidarity and unity of purpose and highly flavored with the ideological and liberal and personal bents of the Governor.

The Governor in 1958 was beginning himself to entertain national aspirations and was sounding people out around the country about leadership in the party. There was enormous disaffection from the congressional leadership which, as you may remember, was then headed by the Majority Leader in the Senate and the Speaker in the House, both of whom were Texans. The Democratic Advisory Council was an area of great ideological interest from our perspective. So that we were, as party politicians from Michigan and as persons connected with the Senate, looking at the national political scene in terms of the alternatives that were likely to be available, that would present potentials for either advancing our own conception of what the party ought to be or, if the governor decided that he was in fact going to make a major break for the presidential nomination, there would be no question about our loyalty or our commitment.

As those events unfolded, to make the story rather compressed, Governor Williams was the first Democratic governor apart from the old, loyal, New England friend, Governor Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff], he was the first non- New England governor to endorse Senator Kennedy's aspirations. Immediately after that our staff people were gradually released and asked to work in various portions of the Kennedy nomination drive. I was specifically released from my staff obligations to spend almost full time with the Kennedy campaign group. The assignment was to do everything possible to enlist delegate support for Kennedy.

In fact, I worked principally under Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver Jr.]. Harris Wofford [Harris L. Wofford Jr.] and Marjorie Lawson [Marjorie M. Lawson] were the co-directors along with Congressman Dawson [William L. Dawson] of the so-called civil rights unit. This is an area in which I had had long professional and political identification. So I began to spend all of the months in the spring going into the summer of 1960 on the campaign. We worked rather closely in the early stages with Bob Wallace, whom we had known from Senator Douglas' staff and who had worked with us on other matters, doing an analytical job on state party organizations.

Those of us who had some relationship with other states were asked to help on it. I

had worked in Minnesota and had worked in Ohio with those governors on fair employment legislation. I knew something about the politics of those states and so I worked with Bob on those, just providing him with background information while we concentrated on civil rights organizations and Negro organizations and generally those organizations interested in ethnic relationships. We had an awful

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lot to do in Michigan with the Minorities Division of the National Democratic Committee, particularly the Advisory Council group, we worked pretty much largely through our relationships in the Democratic Advisory Council and the minority section.

STEWART: What were the big problems as far as Negro groups were concerned?

FEILD: Well, there was a very major problem. Jack Kennedy was not very greatly known as, and certainly wasn't admired as, an advocate for civil rights in that period. You may remember shortly after Governor Williams announced his support for Jack Kennedy's nomination for president, one of the things that we stages was a major meeting held over in the N Street house in Georgetown to which we brought down from Detroit somewhere between thirty and forty leading Negro Democratic Party leaders. In fact, the Caroline was sent out there, and we had so many people we wanted to bring out that we couldn't bring them all out on the President's plane. We had to bring some of them on commercial seats. We held a major confrontation, and that's about the word you'd have to use for it because it's one of the earliest ones that Kennedy had with Negro Democratic Party leadership outside of his New England cronies. Generally the Negro leadership in our state regarded Jack Kennedy's New England friends, Negro friends, as cronies. They didn't regard them as being relevant to the national Democratic political scene at all; they didn't regard them as being aware of the labor relationships that were involved, much less the racial relationships. That meeting was a long, several hour, frank, candid discussion – Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis] was present, Harris Wofford, of course, and others from the Kennedy personal staff – in which he was subjected to a considerable inquisition by Michigan Negro Democrats.

STEWART: This was after the so-called breakfast with Governor Patterson [John Malcolm Patterson], wasn't it?

FEILD: Yes, it was. There was great concern in our minds – when I say “our,” I mean Governor Williams and others who had now made their commitment, who had publicly cast their lot as to where they were going to go in this upcoming Convention battle. And they had to give Jack Kennedy what they regarded as public credibility, that he had to make the commitments face to face in the smoke-filled room so that he could in turn translate this out into the public domain. We knew that the kind of political gossip, the kind of political intelligence that was spread from this meeting was going to be of great importance.

 Interestingly enough, the issue around which there was the hardest comment....Jack

Kennedy quickly committed himself in an opening statement to the group as being favorable to fair employment legislation. And he was told almost forthwith

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by that group that he ought to also be in favor of housing legislation, he ought to also be very much concerned about public accommodations in the South, about voting legislation, about economic opportunity in general, that you couldn't separate the civil rights issue into little convenient compartments. The basic reason for this was a fear that he was proposing an issue which had been sort of historically identified with President Truman [Harry S. Truman] and with the Democratic Party, and he was saying, "Well, I'm willing to go that far." The significant thing about that is that Kennedy never introduced fair employment legislation. When he came down later on, he had shifted in his orientation toward the issue as being somewhat more complex, and he was doing more with the overall national strategy of it.

In that first meeting, my evaluation of him was that he was getting a very considerable exposure and education to this kind of pressure, what he was going to get a lot more of if he went out to Chicago or if he went to Los Angeles and he was confronted. I was present when he was later confronted by similar groups of Negro leadership, political leadership who were testing him, who were prodding him, who were forcing him to be explicit as to how he saw the Negro, race, civil rights leadership problem. He stood strongly; he was forthright; he was direct; he was not defensive, which I always admired. He was analytical. He would respond to the pushes and the prods by reiterating an analysis that he had assimilated. He knew what he was saying, and if he didn't know it, he didn't say it. If he was uncertain, he didn't hedge, he left it. He never said too much; he stopped just short of getting into areas about which he was not very well informed and with which he wasn't comfortable, he didn't know, to be frank. The meeting turned out to be a very considerable success. It was very widely treated in the national media and I think made a very considerable impact both on him, and he in turn in his capacity to begin picking up the themes that he had heard from these guys and using them as a sort of a basis of something he understood better.

STEWART: The decision was made fairly early, wasn't it, that people around him would not try to defend his vote on the 1957 civil rights bill?

FEILD: Right.

STEWART: Were you involved in this decision at all?

FEILD: Yes. There was a lot of discussion about this, and pretty early and pretty consistently. I think, interestingly enough, President Kennedy himself was always the decisive factor in these discussions, that what he had committed himself to, he had done because of the judgments that he had made. There was no purpose to be served by going into any extensive defensiveness. There was every purpose to be served by

delineating a more comprehensive position which would be based upon sound and sufficient reasons for a new political posture. There was always the search for the new basis for a position, of rationalizing it, of providing it with argument, of providing it with a new level of understanding that made the difference. He refused to simply say, "I've got a new position." It had to be a new position that was developed pretty much sequentially and pretty much based upon a broader rationalization of why the problem was now different. In other words, there was an effort to say, "I perceived the problem then because this is the way the problem was." There was a pretty strong personal participation by him in that process.

I had a lot of experience in working on speech material with Harris Wofford, with Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin], with Louis Martin [Louis E. Martin]. Louis Martin had a great influence in that period. They brought him in quite early. We had an earlier relationship with Louis Martin in Michigan because he was the publisher of the Michigan Chronicle, the largest Negro weekly in the state. Louis never would tolerate excuse-making for earlier positions. His political advice was always in the direction, "you've got to have a better position, don't worry about the old one." Louis was a very important advisor to Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] and John Seigenthaler, and they spent many, many long hours trying to rationalize a better position rather than going back to old ones. Once that was settled, from then on it was a question of another principle, namely, don't promise too much.

There was a great fear of over-promising, and again the President himself was very hard on this, don't promise too much. Mike Feldman very often would have to explain why the President wasn't going to be able to make that speech on the Senate floor or make that grandstand play somewhere even though it might be easy to do, to fight for an amendment that you really didn't think had a chance of passing. He would say, "Look, if you don't think it's got a chance of passing, we ought to say so, and we ought to say where we stand." And they did.

STEWART: What was your role in the primaries, specifically Wisconsin and West Virginia?

FEILD: I was not involved in the Wisconsin primary at all. I did go out to West Virginia. We had a couple of interesting forays in West Virginia.

 There was a rather shrewd decision made, as the analysis of West Virginia proceeded, that West Virginia's problem was not going to be intensely racial. It was going to include that, but it was going to be more intensely the problem of economic development and economic opportunity. So the major investment that was made in terms of that primary campaign ideologically was to mount, with Adam Yarmolinsky's help and the Democratic Advisory Council personnel, who were by this time pretty well pulled into this, an urban affairs conference, an economic development conference. There were a series of these, one in Pittsburgh, et cetera. We did one

in Charlestown, West Virginia. This was an excellent way of involving the Democratic

leadership of that state on an affirmative, programmatic basis in the Kennedy interest and in exploration of it. This is the way most of the campaign activity was conducted. It was around economic issues, bread and butter, absolute bread and butter, the development of jobs and public welfare and free food and health services. It was all geared to that. The civil rights issue was only a part of it.

STEWART: Wasn't there some dispute within the campaign staff as to how much emphasis should be put on the civil rights area in West Virginia?

FEILD: Yes. Generally speaking, the way it came down was to be moderate. I don't really think there was very heavy, explicit campaign effort. In the television debates with Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], he was challenged on this, and it was I think pretty early decided that when challenged, don't hedge, but push all the relationships, all the organizational contacts on economic grounds, which was I think pretty much the way it worked out.

STEWART: As it turned out, he did very well among Negro people in West Virginia.

