

Alexander K. Christie, Oral History Interview—12/6/1966
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Biographical Note

Christie, a staff member on the Senate Committee on Labor (1945-1960) and legislative representative for the United Steelworkers of America (1960-1972), discusses John F. Kennedy's (JFK) work on labor issues as Senator and President; Robert F. Kennedy's relationship with Jimmy Hoffa; and Christie's role as an economic advisor to JFK during the 1960 presidential campaign, among other issues.

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Alexander K. Christie
Alexander K. Christie

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May 9, 1973
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Alexander K. Christie

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Oral History Interview

with

ALEXANDER K. CHRISTIE

December 6, 1966
Washington, D.C.

By John F. Stewart
Also present William McHugh

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: This is an interview with Mr. Alexander Christie. The interview is being conducted in the National Archives Building. The interviewer is John Stewart. Also present is Mr. William McHugh. Mr. Christie, why don't we begin by my asking you to describe in general, one, your first meeting with President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and, two, the nature of your relationship during his years in Congress.

CHRISTIE: My first meeting with President Kennedy was in 1947. It was related to a bill that was then before the Senate, Senate SJ-22, which had been introduced by Senator Ball [Joseph H. Ball]. And this bill provided the means or hearings, and out of those hearings came the so-called Taft-Hartley Act, or more accurately known as the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947. Representative Kennedy was a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, and I don't recall the circumstances, but I believe that I received a phone call from the Congressman's office asking me, as the Democratic member of the Senate Labor Committee, if I would kindly come over to the Congressman's and attempt to brief him on SJ-22. I went over to the House and to the best of my ability I briefed the Congressman on SJ-22. That was in 1947, about March. That was my initial meeting with the Congressman.

STEWART: Could you describe in general your relationship with him from then until 1960?

CHRISTIE: My relations with the Congressman were very friendly. I constantly fed him memos of what was taking place in the field of labor management, and sometimes these memos went outside the field of labor management relations and were related to foreign relations, especially where Great Britain was concerned. Also, other memos on public

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power. The Congressman was greatly interested in TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority]. At that time he was wondering, more or less speculating, what could be done to bring cheap public power to New England and undoubtedly in the back of his mind was the Passamaquoddy project that President Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] had toyed with, but nothing had ever been done. But he was interested in TVA and the seven states that make up the Tennessee Valley Authority.

As far as foreign relations was concerned, Congressman Kennedy was a good friend of the United Kingdom, a friend of Great Britain. And, of course, having written his book *Why England Slept*, he was versed on what had taken place in Great Britain from '38 and '39 up until '47 and '50.

STEWART: How would you describe Kennedy's overall interest in the problems of labor, both when you first met him and in his later years as a senator?

CHRISTIE: Well, initially, when he was a congressman it was a sort of a detached academic interest that at times was highly critical of some of the unions and, more in particular, some of the leadership of the unions. But after he became a senator this critical attitude—I wouldn't say that it vanished all together, but it kind of fell into the background. Now to be quite frank about this, Senator Kennedy started to realize that politically he thought the unions were a force to be reckoned with politically, and it may have been that his criticism or his critical attitude was being tempered by the fact the unions were a force politically, at least the membership was. This was something that I think he kept in the back of his mind.

Also, while he was chairman of the subcommittee that eventually reported out what became known as the Landrum-Griffin Act [Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959], he tried to the best of his ability and considered what was involved to get along with various union leaders. By that I mean he listened to what they had to say and tried to put it into the law. This was especially true where Joe Keenan [Joseph Daniel Keenan] was concerned—Joseph Keenan, secretary-treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who was a great admirer of the Senator and who worked hard in the Kennedy vineyard over the years.

STEWART: Do you remember any particular opinions he expressed about major labor leaders?