FEILD: He did very well, but it was an area....The turf upon which that was being debated, the same appeals that you could make in that area, you were making them to poor people. And his willingness not to hedge publicly gave, I think, Kennedy the status with the Negroes that he needed. There was a certain indigenous understanding, he didn't have to be a bleeding heart about it. He was very straightforward about this and that gave him a lot of credibility, the willingness not to overplay it, not to make that mistake.

STEWART: In your discussions with people during this period, how, if at all, did the religious issue tie in with the whole civil rights area? For example, there were some Negro ministers who were very concerned about the religious issue.

FEILD: And how. They certainly were.

STEWART: Do you remember any specific examples of people that you talked to who...

FEILD: I'm trying to think of some specific....It was a theme that kept coming back quite often. We certainly encountered it in every big city. As I remember, Philadelphia, there's a large Negro Baptist church in Philadelphia that had a minister whose name is on the periphery of my memory, he's now living in New York, who had begun to raise

the religious issue largely because of a lack of relationship or lack of involvement with the Kennedy group. This also probably reflected a little bit of the relationship of many Negro political people in Pennsylvania that were not unsympathetic to the Johnson group.... They were not unsympathetic to the older, more conservative Truman ties and were very suspicious of this new crowd that had not really had any great history of liberal identification, they would raise the religious thing. They were raising it as much on religious innuendo as they would on race innuendo. It was a convenient thing.

Louis Martin, I think, spent an awful lot of time on that problem in talking to Negro ministers. In fact, I would say this; we probably recruited an awful lot of Negro politically-oriented ministerial leadership to take on some of this hard feedback talk on the religious grounds, and to use.... Basically the theme was, let's make the test civil rights, not Catholic-Protestant. The Protestant establishment is more against us than the Catholics ever have been. This kind of an argument would be fed into that discussion. Now, I'm just talking about raw politics, not the way the argument went. It did come up very often. I don't really know how that issue got completely resolved except perhaps in the Texas speeches that Kennedy made which were widely observed by Negro Protestants. He achieved in the Negro religious communities the same acceptability on the religious problem as he had in neutralizing at least the white Protestant community.

STEWART: It's an area that, at least to my knowledge, hasn't been discussed or written about that much.

FEILD: No, it hasn't.

STEWART: The whole relationship, and I think it's a very interesting one.

FEILD: I think there was hardly a time we didn't encounter some tension from Negro Protestant ministers who were ambivalent. And they were ambivalent; there is just no question that they were ambivalent.
[interruption] Well, I really don't have much more to say about that except that it was one of these issues and themes in campaign thinking that was running always with us. It was certainly less focused because we were very much focused on the civil rights issue. And great Negro leadership positions were being articulated at that time by Martin Luther King [Martin Luther King Jr.] as civil rights issues. He was not a party to any of the questioning about the other part of it, the religious side of it. So you had a clear enough road to go down without trying to deal with it.

STEWART: What was your function at the convention in Los Angeles?

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FEILD: Well, the Convention was a fascinating enterprise from several points of view, I think. During the campaign period, pre-convention, the so-called civil rights section under Sarge Shriver had become quite well organized. It was a fairly sizable group of people, by the way, either on loan or directly on

the payroll or as volunteers.

Going into the immediate Convention period, all of the various specialized groups, whether it was the farm activity or whether it was Spanish-speaking, whether it was labor, were highly focused on state delegations. We had completed before going into the convention a detailed analysis of the composition of state delegations. The centralized work on this that was being done by Bobby Kennedy and Kenny O'Donnell [P. Kenneth O'Donnell] and Seigenthaler and all the others, and there were many, was very elaborate. They had excellent intelligence fed into them by the leaders of the state delegations that were pledged to them, and they had just as good intelligence fed into them by the minority leaders of the delegations that weren't pledged to them.

There wasn't a delegation that we didn't know who were the definite on both sides or all three sides. Symington's [Stuart Symington II] people were very much in this, and the Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] group was very much involved in it. We certainly knew who all the indefinites were. Our mission in the convention was to gain definiteness as to positions and information about delegate positions as rapidly as possible. So that our assignments were dispersed among state delegations that we had relationships with, that we could immediately identify and then work on by arranging for participation of the noncommitted or indefinite delegates to insure that they were present when major presentations were being made by either Kennedy directly or by some spokesman for him, or that they were put under some new relationship to the spokesman for the Kennedy people in their own delegation.

Every morning for a week ahead of time as the delegations began to come in, we had a joke about it, we had our KKK Campaign, we called – Koffee with the Kennedy Klan. It was a nose counting operation from beginning to end that had an overlay of strong, well thought through position pitch that had to be made. There wasn't a position by that time that had not been very well identified and laid out. Sorensen pretty much kept the focus in that arena, Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell and Bobby pretty much at the delegate level – Bobby more at state delegations rather than individual categories of delegates.

I think the cutest anecdote that I would remember out of this: in the Michigan delegation we had a Negro dentist who had a half vote, who was a man of some means and a man of some importance, highly regarded, who had repeatedly expressed his disaffection with Kennedy and his admiration of Symington. My perception of this was that that would be an easier problem to deal with than if he had been a gung ho Stevenson supporter, which he wasn't. He was the president of the Urban League in

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Pontiac, Michigan, and I felt we had some reasonable chance with his half vote. One morning I reported this, and somebody – I don't know, Sarge or somebody – said, "What do we do to get this guy?" I said, "Well, he said to me if he could have a chance to talk with 'the man' himself, as he put it, maybe he would change his mind." So we decided that we'd try that.

If you remember that hotel suite up there that the Kennedy forces occupied, that was one besieged and beleaguered piece of real estate. I was assigned to go find this guy, bring him back, and sweat out getting him through that schedule. I did find him, he was delighted,

he was very impressed about the invitation. He went over. Miss Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] was sitting in the bedroom with a table and her telephones and what not. And she was sort of a halfway doorkeeper with several other more important doorkeepers, notable the guy who's Chief Marshal today.

STEWART: McShane [James J. P. McShane].

FEILD: Yes. McShane. By some process of alchemy the information was passed in, a note from me to so-and-so. After a reasonably short period of time, it wasn't too long, I would guess maybe an hour, Doc McNeill [H. H. McNeill] almost gave up. He was getting a little fainthearted. I think he was beginning to feel this was terribly presumptuous that he had to go into that room and sit down with this candidate and he had to be told what this man believed and what he said. But he stayed, and we went in. There were a few people in the living room of the suite, and a very gracefully and easily Jack Kennedy moved Doctor McNeill and I and he into a bedroom. He was sitting on the bed, Doc McNeill sitting in his chair. Doc had false teeth that didn't stick tightly, they always clicked. So he sat in this chair, and he was a little bit nervous anyway and his teeth were clicking a little bit more and he kept saying, "But-but-but-but-but-but, Mr. Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, I've got to know how you feel on this issue." Jack Kennedy would give him a nice, direct response, clipped, to the point. He would ask another question, and it would take a little bit longer because his teeth kept slipping. Jack Kennedy would give him another quick, crisp answer and wait.

Doc sort of hesitated, and Jack said to him, "Is there anything more that you need to know from me?" So Doc said, "N-n-n-n-no." And then Jack sort of grasped his arm and he said, "I need your help. I want you to know that. I think you and I both know how important these issues are that we're backing. I don't want to make any misstatement about other persons in this, but I've told you where I stand, and if you think where I stand is the right place to stand, then I want you to help me." So he ushered Doc out and I go out with him. The press is out there waiting for everybody that issued from that suite and they said, "Well, what were you in there for?" He said, "Well, I'm just a delegate from Pontiac, Michigan." "Well, what were you trying to do in there?" He said, "I was just in there to find out what Senator Kennedy's views were on the civil rights issue." They

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said, "Were you satisfied?" He said, "Well, I-I-I'm going to think it over." Well, I've got to give you the footnote; it's a great footnote. The first question I think I was asked when we did the big post mortem on how did these delegations come out was, "Well, how did your guy go?" I said, "He voted for Symington."

STEWART: Oh, boy. After all that.

FEILD: After all that. But I think it was a marvelous measure of the willingness to be specific, to be direct, and to be, I think, very political in the commitments that you give, because I don't think he would have

hedged on Doc. If Doc had asked him a dirty question that he didn't answer – or that he didn't feel he should – he would have said, “No.”

STEWART: Were you primarily concerned with Michigan or were there other....

FEILD: Ohio, I was very much involved in because I had worked with Governor DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle]. I spent four years in Toledo when Mike DiSalle had been mayor there just before my coming, and I felt very close to Mike DiSalle. In fact, I was very hopeful that Mike would have endorsed Jack Kennedy much earlier than he did. As you may know or may remember, he endorsed him very late and never with great enthusiasm. He was pressured into it by very strong pressures.

Mike, I think, had a lot of history that people don't remember in his own aspirations to become National Democratic Committeeman and a lot of other battles that he had been involved in. So it wasn't an easy thing for him to turn his back on those who had supported him at one time in those strong battles. I think he was largely ignored by the Kennedys and they generally regarded him negatively because of that reluctance on his part. We spent a lot of time in Ohio going around him, never really dealing with him.

Later on in the campaign itself I was back in Ohio three or four times and was never given any instructions to deal with Mike. Just deal with anybody out there that we had direct relationships with; county chairmen, individuals of prominence, particularly individuals who were willing to sponsor fund-raising and special interest activities for him. Mike DiSalle, I don't think, came off very well with the Kennedys. It was an unfortunate lack of relationship. I would have thought they would have every reason to be great political allies; they were a lot alike, very direct. It was just one of those things. I also did a little work in Chicago, of course, had a lot of friendships with political people there, and Minnesota and Wisconsin.

STEWART: This was during the Convention?

FEILD: Right. Talking with people in those delegations all

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over. We had a lot of relationships in Michigan, in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa. I had been executive secretary of the Governor's Committee on Civil Rights which had been organized by Harriman [William Averell Harriman] and Williams. The second chairman was Freeman [Orville Lothrop Freeman] from Minnesota. In fact, Freeman was chairman of that organization at that time and was Governor of Minnesota at that time. So I knew all of the Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan delegations. I knew them best and worked more closely with them than anybody else on the civil rights staff.

STEWART: In general, and this might be hard to really answer, how successful do you think your efforts were at the Convention? Naturally, your major emphasis was to hold what you already had and possibly pick up some

more.

FEILD: We had it won before we got there.

STEWART: Was there any real problem in holding what you already had?

FEILD: No. It was a net gain after we got there.

STEWART: Did you personally feel you picked up much?

FEILD: No. I personally felt that the area that we cut into most easily once we got there was the Stevenson group. By that time we had more people of substance politically.

STEWART: Yes. Yes. Why don't you briefly describe your role after the Convention and during the campaign, who else you worked with, what you....

FEILD: The civil rights section maintained its continuity throughout the whole campaign. I worked probably more closely with Louis Martin during that stage. I was sort of his backup person. He was negotiating extensively in the propaganda side with Negro newspapers and the media and the special literature that we were sending out literally by the baleful into community after community. It was largely a job then of consolidating relationships that we had and insuring that they had adequate material, they knew the line, they knew the scheduling, they knew the timing that would be involved in any given point when the campaign entourage would hit their community. It was a scheduling cycling problem almost entirely.

We had a little bit of discussion at a few critical points about the Martin Luther King telephone call. I was on Harris Wofford's side all the way down to the wire on that. Harris was advocating that he (Kennedy) call Martin Luther King when he was jailed in Birmingham. And he did, he called Mrs. King [Coretta Scott King]. Those were a few little symbolic things in the

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campaign strategy but nothing of any monumental importance. There was just a hell of a lot of hard scheduling work at that stage.

I think the most important thing was....Well, there were two prongs to it. We had Southern Negroes on the one hand and we had big city Negroes on the other that were the major targets of insuring adequate exposure of Kennedy to make known his views and to get the personal interaction. But in both instances we had really first-rate help from the friends.

We had a little relationship with the Johnson group in the campaign. I had a little bit more than most on that because Bill Welsh [William B. Welsh], who worked for Senator Hart, was loaned to the Johnson vice presidential campaign team and did a lot of speeches for Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson]. Our relationships were very good in that whole thing. When

Lady Bird [Lady Bird Johnson] made her train trip down through the South, the arrangements were easy, the speech line was well developed. We didn't have any problems. The line was the same. It was an affirmative line all the way through so that we didn't have any fears of being undercut on that point. It worked pretty well. It was just a lot of damn hard, slow moving work.

I think once we got the campaign organizations at the local level clued into scheduling, clued into the line, clued into the materials, they produced damn well. It was a remarkably good operation. It was a big operation; it was from a technical standpoint, a monumental activity. Kenny O'Donnell was a real genius in that, I think. He let all these sections know where the thing was going, and they in turn could fan out from there.

STEWART: Yes. Were you at all involved in the problems of defining Congressman Dawson's role in the campaign?

FEILD: I was present on several of those discussions, both with the Congressman, with his staff, and with the rest of the civil rights people in Sarge Shriver's group. I think the position that was taken, namely to be cordial, to be friendly, but to be in no sense dependent on that organization was a pretty sound one, and it was pretty quickly perceived by anybody who was interested in real politics.

Paul Butler [Paul M. Butler] helped a great deal, and I don't know that Paul Butler ever got much credit for the help he rendered, I think, in making it easier for the Kennedy's to develop their own relationships with Negro political leadership. We were, as Kennedy people, invited by Butler to several strategic meetings involving Negro Democratic leaders who were called together from all over the country and were afforded the opportunity to participate in strong strategy discussions about campaign activity with them directly. Now this was, interestingly enough, pre-Convention because post-Convention Butler was out. Scoop Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] became the national chairman, and for all practical purposes at that point, you know, it was really taken over by the Kennedy group.

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But, we had a tremendous number of relationships that were Kennedy identified that we were able to quickly bring into campaign planning discussions and weren't dependent on Dawson. It was very easy for Sarge to convey back to the central planning group, to Bobby and others, that we're just going to go around him. It was a little bit easier for Sarge in another way: he was a Chicagoan; he was known to Daley [Richard J. Daley]; he was involved in that process; and he could justify it on the grounds, "Look, we've got to have more push than that. There's not enough energy here and it's too parochial, and we've got to do more."

You also had a whole new breed of Southern Negro leadership coming along, and a new breed of Western Negro leadership coming along. We had Cecil Poole [Cecil F. Poole] and Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher] coming out from the California group. They were helpful too, in their own name, demand attention which they weren't going to take from Dawson. That was my perception of how that was working. I think it was much resented by

the Dawson people. I think that they were very cool to the campaign effort. They were very reluctant to work very hard in the early stages. I did not perceive them as being all out. It may have been personal pique, it may have been lack of confidence, I don't know. Elmer Henderson was assigned to work over in our group; he occupied Congressman Dawson's office. He was given a special private little office which we had made with a partition around it so you'd have some status, but they never did much. They were doing little things. They weren't in the big push in that campaign.

STEWART: Did you stay in Washington the whole time? Did you get out of the city at all?

FEILD: Except for trips to Ohio, Michigan, Chicago, Minnesota, Wisconsin. I don't think I was in Indiana, but I met with Indiana people in Chicago.

STEWART: Okay. Why don't we move on? As I said, if there are any other things, we can come back. After the election, what was your function during the transition period?

FEILD: Well, immediately after the election, Sarge Shriver and Adam Yarmolinsky and Ralph Dungan began to put together what later became known as the talent search. They borrowed temporarily a few of us to stay with that to see if we couldn't start to contribute to the planning on this, Harris Wofford, myself, Marjorie Lawson was less involved in that activity. She wasn't involved to my knowledge at all, maybe a little bit. I began more to work with Ralph Dungan and with Adam during that phase, but I was working also with Harris. We were beginning to think about executive organization for civil rights, what should we be doing.

We had Bill Taylor [William L. Taylor], John Silard, and a number of others of us began to think and to write memoranda on what should the shape be of the executive and legislative

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programs of the President. We were basically engaged in a sort of a program development process that would feed into the series of messages that was envisioned. It's interesting how short your memories are some times, but when I think about this and can go back and recollect something of the flavor of it, it was sort of imbued with the notion that we had to do as much in the first hundred days as we could.

Neustadt's [Richard E. Neustadt] book was very much under discussion. There was a great feeling that the key problem would be to grasp the leadership of the federal branch, of the executive branch, and that it not only was necessary to grasp it in terms of appointments of high quality early, but to have sufficient preparatory work done so that the essential programmatic directions could be articulated early. I was working during that period on the question of the problems that had been involved in what were called the President's Committee on Government Contracts, the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy, the role of the Civil Rights Commission.

Berl Bernhard [Berl I. Bernhard] was involved in these discussions too at that stage, Bill Taylor – the whole question of executive orders, the question of what later became Title VI in the civil rights legislation of 1964, that is, the use of federal moneys. And we began to do drafts of executive orders at that stage and drafts of political planning memoranda as to when appointments should be made, what kind of people did he want to have in these, what had to be done to insure adequate participation by Negro and civil rights organizations without tainting them with excessive political identity with Kennedy, enabling them to make their representations in a systematic way that could be given political consideration but not necessarily co-opt them.

A lot of discussions were being held with Roy Wilkins and with Martin Luther King and with the Southern Regional Council. You know, “Send to us now your recommendations as to what the executive branch ought to do and what the President ought to do about its organization.” We were soliciting views and opinions. Some excellent monographs were prepared, by the way, and sent to us. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights under Roy Wilkins’ leadership enabled some sixty organizations to participate in an orderly process of recommending what they thought the federal branch, the executive branch ought to do.

The question of the civil rights department in the Attorney General’s office was very critical and very much under review. The Southern Regional Council submitted a major working paper to that process. So I was involved in almost daily discussions with somebody about what the programmatic line ought to be in the civil rights field and what the personnel side of it ought to be as well as the personnel for other functions of government that had high sensitivity to civil rights. There was a lot of concern about the Agriculture Department which had been notoriously Southern dominated, and this ought to be broken, and as you know, it was. It was a very interesting division. That pretty much consumed most of our time between November and the

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opening of Congress.

After Congress reopened, of course, I was still on Phil Hart’s staff and our problem was to reestablish our own lines of leadership at that stage of the game. I did continue to spend about half of my time, however, working with Ralph Dungan and Harris Wofford.

STEWART: On recruitment.

FEILD: Yes. The recruiting problems and discussions about these recommendations on programs that were coming in. The appointments began to come in pretty quickly and the personnel began to fit into the structure of the government so you could pretty much see what was going to be the next stage of need.