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CHRISTIE: He was highly critical of John L. Lewis, but it must also be said that John L. Lewis was highly critical of Senator Kennedy. There are not many John L. Lewises around and maybe that's—the country suffers from that, at least the labor movement does. Mr. Lewis was not only brilliant, he knew the whys and the wherefores, and at times he could be very arrogant. And Mr. Lewis was a man who did his homework. In other words, he knew from whence he spoke, he had the facts to buttress them up, back himself up. Many times he thought that Senator Kennedy was being a bit facetious or presumptuous or snappy in his judgments. The Senator felt the same way about Mr. Lewis. He thought at times he was overbearing, overdid it, tended to be overdramatic. My opinion is that Senator Kennedy couldn't stand dramatic individuals or the people. He may have liked the stage, but when it came to testifying before a committee you made more progress if you stuck to the facts and stated them as plain as you could rather than bawding it and going into a long dramatic discussion or pounding the table or shouting or raising your voice. That jarred the Senator.

STEWART: Do you remember any other strong opinions one way or the other that he expressed about any of the other labor leaders?

CHRISTIE: He did think that President Green [William R. Green] of the AFL, American Federation [American Federation of Labor] at times was sort of weak and wishy-washy. At times, he wondered about Joseph Curran [Joseph Edwin Curran], president of the National Maritime Union.

STEWART: He admired Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] didn't he, right along?

CHRISTIE: He admired Walter Reuther. But he also admired Phil Murray [Philip Murray] to a greater degree and extent than he did Walter Reuther. Walter Reuther, as everyone knows, is a windy speaker—not to take anything away from Mr. Reuther—but Senator Kennedy liked Phil Murray. And one of the unfortunate things was that Mr. Murray died before Congressman Kennedy became a senator, but in his exchanges with Mr. Murray he expressed great admiration for Phil Murray. True, as you say, he was impressed with Walter Reuther.

STEWART: Can you think of any others?

CHRISTIE: I'm trying to think of others. Joe Beirne [Joseph Anthony Beirne] the president of the Communications Workers, [Communications Workers of America] Senator Kennedy thought highly of.

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STEWART: How about Meany [George Meany]?

CHRISTIE: He thought very highly of President Meany, but I don't know. At times he expressed the thought that Meany could be a bit too demanding. My feeling is that after the Senator became president—not that there's any connection or any relationship between being president of the United States and president of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations]—but I think that President Kennedy had a greater appreciation of the difficulties confronting President Meany as when he did when he was a senator. He appreciated the problem. It was like a new opening, somebody opened a tent and showed him something he never realized existed before.

STEWART: Do you ever recall him expressing himself in general on the competency of the leadership of American labor unions in the 1950's?

CHRISTIE: Can I go back a bit?

STEWART: Yes, sure, go ahead.

CHRISTIE: He liked Dave Dubinsky [David Dubinsky]. Sidney Hillman was another and Jacob Potofsky [Jacob Samuel Potofsky]. He liked Dave Dubinsky.

STEWART: Why did he ever...

CHRISTIE: He considered Dubinsky what he would call a real down-to-earth gut fighter. In other words, when the occasion arose Dubinsky went to the mat, no holds barred when he was in there fighting.

STEWART: You think Kennedy liked this in general in a labor leader?

CHRISTIE: Yes. Not too generally, but apparently he liked it in Dave Dubinsky. Now he did like—he expressed admiration for Dave McDonald [David J. McDonald]. But Phil Murray, Meany, and Reuther, they were the ones that he.... And as time went on, as a senator, he began to understand the intricacies of the labor movement and appreciate the problems that confronted it.

STEWART: Do you think he later on had a different feeling about the leadership in general?

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CHRISTIE: Yes. Yes, than he had when he was a congressman or initially. When he was a congressman he was a sort of detached professional attitude from off looking at distance. When he became a senator he became more intimately involved with them especially when the—don't forget that he was the chairman of the subcommittee that put so-called Landrum-Griffin on the books, and he was faced with it there. There were

many a D-day encountered on that one. And also it was also out of that, in my opinion, that he attained greater respect for Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse] than he ever had previously, because Morse was the one that fought them tooth and nail on Landrum-Griffin.

STEWART: Do you recall any discussions or contact with Senator Kennedy at the time he was getting into the investigations? By that time, of course, he definitely had some long-range political plans. Was he concerned with the risks involved?

CHRISTIE: Initially when he started out he didn't know—he frankly stated one day he didn't know where the devil this was all going to end up or what it was all going to amount to, and he was concerned. Now in all fairness, I appealed to him one day. He had a habit of taking off during the hearings and I don't know where he went, but I appealed to him one day, for God's sake, to stay with these hearings and not turn it over to Senator Morse. The record will show that Morse sat in on more sessions of the hearings that put Landrum-Griffin on the books than Senator Kennedy ever did, yet Senator Kennedy was the chairman. Now this was unfair. But in fairness to Senator Kennedy, he may have been, I don't know, he may have been talking to Meany and others, to the General Counsel, and let's not overlook the fact he was talking to the employers, many of them. He may have been doing this.

But in all fairness, one of the things that disturbed me no end was that while Senator Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] was in constant attendance and Mike Bernstein [Michael J. Bernstein] who is the minority counsel to the committee was right there all the time, Senator Kennedy, by and large, was conspicuous by his absence; and the load fell on Morse. But yet, when the final showdown came in the executive session it was Jack Kennedy, Senator Kennedy who was in there.

STEWART: I've heard it said that he had a knack for showing up at the right time.

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CHRISTIE: Well, that's right. He did on this, especially in these executive sessions, he came in at the right time. Now I will agree that it's kind of tedious to sit through these hearings and listen to them, and after a while maybe you hear the same thing over, but—as I told him one day and he got a little bit mad at me—I said, "This is the way you learn. This is what you're being paid for."

STEWART: Was he concerned...

CHRISTIE: If Senator Kennedy was to be elected on his record in the senate, be elected president, he never would have made it. There was no legislation, there was no nothing.

STEWART: Was he concerned with the enemies that he may have been making because of these hearings?

CHRISTIE: No. Once in awhile he'd....No, it was more of a sort of an intellectual detached attitude. John L. Lewis blasted him, oh, something terrible a couple of times, which was uncalled for. But Senator Kennedy's attitude was, "Oh, well, I guess he's getting old or something." He had no malice in him, you know. Oh, he'd disagree with you, and he'd be sharp with you, and I'd disagree with him, which was unheard of. But anyway, no, he had no malice or anything like that. That's the two things I recognized with both Senator Taft [Robert Taft] and he. The only other senator I've ever seen in my lifetime up there that had the same thing was Senator Morse, and also—I forgot the senator now from Vermont, Austin [Warren Robinson Austin], Austin a good man, terrific. You could give these Senators a memo and disagree with them. I never volunteered, but if they asked me I gave it to them: Whereas I've noticed on a lot of the staff they were giving them things that they thought the Senators would like to hear. And I long ago learned the devil with that, they either take it or let it go at that. But no, he wouldn't hold any....

At times he was appalled at the attitude of the corporations and the companies, and especially the National Association of Manufacturers. He wondered what they were thinking about if they were thinking. On the other hand, he was appalled at the narrowness and the vindictiveness of, what he sometimes would say, the stupidity of some of your union leaders; and more important than your union leadership, the position that the union or the labor movement was taking as a whole, particularly in regards to Landrum-Griffin. The one point he used to make was that they completely forgot how the Labor-Management Relations Act of '47, more commonly known as the Taft-Hartley Act, got on the books. And on that

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one he was right. The difference between Senator Morse and Kennedy came about this way. Morse's point was that they could have made a fight and beat this, beat Landrum-Griffin down.

STEWART: The whole thing?

CHRISTIE: The whole thing.

MCHUGH: Would that have resulted in a tougher bill?

CHRISTIE: Well this was the gamble. It may have. You hit the nail on the head. It may have. On the other hand, so that they may have beat it down all together. Hindsight is good. The feeling is now you may have beaten it all the while. My personal feeling was we should have taken this thing on and had this out. But Kennedy's point was, no. Landrum-Griffin, by and large, considering everything involved, was a good compromise. The other thing that's curious is that the Senator did not want his name on the bill. He wanted no part of it, even though it was his subcommittee that held the hearings in the senate. He was afraid of this.