STEWART: What types of people, or what types of jobs were you primarily involved in, and what were the biggest problems?

FEILD: Well, most of them had to do with the personnel that were going to be involved in the public civil rights leadership positions in the government. That raised the question about the Civil Rights Commission. There were five appointees there; the question was, should the chairman continue? The chairman was a man from Michigan, the President of Michigan State University, John Hannah [John A. Hannah], and there was a question as to whether or not he should be asked to step aside. As you know, it was decided that he should not and he is still the chairman of that Commission.

We knew that any new executive order that came out on employment – and it was quite sure that there was going to be one, there wasn't any particular question about that – was going to require citizen participation on some public committee. What kinds of people should they be and what representative flavor should they come from? There was a question of that caliber of personnel. There were questions about the White House Staff. Should the White House staff have a civil rights representative? Should it have a Negro representative? Frank Reeves [Frank D. Reeves] had been on the staff of the civil rights unit and been very important to it. He had been, as you may remember or not remember, one of the key people in the Humphrey campaign, and he had a lot of special identity because of this. He had very good credentials and relationships. Marjorie Lawson had been an older Kennedy supporter. A lot of hard choice had to be made as to who was going to end up at what points in connection around this damn business.

The Attorney General's office was very, very important. They had a very large staff; it was early recognized that the caliber of that special staff and the lawyers there were going to be the key troubleshooters for the Attorney General. Who should they be? What background should they come from? How Negro could they be? How many Negroes, you know, could they have? You know,

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the political discussions were going at a pretty fast clip during that period. What non-civil rights functions, would opportunities exist considering the qualifications and the degree of prestige that you needed for these jobs afford? How many key people in Negro leadership would be available for non-civil rights jobs?

STEWART: This became a problem at one time, didn't it, of...

FEILD: It did indeed.

STEWART: ...presumably, drawing people away from key positions.

FEILD: It did indeed become a key problem and I think probably still is. The Negro lawyers were the most interesting group to speculate about because in many ways, there was no particular reason why they couldn't be asked to take on, as so many other white lawyers had been asked to take on, more general administrative leadership positions and become non-civil rights persons. This didn't happen, by the way, interestingly enough.

Weaver [Robert C. Weaver] was pretty much targeted on fairly early because of his preeminence in the housing field, and he held a current position of prominence in the field. He was, you know, a housing economist of stature. It was relatively easy to slot on him for that reason. It was a little more difficult to think of, you know, moving Hastie [William Henry Hastie] off of the bench into the mainstream of administrative action or switching gears on a Thurgood Marshall or pulling a Whitney Young [Whitney M. Young Jr.] out of Negro interest into public welfare interest. Whitney wasn't really on the scene at that time, the national scene. He was down in Atlanta at a school of social work then. You know, the thought, well, maybe you could make the move.

There was a lot of talk about HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare] and the potentiality there. There were plenty of educators around. Were Negro colleges to parochial, and what was the caliber of these men? It was a very sifting process, and it was in the hands, by and large, of a group of people who were terrifically sympathetic to the need to publicly attract and place into these positions representative Americans from the constituency that supported Kennedy. I think probably on the whole that it was done at a little bit too low a level. The guys that were brought in came in too much at the sub-level or at the specialized civil rights level and not generally enough at the operating level.

There was, however, a very strong feeling among Negro political leadership that there should be somebody with direct access to the White House. This is the pressure that ultimately produced Frank Reeves as a presidential assistant. Kennedy balanced that by naming Harris Wofford at the same time. Fortunately, Harris and Frank were very good friends, and they worked easily together. But it's significant that they didn't

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want to have a Negro civil rights guy. Harris was expected to carry the cutting edge burden of civil rights as much as Frank. Frank was expected more to be concerned about Negro participations in the party and in the councils of discussion about politics, which was really a good flavor to put on him. Then he went out prematurely on a little problem that he encountered. But the process was one of trying to get participation internally and, at the same time, get some public posture on it, public appointments. That was basically, I think, the mission during that period. That period went on for a long time.

It was very well into 1961 before those spots were pretty much cumulatively filled in. By the time we created the sub-Cabinet committee on civil rights, which was an early administrative creature, it was largely the result of pretty much the same group of people that had worked with Harris Wofford in shaping programs, who said, "Now that we've got these guys scattered around the government in appointed spots, let's pull them together and let them know what direction they're supposed to be going." They were pulled together, and the President did address them and tell them, "Now this is where we are going. These are the commitments we are going to make." That created a structure of leadership that enabled the Administration to continue in its programmatic posture once we had sixty guys appointed around the various bureaus. That was also very consistent, by the way, with the Kennedy method of operation.

STEWART: Yes.

FEILD: If you put them around through the bureaus, they better know where they were going. You damn well better tell them. So that little device of the sub-Cabinet committee was simply a means of telling them where we were going, and also of pushing them and challenging them to think of the ways that they should administratively and internally to their own bureau or their own department or their own commission. It takes the leadership and the reports that they were doing.

STEWART: What role did you take in the final drafting of these executive orders to set up the President's Committee [on Equal Employment Opportunity]?

FEILD: I was very much involved in early drafts. Abe Fortas [Abraham Fortas] had been involved in some drafting. You may remember this, it's a little piece of history: the first meeting between the President and the Vice President occurred at Palm Beach, Florida, shortly after the election, and it was announced from Palm Beach that the Vice President would be named chairman of the President's Committee on Government Contracts. Apparently – not to my detailed knowledge at all, I only know this by the way it came back finally by February – Johnson had asked Abe Fortas to work on the executive order and to do some drafting.

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Harris Wofford, by that time, was over on the White House staff and was being given copies of this as discussions were being held and the Attorney General had been named and Burke Marshall had been named, so they were discussing the language of this. Jerry Holleman [Jerry R. Holleman] was named the executive vice chairman pro tem.

By the time the executive order had gone through several drafts, it was clear that we were going to combine the two committees, the Government Contracts Committee and the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy, and that it was going to be clothed with a good deal more power and centralized leadership. I saw the draft at about that point, where all that was left was to spell out relationships and the powers of the executive vice chairman and the Secretary of Labor. I remember I did not feel that the Secretary of Labor ought to be the chief executive officer, Secretary Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] did and, in fact, changed the order to make sure that that's the way it read. Maybe he was right, I don't know. Our purpose was solely at that stage, since there were no personalities involved, to provide a single executive vice officer. It seemed to me and to some other that the executive vice chairman ought to be that person. So that's the way it finally worked out.

There were two areas that I was very much involved in, one was the requirement for reporting. One of the great lacks that the previous experience had demonstrated was they had no factual information to know how many Negroes were working where, and I felt strongly that we had to have that, we had to have bench marks, and that was ultimately bled into it. Secondly, the concept of affirmative action, that we ought to be in a position to require, in the public interest, more performance of a government contractor than we would of a private employer, and that concept was built into it. I still regard those as two of the most important;

the decision to do it, the decision upon its main lines was pretty much agreed to by Johnson, by Fortas. Fortas' great contribution, as I remember it, was they were going to give merit awards to all good guys. I'm sure he made more than that.

STEWART: Let me change the tape.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

STEWART: So the thing was, except for the things you mentioned, the executive order was pretty well in shape...

FEILD: By the time I got back to it. Keep in mind I was dealing with concepts of it, and then it was being worked out by lawyers, and then there were drafts being circulated back to us by Harris Wofford. So I probably saw it at three different stages in its status. We had a comment or two at each stage as to what I thought was or wasn't... John Silard, Bill Taylor, Berl Bernhard, all the guys that were lawyers who were working with Harris were also doing this. I was only being

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checked with on program direction, would it work administratively, what could we do with it, what were we missing administratively.

STEWART: Was anyone from the outside brought in or advised of the progress of this thing, any of the civil rights leaders?

FEILD: Yes. At the very later stages, after some key decisions about consolidating the two committees, about giving it this extra push, Harris and Frank Reeves did talk with Roy Wilkins and others and informed them... I think in some detail they were given an awareness; I'm not sure they were ever given drafts. I really don't know that. I have a sort of suspicion that they weren't, although it's possible that Harris would have given them drafts.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the decision as to financing the operations of the Committee from contributions from agencies as opposed to regular appropriations?

FEILD: I was very much involved in that. You've got to know a little history of that. The executive order was issued on March the seventh or somewhere around there.

STEWART: And to be effective April....

FEILD: April the seventh, April sixth. Once the executive order was announced, almost immediately the executive vice chairman was named, and a decision was made to designate Jerry Holleman. That was a very interesting political decision, and it had an awful lot to do with what ultimately happened to that committee because it was clearly envisioned when the language of the order was finalized that the executive vice chairman would be a full-time functionary. But it turned out Jerry Holleman couldn't be a full-time functionary, he was an Assistant Secretary of Labor. So the Vice President announced that Jerry Holleman was going to be designated, or nominated – no designated, he was a presidential appointee – and that he was appointing Hobart Taylor special counsel and George Reedy [George E. Reedy] his special assistant.

STEWART: Special assistant to....

FEILD: To the Vice President, who was chairman of the committee.

STEWART: Yes.

FEILD: Those three appointments were announced at the same time, but it created a confusion as to who was in fact

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going to be the full-time officer. Once Jerry Holleman was named by the President, this little certificate was sent over there, Jerry took the view, after he sized the thing up, "Well, we're going to have to get somebody in here full time to run this thing."