MCHUGH: He didn't originally sponsor the legislation, did he?

STEWART: Well, it was his.

CHRISTIE: Well, that's a good one. He had two bills introduced that helped sponsor it. Now let me go back a bit here. My feeling, Senator Kennedy and his brother [Robert F. Kennedy] saw what the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce did for Estes [Estes Kefauver]. No two ways about it, without that crime committee, Rudolph Halley, and the bunch of them, Estes never would have gotten to first base. Okay. Bobby—I can't prove this, but I can speculate as good as Stewart Alsop on some of them—they looked around for a vehicle that they thought would help the Senator, help Jack.

There were a lot of rumblings within the labor movement back in that year and at that time. Dave Beck [David Beck] happened to be a Republican, and the Teamsters [International Brotherhood of Teamsters] were riding high, wide, and handsome. But having worked for a union now for twelve years, I don't know that the Teamsters are any worse than what I've seen, any better. But anyway, Bobby decided—and he got the Senator on the committee, and other Senators—that they would go ahead and launch this investigation. They'd start with the Teamsters. Now, one of the things that amuses me that what was formally the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] unions, they consider themselves holier than thou. The Building Trades, they're the crooks within the AFL. The Teamsters were a member of the Building Trades Department

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under Dick Gray [Richard J. Gray] who was a Republican. And Meany came out of the plumbers, or so Meany—it is commonly said that President Meany never walked a picket line, and he wouldn't know a wrench if he saw one. But anyway, he's a member of the Plumbers' union. He was in the Building Trades Department.

Anyway, a number of things had been—Bobby didn't unearth this—these leads had been leaked or given to him. And they went ahead and decided that.... There was political hay here. If there wasn't political hay there at least was publicity to be had. The Kennedys are past masters in the field of publicity. Well, anyway, just stop and ponder. Here's President Roosevelt who went out of his way to get along with the unions. God knows, the unions needed him. They wouldn't be where they are today if it hadn't been for Roosevelt. So did President Truman [Harry S. Truman]. Yet Bobby Kennedy and his brother who was a part of this, who launched this all-out investigation of the unions that almost wrecked the so-called American trade union movement.... It came within a hair's breath. One of the things that made John L. Lewis bitter at Kennedy was this investigation of the unions. Then you had people like Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] who were not above seizing an opportunity to more or less advance themselves along this line.

What happened with the Teamsters and the Building Trades union could have been—I'm not saying that it could have been swept under the rug—but it would have been cleaned up within the so-called house of labor. Now if you can show me any cleaning up that has been done by the investigation of the Teamsters and the other unions involved, the operating engineers and so on and so forth.... But there was nothing. Landrum-Griffin supposedly was an outcome, but look at the harm that's been done and everything else. Now despite the fact

that this investigation was damaging to the unions—and, of course, when he ran for president against Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] they had no other choice...

STEWART: He undoubtedly knew that when he...

CHRISTIE: Right, he got the support of the American trade union movement. Now, Bobby Kennedy was very friendly with Jimmy Hoffa [James Riddle Hoffa]. He had Jimmy over to dinner—several times. There was close liaison between the two of them. But I again come back as to what was accomplished by this committee, by the so-called McClellan committee [Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor-Management Relations]. Nothing. But it did provide a vehicle that got Senator Kennedy a lot of valuable publicity that was helpful.

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[Page 9 missing from original transcript; possibly mis-numbered]

STEWART: And there were really few risks involved politically. As you say, they had no place to go...

CHRISTIE: That's right. They had no place to go and yet, some of the things that were done by that committee...

STEWART: Could you give some examples of that?

CHRISTIE: Let me think that one over, Stewart, and I'll come back another day.

STEWART: All right.

MCHUGH: This friendliness that Bobby Kennedy had with Hoffa, was this prior to the investigation or was it during the investigation?

CHRISTIE: During the investigation.

MCHUGH: He had him to his house....

CHRISTIE: He had him to his house, over to McLean, [McLean, Virginia] I believe two or three times for dinner. Now where did I get this? I got it from Hoffa and I got it from Bobby. It was when supposedly, this guy John Cyé Chesty whom I happen to know, went on the committee. Bobby asked me to go on the committee, but I wouldn't do it. I had put in fifteen years on the Senate Labor Committee, Joint Committee on Labor Management Relations, and I wasn't about to—to hell with this business. Some things are better left unsaid. Not that you are covering up or anything, but I'm always trying to look ahead. Many times when I was on the Senate Labor Committee I'd go to some of these characters and I'd say, "All right, now come off it, straighten up. Let's get this thing cleaned

up. If you don't I'm going to blow the whistle on you." And before long it would be cleaned up. There was none of that on the McClellan committee. It became a vindictive thing between Jimmy Hoffa and Bobby.

STEWART: When did this start? Exactly how, from your personal impressions, how did this exactly come about?

CHRISTIE: Let me think this over a while. There was some political ramifications involved in it. Amazingly enough there's a man by the name of Steve McCloskey, [Stephen E. McCloskey] who is a labor commissioner of the state of Massachusetts, He is very close to the Senator. He's a member

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of the Teamsters union, and I work very close with Steve—worked just this last election. We tried to get Eddie McCormack [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.] elected as governor, obviously we failed. One of the things I ran into up there was that the Teamsters of Massachusetts were supporting Volpe [John A. Volpe]. I think mainly the thing that motivated the Kennedys as regards to the McClellan committee was that it was a vehicle to get publicity, to get the Senator's name before the public, out in the open, showing up a "terrible situation." All of that is all well and good, but my point is that there are better ways of doing it than that, and I think the years will prove now that what did the hearings accomplish? They accomplished nothing. They did help Senator Kennedy become president. He got a lot of valuable publicity out of it, but other than that nothing. Bobby Kennedy, who was formerly the enemy of many of these unions, the operating engineers for one, Hunter Wharton, [Hunter P. Wharton] who was the secretary-treasurer, now President of the Operating Engineers, he swore that he would have a nothing to do with Jack Kennedy. Well, he and Bobby today are like this. Time marches on. Bobby, himself has come right around; he's in good with all of labor.

STEWART: Why, in general, did you mention that these hearings came very close to causing the almost complete collapse of the labor movement? What, in general, do you base that on?

CHRISTIE: Well, it was getting to the point where every union was practically under an investigation. The steel workers, my employer, were under investigation. Some hanky-panky took place. It would have made the Teamsters look like a bunch of Sunday School teachers. IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers], sheet-metal, the hotel-restaurant, Petrillo [James C. Petrillo], the musicians, the auto workers...

STEWART: They all could have conceivably done...

CHRISTIE: Yes. They were all at one time—Bobby touched practically all, but the thing was getting so that it was beginning to fragment. And you had unions running up to Bobby Kennedy telling things about the other guy, hoping to buy

themselves off.

STEWART: Get them off their backs.

CHRISTIE: This was the terrible thing about it. You had your staff up there. I worked up there. I wasn't on the Hill when this took place. I had these General Counsels; there's one of them still there.

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There's one now, he's general counsel to McClellan [John L. McClellan]. The things that these people stoop to is absolutely terrible.

MCHUGH: Senator Kennedy was attacked for not investigating the auto workers, and I think he said that Walter Reuther was running a clean union, and therefore an investigation was unnecessary.