I happen to know, because I was in Phil Hart's office, that it was the Vice President's intention to name Hobart to do it because Hobart had come to our office and had asked Phil Hart to give him political clearance for full-time employment as executive officer of that committee, which was in turn translated back to the Michigan party, and in fact, Hobart was given clearance for this. There's only one thing that happened. I don't recall whether it was in Houston or in Dallas, probably in Dallas. Texas newspapers wrote the story that Lyndon Johnson was naming a Michigan Negro to be the full-time head of his Employment Opportunity Committee. And political hell broke loose. Hobart Taylor Jr., in fact, or course, was from Michigan. His father was from Houston. The Michigan label, of course, was tarring and feathering him with G. Mennen Williams identity and was a real bugaboo and a frightening thing for conservative Texans to contemplate.

In any event, the flak was pretty terrific, and it was indicated that maybe Hobart had better remain as special counsel. This provided Jerry Holleman with the opportunity to say, "Well, if that's the case, then what we'd better do, we'd better arrange to have a full-time executive come in here and run this thing." It was at that point that he conveyed that to Harris Wofford, and Harris immediately agreed that the time was right to do it, that this was a way to prevent Johnson from totally taking over this Committee, and I was the goat that was lined up to do that little task.

So Jerry took me over as his appointee, so that we had created maybe somewhat greater tension within that Committee than Kennedy had intended, but it was certainly not

without his knowledge. Harris reported to me that he had discussed this with the President as to what they should do. Earlier Kennedy's intention had been, "Well, let Johnson run it." Then it was decided that no, it was of much too great a political importance, much too high a priority, that it better be run by the Administration.

That created the political milieu within which I could be appointed to that position. It was made a little bit easier by the fact that Hart had very high prestige, I was sponsored by a politically appropriate background, the political credentials were evident, and Johnson didn't object. He was afforded the opportunity to object. You may remember, of course, that Johnson and Williams were very, very bitter opponents at that stage, but Phil Hart had not personally been identified with that to any degree. It was wondered whether – in fact, Johnson personally wondered to me aloud whether I was going to be more like Phil Hart or more like Soapy Williams.

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STEWART: What was the anticipated role of the Vice President at that time, especially as opposed to the role of the secretary of labor?

FEILD: Well, I think generally it was felt that if they needed Goldberg, it would make it easier for Johnson to be effective and to carry this out, that Johnson could go as far as he chose to go and where the pressure and the heat and the problem got a little stickier he could always say, "Well, that's the Secretary of Labor." In many ways, those were the conditions that were created for him, and I think quite astutely. It turned out not to be a problem. Johnson, very gradually, but very definitely, moved more and more in the direction of affirmative advocacy of programs in this area. It was not certain by any manner or means that he would do that in the early months, however.

I got on this little background because you asked me a question about budget, and there was a very early problem of appropriations. Jerry Holleman asked some of his associates in the Department of Labor and I to go to work immediately on a program plan for that Committee, and we brought to the first meeting of the Committee on April the sixth a budget for that Committee, a budget that was approved in principle. As I remember, it was a budget for a million, one hundred thousand dollars, a budget the Committee never got.

STEWART: Approved in principle by....

FEILD: By the Committee.

STEWART: Oh.

FEILD: Then after that meeting was over, Johnson told Holleman, "Let's be careful about that damn budget. Let's reconsider that whole question. I never had any notion we're going to be getting into all of that money right now." So that the inside understandings about that budget was that the amount that would ever show publicly would not be greater than the combined amount of money

appropriated to the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy and the President's Committee on Government Contracts. This created one hell of a messy, lousy, internal administrative problem. The problem was how could you get access to moneys without showing it. So we engaged in a one and a half year mirror game to do that. But the pressures from the Johnson side in the early stages were very negative on that money and very negative on that budget. They didn't want that thing to be that way. The pressures on our side were to make as much commitment as we could with as much accommodation as would be tolerable to administrative finagling, and very gradually the Committee was caught in the pincers in the Congress by George Congressman Davis [John W. Davis], and Senator Russell [Richard B. Russell Jr.], and Senator

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Talmadge [Herman Eugene Talmadge] and Senator – from Virginia who's just retired, who was just retired by the good voters of that state.

STEWART: Robertson [Absalon Willis Robertson].

FEILD: Robertson, who was at that time chairman of one of the subcommittees on defense appropriations. We had one running battle with those guys about placing our staff on the payroll of those agencies and then redelegating them back to do our work and/or cash contributions from those agencies to the Committee's budget for its own purposes. Moneys had to be made as administrative transfers to the Department of Labor, and then the Department of Labor operated from there. So we ended up with cash transfers equivalent to the so-called Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] budget level, and we ended up with certain unilateral arrangements on personnel support from the operating agencies.

It was always a tough issue, and in the early stages, because there was a negativism on this on Johnson's part, there was a lot of suspicion in the Administration as to how far he really wanted to go. Later he began to finesse that problem by agreeing to these administrative devices, which enabled us to programmatically move forward at a faster clip, although not as fast as we would have liked, but without any feeling of heavy-handed restraint on his part. Gradually, the perception became one more of accommodation to the political problem, that he was not personally the hammer on the program so much as his sensitivity to the other pressures.

I discussed this only once with the President. Jerry Holleman and I had continually complained of this; that this was restrictive, that his was damaging, that this was really an intolerable position. The President knew we were complaining, and he asked us in the course of a report meeting one time we were having with him about the activities of the Committee, "Do you still feel the same way about the budget?" And we both said, "Yes, we do. We still feel very strongly that the budget situation is intolerable." "Well," he said, "I really don't know what we can do about it yet." I never discussed it with him again, except that he was aware of it, and he accepted it.

STEWART: There were certain arrangements made with key people on the Hill to let all of this go on as it did, I assume.

FEILD: Yes, there were. Nobody was ever fully cognizant of what all those arrangements were except that David Bell [David E. Bell], when he was Director of the Bureau of the Budget, was involved at one point in one of those discussions. Our own relationship to that came to the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor people had to go up and, you know, sort of fudge the issue a little bit and make commitments – “We won’t spend beyond this” – because it was their appropriation, too, that was involved and they were given sort of a green light, “Okay, you can do it within a limit.” That’s the way it worked.

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STEWART: How was the original, what was the original concept as far as the role of the Committee was concerned? Did everyone feel or did some people feel this would be a very active working committee, or did others feel it would be, it would tend to be an honorary type of thing?

FEILD: No. Pretty much the early concept was that it would be quite active. That concept gave way a little bit as we began to move administratively in harnessing the capabilities of the line agencies. As we got better hold of the administrative direction of the line agencies, we could see that it was possible to extend personnel throughout their structures, both in the contract field and the internal and governmental employment field, that it would be very operational. We got acceptance for the concept of full-time operating personnel assigned to these programs that we were directing as a committee, but that they were administratively carrying out.

As that capability grew, the involvement of the Committee members themselves, if they were governmental, was largely planning. If they were citizens, it was directed more towards building public support for programs. We sponsored a number of very major PR [public relations] conferences and meetings, giving a lot of prominence to our business and civic and religious members who were serving on the Committee, so that they became more involved in public educational sides of the Committee’s activities.

There were a few exceptions to that. There were some major policy problems that were relegated by the full Committee to sub-committees. The most important of these had to do with so-called franchise industries. Under the previous administration utilities had been exempt from regulations. It had been our intention very early in this game not to have that continue. The first division that occurred in the Committee was on that issue. It was resolved in the direction of including utilities for regulation. This resulted in the decision that had to get some clearance at the White House only by accident. The initiative for regulation extended from the Committee through the contracting agencies, but it came only in the form of requiring them to sign contracts.

The utilities recognized the inherent risk that they were talking once they signed a contract obligating themselves to this provision. So their practice was, in the early stages, to refuse to sign contracts but to continue to provide services. In some instances, they didn’t

even bill the government. They wrote letters indicating they would like to have clarification of this and would, upon clarification of it, submit appropriate billings.

The most important of these incidents came to a head – you can't say anything about this except it had to be coincidental – in Texas. It was a dispute between the Navy and one of the Texas utilities about the supplying of power for a Naval station in the Gulf of Mexico. The utility not only refused to

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sign the contract, but upon the Navy's insistence on the position that they had to have a contract signed or they couldn't accept power, the Navy had to hook six of its damned destroyers together to provide power. That provoked one goddamn loud shout of pain from the Chief of Naval Operations who didn't want to see his generators burned out over an issue of this kind, and we had to get some clarification from the White House as to what their position was going to be, and this had to go to the President. The President said, "We're going to stand pat." Word then came back to us, "Well, let's get the damn thing worked out."

My impression was, I think with some reasonable good foundation, that the Vice President then was asked to resolve this, and within a day the power company did exchange letters of agreement, agreeing to comply with the regulations of the Committee, and then did, in fact, restore the power to the Naval base, and the Navy got to turn off its generators. But that went on for almost a week. It became a rather interesting early....Here again, I think that that was sort of a testing period; it worked out well, the thing moved forward. The Vice President responded; he was, you know, a participant, an affirmative one, and cleared the way for further gradual expansion of it.

STEWART: As far as the original appointment of public members, how and by whom were the original recommendations made?

FEILD: That group came out of a lot of tugging and pulling in this Shriver group. Harris Wofford was very important in that discussion. Ralph Dungan was very important in it. Although I was not personally involved in the Committee's business in the sense of having any expectation about becoming its director – I didn't, by the way, and I wasn't a candidate for it, I didn't ask for it, I asked for something else that I didn't get – I had known many of the names under consideration. I didn't know of all of them, but I knew the kinds of names that were tossed into that hopper. They were just going through the typical process of trying to get some balance, what kind of business people, who should be carried over. I was very much involved in that, too. Adam Yarmolinsky was involved in it. Those were the guys that finally listed the names. They finally were probably reviewed by, oh, undoubtedly they were reviewed with Bobby Kennedy. I doubt if they were reviewed with Larry O'Brien and Kenny O'Donnell. I think they were just submitted to them. I don't think they really reviewed them.

STEWART: Very early in the game, of course, there were a set of rules and regulations issued by the Committee. You, by that time, had been appointed.

FEILD: Right.

STEWART: Do you remember any serious disagreements over the

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substance of these rules and regulations, or did they pretty much follow naturally from the structure of the whole thing?

FEILD: They pretty much did except there were a lot of extended discussions about exemptions. This was the most important area. There was a lot of discussion also about reporting requirements, it's a costly business. It had not been previously done. We felt it could be very politically expensive, and we felt that a top decision had to be made about that. I provoked Jerry Holleman into confronting the secretary of labor with the significance on both exemptions and the reporting requirement. It was a very heavy burden on industry, one that they were unaccustomed to that could easily produce a kickback. I felt that we had to be in a strong, knowledgeable, cognizant position if we were going to promulgate regulations of that kind.

When we did present this as our position on regulations and rules, we were supported by Goldberg and by Harris Wofford. I don't know that Harris ever personally discussed it with the President. He probably discussed it personally with Ted Sorensen or Mike Feldman. Generally Mike was pretty much the touch base point on regulatory problems involving industry. All we did was to make certain everybody knew that this was going to be the position before it ever posted for public hearings. There wasn't any great argument about this.

Hobart Taylor had the technical responsibility for drafting those rules. He was very, very cognizant of the need to have these cleared and understood, and if there were differences, have them ironed out, and they were. When they were presented, there was no great debate in the hearing. The opposition was very slight to any of those. We did encounter more opposition later on on the scale of the reporting process.

There is a law that requires any form that's sent to industry or to any private group of more than ten units, that this must be cleared by the Advisory Committee to the Bureau of the Budget on reporting forms. That Committee is still debating that issue over there, and they'll be debating it next week again as each one of these forms is revised – the complexity of them, the scale of the information. Jack Gaynor, who is the chairman of that Committee, the controller for U.S. Steel, is a bright Hawkshaw on this, and he is a good stalwart to make sure they don't put any more burden than they have to. We had more trouble there with technical details than we did with the acceptance of the necessity of it.

STEWART: Wasn't there some problem or some question as to how many levels as far as subcontractors were concerned? Could you go into it?

FEILD: Oh, yes. Yes. This was a very major issue. Again, it was brought about by the problem of exemptions. You've got to make a cutoff point. We spent an awful lot of

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time, and I think warranted time...I was personally severely criticized for taking so much time on this. I spent a lot of time conferring with the experienced contracting officers at GSA [General Services Administration] and the Defense Department and all the major contracting establishments, trying to determine the feasibility of extending this requirement beyond first tier subcontractors. How much can you require each successive level of interest to perform paper work that feeds back through the other? The reporting system that had to be devised was very complicated for that reason.

The only merit or justification we had for the position we took was how much paper could we swallow. We took a very pragmatic view, I mean, it wasn't an ideological debate between anybody in our staff or on the Committee. It was only a matter of scale. Obviously, there were forces outside the Committee looking at us saying, "You ought to do everything," without much awareness of what they were asking them to do, in fact do, what was going to happen to this after the requirement was put out.

We did end up taking a pretty comprehensive position. We took the position that the coverage extended throughout the whole of the corporation; if one part was covered, it was all covered. We did take the position that first tier subcontractors had to report and that all subsequent tiers of contractors were obligated by the requirements of the executive order but wouldn't be required to report. So we kept our jurisdiction, we kept the coverage, and we reduced the amount of volume paper coming back. I don't recall again that that was any great...It was being more talked about in the abstract as a political debate than it was in the reality of what decisions you had to make.

STEWART: Okay, how did the idea of Plans for Progress originate?

FEILD: In my head.

STEWART: In your head?

FEILD: I coined that phrase, and I designed that program, and poor Bobby Troutman [Robert Troutman Jr.] has been damned by it by more people than you can imagine.

STEWART: I thought it originated from the Lockheed....

FEILD: It came right out of the Lockheed experience. Bobby, of course was in Atlanta and very much involved in all those discussions down there. Bobby had the PR sense and the political drive to want to aggrandize an idea which had come out of a very practical circumstance, and he wanted to do it because he wanted to demonstrate, I think, number one, his own leadership; and, maybe, number two,

and more important, that he was successful in defending the interests of Atlanta and Georgia and southern based military contractors. He wanted to convert an apparent defeat into a blazing victory.

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The circumstances were very simple: The Air Force had turned in a routine compliance review report on the Lockheed Marietta plant on an ongoing contract involving the C-130. The issue had to do not with that aircraft but a forthcoming billion dollar contract involving the C-141 or 140, the next stage, the jet powered transport. The reason why the issue became what it was was that when the Air Force returned this report to us, my staff reviewed it, it got to me, and I said, "I'm not going to accept this report. The Lockheed Company in Marietta, Georgia, is not in compliance."

I notified the Air Force – I notified the Air Force, not my superiors – I also notified my superiors that I had, that they had better so inform the company and ask them to enter into negotiations to bring themselves into compliance. The Air Force quickly pushed back at me and said, "This is a very high policy issue you're taking here, young man." I went to Jerry Holleman and said to Jerry, "You and I better talk to the Secretary of the Air Force forthwith because the issue is not joined. They're either going to bring that plant into compliance or we're going to say they're not entitled to the contract they've got now much less getting any new ones."

It was very quickly agreed that Assistant Secretary of Air Force Joseph Imirie, who later retired, would assign his assistant to accompany me, representing Jerry Holleman and the Committee, to go down to Lockheed and to meet with the officials and to establish a basis for bringing them into compliance. The Air Force had communicated the red light that I was blinking down through its chair of command to the Lockheed people, and they in turn called Bobby Troutman and said, "Aren't you a member of that Committee?" And Bobby said, "Yes, I am." But we had also notified Mr. Troutman that we were coming to Atlanta to meet with the Lockheed people, and he would be welcome to join us since he was a member of the Committee in that area.

We spent several days, and we devised a way for the Lockheed Company to commit itself to a series of actions over a given period of time that would allow them in stages to eliminate the practices that we were questioning and to do the things that we thought they ought to do. And I said at the key negotiations, "We will accept your present posture if you agree to this Plan for Progress." I said, "That's what we'll call it, a Plan for Progress." They conferred with their principals in Burbank and agreed to do it. It was agreed that we would issue a joint press statement from Atlanta that we had reached this agreement.

Then Bobby's brilliant mind got to work and said, "Well, now that the tensions are off and things are looking pretty good here and this worked out so well, why don't we just see if we can't make this the method of operation of this Committee? We'll just make this the raison d'être, and there isn't any reason why every president of every major company in this country wouldn't be willing to sit down and negotiate and work out a Plan for Progress." And I said, "That's right, Bobby. There's no reason in the world. We've been doing it this way for

a long time, but we've got a nice concept here, it's high visibility. Let's go."

He said, "Well let's talk to Dan Haughton [Daniel J. Haughton]." Dan Haughton was the executive vice president of Lockheed at that time. He is from Alabama by the way. Dan thought it was a good idea. They immediately decided to arrange to meet in Washington with Courtlandt Gross, who was at that time president of the company. His brother, Robert Gross [Robert E. Gross] was the chairman of the board and the real founder of the company and the real power.

So Courtlandt Gross came here and had lunch with Bobby Troutman and me over there in the Mayflower Hotel, and he thought the concept was pretty good, and Bobby proposed to him, "Well, would you be willing to sign this Plan for Progress agreement in the White House, with the Vice President, with the President covering the entire Lockheed Corporation?" Mr. Gross, being by nature a very courtly, stately New England conservative, said he had to talk it over with his brother. He did talk it over, and it was agreed that we would use this as a basis for establishing an affirmative posture of a major American industrial corporation in setting some goals.

I should tell you that there was an intermediate step of some importance in this. We had to fly out to Burbank. Joe Imirie had hired a guy named Phil Hammer [Philip G. Hammer], who is a management consultant in town, to go with his military group. His earlier representative had been an Air Force colonel. Phil Hammer, George Boxall, myself and two of my staff assistants went out to Burbank after the meeting with Cortlandt Gross. By that time we had insisted, and they had agreed, that the agreement would be a corporate-wide agreement and would involve all of Lockheed facilities no matter where they were located. We met over a two-day period with, I don't know, ten or twelve industrial relations directors for as many Lockheed installations – Puget Sound, New Jersey, Burbank, several of their major operating units, their airport and aircraft maintenance company, they made building materials for windows – and we worked out with them the details on how the whole corporation-wide Plan for Progress would look.