CHRISTIE: All you have to do is go back and read the record compiled by the Joint Committee on Labor Management and Relations, 1947-48 on Reuther's union, on the UAW on Reuther's use of goons, flying squadrons, and what have you. It's all there. I think, with all due respect to President Kennedy, he had his tongue in his cheek when he made that. He did not feel that it would be politically expedient for him to take Reuther on, for what Reuther stood for and all that. Now as an overall proposition, perhaps Reuther's union does not get involved—the pension fund did not get involved in some of the things the Teamsters were doing. But, let me point this out to you—just recently Reuther's union lost somewhere between three and seventeen million dollars in a Savings and Loan out west. I don't know, they may admit—Hoffa's sunk a lot of money into Fruehauf trailers [Fruehauf Trailer Co.] and it paid off. He was the first of the unions to get away from government bonds. The way unions invest their money, they made the most conservative banker look like a radical. They're getting away from that now. They're investing their funds in common stocks and preferred, not mainly municipal bonds, or what have you. They're now beginning to take a gamble, take their chances, which in my opinion this is what they should do but Hoffa was doing this. Here's Reuther, highly critical of Hoffa, at the time, and the Teamsters union, but here his union took three to seventeen million out of the fund in Detroit, put it out into this Savings and Loan. The only reason he did it is because it was paying 5 3/4 to 6 percent, to get this high interest. Now it's all right, but the bank went broke. Let not the pot throw the kettle on somebody. These things will happen.

Reuther made a speech to the steel workers at Atlantic City castigating high interest rates. Well, I'm beginning to wonder if he knows what the hell's going on in his own union. Why did they take the money out of Detroit and put it out in California, if it wasn't to get 6 percent interest.

STEWART: What about Kennedy's use of advisors? It's often been said that he was quite adept at picking up some very good people, people like, for example, Archibald Cox at Harvard who worked quite closely

with him, and also people on his staff, such as Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan]. Do you have any comments on that?

CHRISTIE: To be quite truthful, I always wondered about Ralph. And he wondered about me. Cox was bright in his field, but the Senator was a way ahead of them. My feeling about Ralph Dungan was that the Senator gave Ralph a job, not to take anything away from Ambassador Dungan, but he gave him a job because he needed a job at the time. He put him on the Senate Labor Committee, I forget the Monsignor that recommended Ralph to the Senator. And then Ralph proceeded to get the Senator into a hell of a binder in West Virginia. I warned Ralph not to go out and campaign actively and politically while he was on the Senate payroll. I said the Republicans and Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] will pick this up and murder the Senator. Well, he went ahead and did it; the Senator had to come out and apologize. This is a violation of the Reorganization Act. None of the staff on the committees.... You know that.

Ralph worked on the Democratic National Committee for the Senator, along with Esther Peterson [Esther E. Peterson], myself. The Senator liked him. He also was a good handy man, hatchet man, and legman for the senator on Landrum-Griffin, but he had no knowledge of the field of labor. But he did ingratiate himself with many of the so called legislative reps, or lobbyists, of the unions. And they were grateful for it. No sooner did Ralph get into the White House, than he forgot all about the legislative reps and the unions. This is a fact. I don't think that President Kennedy every got anything out of Ralph Dungan. He may have but not much. Cox, Archie, was a different story. But even here, the Senator was miles ahead of the whole bunch of them.

STEWART: By the whole bunch do you mean the people at Harvard?

CHRISTIE: Oh, yes, all of his advisors and...

STEWART: The academic people.

CHRISTIE: Right. Correct.

STEWART: In what way was he way ahead of them?

CHRISTIE: Well, he's a way ahead of them in the practicalities of things, as to what could and could not be done. And then he had the unique ability of weighing things. Whenever I gave him a memo, I stuck to the facts; I never went off a deep end or quoted theory. I tried to zero in on the main thing—what are the facts? This is what he appreciated.

He did like to theorize and speculate at times like anybody else. The thing I liked about him was that he was not afraid of innovation. He was not afraid to try something new. Of course, keeping it within bounds.