Jim Lydon [James P. Lydon], who is vice president of Lockheed, and I finalized that agreement and brought it back, and that's what was signed in the White House. We had to get the Vice President committed to it. Bobby then went on a very rapid toot to line up other aircraft company guys. He talked quickly to some guys when he was in LA [Los Angeles], the North American people, the Douglas people, and he began to go with the idea let's make this a big program. That's how it got started. I was involved with Bobby and talking personally with all those executives, the presidents of those companies, in the early stages in formulating the first ten Plans for Progress agreements.

STEWART: When did the dispute really begin as to whether this would be a substitute for....

FEILD: There was the rub. Bobby Troutman very early began to articulate the view that this could very easily become the whole of the Committee's basis of operations, that we didn't need this million dollar budget. He made a little speech before a Committee meeting: He was horrified about that million dollar budget that they all approved; he didn't want that budget, didn't want to spend the taxpayers' money; and he didn't like all this business of regulation, and he didn't think anybody else in business liked it either; and that, therefore, what we ought to do is have this great Plan for Progress program, and let's not worry too much about all those regulations, all these forms and everything we send all out.

My position with Bobby, it was very friendly, was, "Bob, we're going to have to have both. The strength of the Plans for Progress approach is that it will make all the rest of the thing less burdensome, less expensive, but no less necessary, because for every one guy willing to step forward, there's an awful lot of guys that don't understand it." So I agreed that we would promote the program and assigned my staff to implement it. In fact, we did all the work on it with the understanding that there was going to be no diminution of the compliance procedure, the reporting system, the regulatory approach, et cetera. It wasn't until it got so damn big....

Bobby kept suggesting that we ought to get five hundred companies. I wanted to go with first, fifty. The thought of a hundred didn't bother me, it was administratively manageable, it would provide greater leadership. But going beyond that without any evaluation of the performances of those that were already involved seemed to me idiocy, and I opposed it. I took the view that we had to have a period to digest and evaluate what these guys were doing. And in fact, of the first ten reports of the first ten companies – I'll say from my certain knowledge – there were at least two companies in there that were total nonperformers. Not only were they nonperformers, they were going backward in what they had said they were going to try to do. They weren't doing that without any knowledge or awareness of what they were doing. They were doing it as a way of not living up to their commitments and at the same time evading, and I regard it as evasion of the regulatory obligations under the executive order, and I said so to Johnson, I said so to Goldberg, and the rest of them. That was my only beef with Bobby.

Publicly the pressures developed, question began to be asked. Are these guys getting out of obligations? et cetera. Herbie Hill [Herbert Hill] was the main motor on this, and Herbie's reason was that he was as suspicious of me and anybody who was in the regulatory spot as he ever would be of Bobby Troutman. Herbie just simply wanted to know what was happening in Lockheed. Our complainants down in Lockheed a year later were no happier than they were the year before, and they were complaining to Herbie. Herbie was saying to me, "You guys have got a big PR program going here. You guys are just like Nixon." He began to feed this

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out in the press, a good propagandist, and Troutman became a symbol. And as far as I was concerned, he deserved to be the symbol by that time.

The pressures developed more and more, and I think he was caught in a great deal of double-dealing with Johnson and the White House. It was never quite clear whether he was

trying to undercut Johnson, it certainly wasn't very clear to Johnson whether he was trying to do that. On the White House side, it was never very clear whether he was playing with Johnson. In the end he was asked to resign.

STEWART: Everyone had doubts in other words.

FEILD: Right. They all had doubts as to what his motives were and with whom he was playing, and he was asked to resign. Interesting enough, Jack Kennedy couldn't bring himself to do it. Kenny O'Donnell asked for the resignation.

STEWART: I've heard that someplace, I don't know where.

FEILD: That was so understandable because Bobby is a charming and ingratiating person, and he is well motivated. He wasn't trying to hoodwink everybody. He was glamorizing some of this because it served the purpose of making....He was very typically Southern pride at work, you know, and he ballyhooed this a lot. In his relationships – he worked assiduously at his friendships with the Kennedys and Shriver. He spent a great deal of hours and time trying to get on airplanes and riding with them and seeing them and inviting them down to his house. Shriver was down there. I spent many nights in Bobby Troutman's house, so I know exactly the style the guy was playing. He was just....It would be very difficult to say no to the guy, like kicking him in the teeth, but on the other hand, he'd become a political liability, and he was dropped because he was a political liability.

There were a lot of other questions that had gotten the situation much worse, questions about money and solicitation of funds from private corporations for activities in connection with the damn program that would leave too much question as to the basis of its use and its management. And you can't have a guy going around trying to raise fifty thousand dollars or twenty-five hundred dollars or six thousand dollars for an activity that wasn't governmental activity. It was raising all kinds of questions. The Attorney General's office had to respond to these phone calls; what is this guy doing? Who does he speak for? Who is he representing? He was very flamboyant. You wouldn't have thought he was trying to hoodwink anybody, he was just flamboyant as hell. And you know, if you saw him face to face, you'd see that's what he was doing.

STEWART: Masterful way of operating.

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FEILD: Well, that's my story, and I'm stuck with it.

STEWART: Okay. Was there ever any serious thought of cancelling a contract?

FEILD: Yes, there was, but we decided on another course of action which we used as an enforcement tool that we believed had more strength. Now there were some trade offs on this. There would have been some very great political advantages to us to find some contractor somewhere and cancel his contract. You could always reinstate it. We could have gotten the great advantage of drawing a big distinction between the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] years, the Nixon years, and ours. We did have plenty of report investigations that were coming to us upon which we could have acted.

When we got two or three of those that were very blatant, there was a very real question about should we take that course of action. But in every one of those instances, the companies involved also were coming up, and we knew they were coming up because we were talking to procurement agencies that they were dealing with, for new contracts. So we had an option, the option being should we simply withhold new contracts from them. It happened that all the companies that we were getting sharp, detailed information on... By the way, that was the case in Lockheed. The lever we were holding over Lockheed's head wasn't that we were going to do anything with the contract that they had, but they wouldn't be eligible for the new one.

We didn't ever take legal action against Lockheed because we got an agreement which we committed to writing. But we did take legal action against three companies at once, pretty much in sequence, by instructing the contracting agencies to withhold further contracts. We were permitted to do this under the rules and regulations that we had published. We chose that as the device, and we publicized it, and it was used as frequently as it was felt necessary when the facts and the circumstances warranted it. It was used after I was gone. It wasn't used for a long time after I was gone, but it was used by the time the agencies could agree with the Committee on where they were going to apply the sanction.

The reason I put it a little bit in that context is the decision as to who would do this was not taken above Jerry Holleman's level. The question was raised above that level, but the decision as to what was to be done was left to Jerry. Jerry Holleman is the first man that issued an order withholding a contract from anybody on race grounds in the federal government. (Incidentally, Jerry is a Texan and I was born in Arkansas.) He did use that power as long as he was there. That's the context in which it came about.

I would say that the reason it was not taken above Holleman's level is also a little reflection of this political posturing that was going on with Johnson and Goldberg and the

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White House, and it was understood that Holleman would be a clear symbol of the White House. I think Johnson's instinct was, "It would be easier for me to support it than it would be for me to claim credit for it." So he neither claimed credit nor was he backing away. He was just waiting, and it worked. It worked very well, as a matter of fact. It is today the device that all the agencies are using as their main lever with any of these guys to the extent that it's being done at all.

STEWART: Look it...

FEILD: No, go ahead.

STEWART: All right. Let's talk a little bit about the problems within the federal government. I guess it was right at the start you began to appoint employment policy officers.

FEILD: Right. This is basically having more to do with the President in this area than with the other area.

STEWART: Right. Well, let me ask you first, there was a decision made to locate these people directly under the head of the department agency.

FEILD: Right.

STEWART: Did this create any problems initially or did...

FEILD: No. No. Let me give you the background on that very quickly. I happen to know a great deal about it for a variety of reasons. I was at one time named by Eisenhower to be director of the President's Committee on Government Employment Policy. I never occupied the job because Senator John Bricker [John William Bricker] from Ohio made me persona non grata because I was a Democrat. I was in Ohio at the time; I was a registered Democrat in Ohio, and Bricker said, "No sir, you're not going to get that job." In the course of that, however, I had made a very elaborate study for that committee – this was shortly after it was organized, I was to be its first director – as to what they should be doing and where they should place their apparatus. So I knew what that structure was.

By the time Kennedy came along – this was some years later – during this hiatus period between November and March, I made another study of that for Harris Wofford and wrote a memorandum on the subject and was able to use that experience, I think rather effectively, for Harris in recommending that we place this responsibility directly under the administrative head of the agency. So we were able to get all the agencies to agree to designate an assistant secretary or equivalent. You say, "Was there much problem?" Well, there wasn't so much a problem as there was such a terrific lack of understanding of the

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significance of that administrative change.

All these agencies had long time career people in them who were consorting with the new Kennedy team and telling them, "Well, that's not the way we do that." They were telling our new appointees, "This is the way we handle this problem around here." We were trying to get across that that's not the way we're going to deal with the problem of managing the equal employment opportunity program in the new government. We were not going to be reactive to the problem, we were going to direct the leadership on the problem.

It was necessary for us, through Harris Wofford, to report to the President that he needed to put push behind this. Too many agencies hadn't sent in the name of the person to

Harris' office. Harris and Frank Reeves would send around a memo, "Tell us who you designated." They'd get designations of John Henry Jones, who's the third deputy to the fourth deputy, you know, in the personnel office. They had to send back, "That isn't what we want. We want an assistant secretary." It was necessary for us to get that on the agenda of the Cabinet and for the President to tell the Cabinet, and then for Harris, as a function of that, through the Bureau of the Budget, to tell all the other agencies what we intended. It took us months before we actually got that structure created even though the instructions were absolutely clear.

STEWART: It seemed so simple.

FEILD: It seemed simple, but there was no adjustment to it because it was so new, and it was not clear at what level the decision had been made. We strengthened that by having the President call the first sub-Cabinet committee meeting on civil rights, and he addressed that sub-Cabinet meeting. We had sixty assistant secretaries, or assistant administrators or whatnot. He conveyed, and the Vice President conveyed, his commitment to this level of responsibility and this level of leadership.

Shortly thereafter, we published all over the government, posters in every damn public building in the country, "President Kennedy says this is where we are going to be on equal opportunity in the federal service: the right to advance, the right to contribute." We changed the philosophy that it wasn't going to be a case where some poor, benighted grade 2 employee could complain, but rather it was the obligation of the executives of the agency to review, to direct, to lead by recruiting, by training programs, by reviews of promotional rosters, by the assignment of management time to the issue.

STEWART: Was there a big problem in getting people in each agency, the staff people who were actually going to carry out this stuff, who had the right qualifications, who had some experience in these areas?

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FEILD: Yes, there was. That took a little longer. We did suggest to the major agencies, "Look, you'll be well advised to bring into your staff a specialist in personnel to assist you, at the assistant secretary level, to carry this out." It was a couple of years before we had enough of those types of specialists working around the major agencies to feel that you really had the shoulder into problem. It is very substantially into that today; it has continued under President Johnson.

Johnson himself took a very active role in this area, by the way, understood this very well. It did not contain as many uncertainties I'm sure. He was very forthright on this all the way across the board. It didn't present the same problem in terms of appropriations. The agencies weren't asking for that many people, they were their own people, they were specialists, they were civil servants, they were getting approval for them from Congress.

The Post Office had a very large investment in this. One of the most brilliantly directed efforts of its kind, I think, took place there under a young man who was one of the

early Kennedy politicians, a guy named Elmer Paul Brock, who was in that job just a few years. He was a young man in his early thirties who died of cancer within three months of its discovery. He had put his life into trying to push that in the Post Office, and he did a brilliant job. This was under Day [J. Edward Day]. That big piece of federal bureaucracy – the Post Office – by the way, was very important in persuading the rest of them as to what the Kennedy style was all about, what the leadership really meant.

This guy brought in hundreds of employment policy personnel from all over the Post Office for three-day seminars. He would get Day down there; he would get, you know, a message sent from the President; he had the President call on the phone and put it on a loudspeaker so that they'd know that we meant this. He understood the problem. He was really brilliant in this. After all, the Post Office has six hundred thousand of our two million some employees. He was setting a terrific pace in there. That was the problem, to get these fellows to feel that affirmatively they really had to do it.

STEWART: What about the role of the Civil Service Commission in all of this? One, how would you describe your relationship with John Macy [John W. Macy Jr.], and two, was there any problem in defining their role in this whole thing and the role of the Committee?

FEILD: Yes, there were a lot of problems. They were all understandable problems. My relationship with John Macy I think was always good. John is an exceptionally capable person. I don't want to be patronizing in saying this but it's the best way of saying it because it's the way I honestly perceived his performance in the area. He held the strategic position, and as you can imagine, what we were, in

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effect, saying was that all of the management leadership that they had been giving this problem up to that time was inadequate. You had to say this in ways that were not anti-Macy or even damaging to the integrity of the Civil Service Commission, but you had to say it. Therefore, I would say that John Macy evolved a very good position out of the interplay of those Kennedy people who were kicking this problem back and forth in the operating agencies and from a political perspective on the commitment that we had to it, so that today, John Macy to me represents a considerably more advanced, firmer position on this whole problem than he represented in 1961.

In 1961 I regarded most of his general posture in the field of this part of the employment thing as traditional, and it was not effectively translating into administrative action the commitment that they allegedly had made. It was traditional administrative policy without any guts. It was a nice policy statement that sounded great that nobody followed. You couldn't have had the posture of the accumulation of that many Negroes in those lower levels of government service without neglect. It had to be neglect. It didn't have to be vocal, that's for sure, but it sure as hell had to be neglect.

Not all that was certainly John's responsibility, he was relatively new to that leadership, but I think that he maintained strong commitment with the Kennedy commitment

and with the Johnson commitment, which I think is identical in this area. I think he has necessarily been concerned for the greatest role for the Civil Service Commission; he has necessarily been concerned about that responsibility he had to the Congress. After all, the civil service law is a congressionally guided frame of reference so that he had to be mindful of that. I think that his position has emerged as an affirmative one all the way through. I would guess that he has achieved what to him would be the solution to the relationship to that old President's Committee, namely to accept the goals of that Committee but to integrate the administrative machinery for that activity within the orbit of concern for the Civil Service Commission, and he did that systematically step by step.

I resisted it, and I resisted it as long I was only there two years to resist it, but I resisted it. He always made the recommendations for more integration of the program into the Civil Service Commission. My posture was, "It's early, it's too early, we haven't done enough. That can come later." I don't hold any great criticism for the fact that it has been put under the Civil Service Commission. I think that it was inevitable, that it should under conditions where the commitment of the Commission was clear, it was accepted and it was being given management priority.

STEWART: How important or how much of a consideration was the fear, especially among agency heads, that a real aggressive policy here would harm the morale of non-Negro employees? This, of course, is continually in little

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instances coming forth. To what extent was this a consideration in any major policy decisions?

FEILD: It was a great – I think it was a very frequently made observation by career executives. I took the view it was greatly over exaggerated and didn't constitute a problem for an effective manager. I think that that's better understood today than it was then. The issue revolved always around the problem of quotas. We always hedged our position on the quotas by simply saying, you know, "We're for equal opportunity. If you're going to insure that you're going to have qualified people, then they ought to be representatively qualified. Not all the qualified people are white. If you can show us reasonable effort to obtain qualified recruits or reasonable effort to evaluate qualifications of the work force fairly, that's bound to demonstrate or to show Negro participation." That's not saying to them, you know, "You've got to have ten per cent Negro in this or five per cent in that," leaving a whole flexible range of alternatives to choose in and to evaluate.

But there was always the suspicion that we were really talking about quotas, and it was a suspicion that was given some credence by the fact that because we were continually lashing the sub-Cabinet Committee on Civil Rights, and we were continually pressuring the hell out of all the Kennedy appointees, you know, to show performance on this issue, it is conceivable to us that less sophisticated spokesmen for this policy were saying to departmental head units, "Look, for God's sake, why don't you get some Negroes in there. If

you're not getting them in there, you're not doing your job," and giving it a sort of a gross translation that was feeding this fear, this apprehension, this kind of backlash talk.

I noticed in the papers the other day again criticism of a self administered questionnaire identifying race, feeling that there was too much leaning over backwards. We had complaints from a couple of the union guys about this, that pressures were being put, you know, in one of the post offices to push Negroes ahead of whites. Taking the whole thing all together, with a work force of a two and a quarter million, which is what it was when I was there, it's two and a half now....That's the largest employer in the Western world. AT&T is the second largest. They've got seven hundred and fifty thousand. That's just to show you the scale, it's almost three times....

STEWART: A little bigger than the Post Office.

FEILD: Yes, it's three times the size of its next nearest relationship. It would have been amazing if we didn't have it. We had less of it, I think, than we probably had a right to expect we'd get, and I think it's going to still be there in large work groups of this kind. Group consciousness, race consciousness, even racism is there. A lot of

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the people who were making these statements about leaning over backward and who were critical of the Administration are racists. Let's not coat them all as nice benign decent little white collar workers around here in the government. They aren't benign and decent. They're vicious, and they're going to spread that kind of statement.

We had to force people in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving over there, who made the most racist statements you can imagine, to place the first Negro sheet metal worker in that place. If you've encountered what people can, in fact, say to you about management choices, they don't all come out so sweet. It would be amazing to me if we didn't have rumors and grumbles and backlash on it, some of which is vicious – some of which is unintentionally so; it's just a superficial impression about people getting ahead.

STEWART: What about the whole area of labor? Was there any opposition at the beginning to including unions in the program?

FEILD: No.

STEWART: And the whole matter of, in effect, giving labor leaders another problem when they've had so many to deal with in the last few years.

FEILD: No, there wasn't any. There was a strong enough political commitment, I think, among labor to understand it. Jerry Holleman, as you know, came out of the labor movement. He was the president of the AFL-CIO in Texas. Another important political fact going back to the earlier history, that labor was strong in its acceptance in principle. They were very concerned about the impact in

any given situation of regulation on unions and where the equities were. We had some very, very important ones. They're obviously very important in construction.

We had it come up, surprisingly, in other circumstances, in skilled trades that are not construction, machinist trades. We had it come up in closed shop unions where the layoff situation was such that Negroes were unlikely to be hired as new employees in a company where the rate of employment would go up a slight margin and come back down a slight margin always leaving enough white workers on layoff status with eligibility under the union contract to return, you'd never break the patten of employment independence.

STEWART: The tape's running out.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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