He had a great admiration for Great Britain, the setup, what Britain has contributed. I used to kid him about that. I said, "As an Irishman, you'd better be careful." When he came back from Ireland, Evelyn [Evelyn N. Lincoln] called me up. She said, "Jack wants to see you. The President wants to see you." (By the way, if you ever get talking to Bobby, either one of you, oh, say "the President.") Anyway I went down to see him, and he started raving to me about the Pipe Band that met him when he got off the helicopter in Cork. I said, "Oh, Mr. President, it couldn't possibly be as good as the Black Watch." So he looked at me, kind of laughed. He said, "What do you mean?" "Oh," I said, "the Scotch pipes are way ahead of the Irish." I said, "Those Irish pipes, it's kind of sweet but for real stir, to shake you up, you can't beat the Scotch pipes." So he laughed. "By the way," I said, "I'd be honored if I could get you six tickets." I said, "Charlie Bartlett [Charles Bartlett] and Helen* [Helen B. Bartlett] would like to see them (that's Charlie's wife). They'd like to see them." He said, "Where are they coming?" I said, "Uline Arena." He said, "Give me a memo, and I'll think about it."

Well, just at that time (this is the one Evelyn got the kick out of he'd been over to Ireland. He made a speech before the Dail, the Irish Parliament. But anyway he came back, and then he had the Prime Minister [Sean F. Lemass] into the White House, and he'd gotten a hold of the Air Force Pipe Band, put Irish kilts on them and had them play for dinner. So anyway I gave him this memo. In my memo to the President, I said, "You've been over to Ireland, you honored the Irish, you had the Italians entertained in the White House. It's about time you showed some appreciation of the Scotch. So here, what he'd done, he'd invited the Black Watch to come and perform in the back of the White House. This was November the thirteenth. Now to me, this—oh, a lot of people say historically all of this is a minor thing and that—but it wasn't minor. This was terrific. When you consider Kennedy's Irish background, the Free State, the Black and Tan—he knew all of this. Here's a man who'd been to school in England, who went to the University of London, and he knew the background of the Irish. He knew the battle that went on between them and the English, and some of the Scotch were involved in it, but yet he was not afraid to innovate. And one of the ideas he told me two days before he went to Dallas, he said, "I'm not trying to change. What do you think about trying

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to make the back here similar to Buckingham Palace? A parade. I said, "That'd be wonderful." But he was tickled with the Black Watch because the piping couldn't have been better. The sun was shining down through the trees, and it hit the black and the royal Stewart tartan. Beautiful.

STEWART: What was the occasion and who was there? I don't recall...

* Helen Bartlett is the daughter of Charles Bartlett. His wife is Josephine Buck [Josephine Martha Buck Bartlett].

CHRISTIE: I mentioned to him the St. Andrew's Society. He invited all the members of the St. Andrew's Society. And then he invited all the members of the Commonwealth Nations. And he had the Irish ambassador there Dr. Kiernan [Thomas J. Kiernan]. Excuse me. This was a riot. And then he hooked it into United Givers Fund. He invited about eighteen hundred high school students from Maryland and the District, to come in and see the Black Watch perform.

He made a speech welcoming the Black Watch, and he had Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] standing here, on his side, and then his military aides, and the Pipe Major right in back of him. But in the course of this speech he said, "Of course, I consider Scotland a lost cause." So I said to my wife, "What the hell is he saying?" She said, "Oh, keep still." But anyway, Jack came up and he spotted us. I was sitting right in back of Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy], and they just about damn near spoiled it. A couple times I said, "Ethel, can't you keep them quiet?" Their kids were jumping up and down. One wanted hot chocolate. Anyway, he came up, and I stood up, said, "How do you do, Mr. President?" I said, "I'd like you to meet my wife." Jackie knew me. I introduced her to Barbara [Barbara Christie]. He said, "What do you think of the speech?" I said to myself, "I'll be damned if I'm going to answer that one." I said, "Oh it's a beautiful day, you really did it up proud." I said, "This is wonderful, Mr. President. This is wonderful." He said, "Get to the point. What did you think of the speech?" So Jackie checks in and says, "Obviously he doesn't want to answer." So he said, "Alec, come on, what did you think?" Well, I said, "You made an awful mistake." He said, "What do you mean?" He kind of knitted his brow. I said, "I'm afraid you've got us mixed up with the Irish." I said, "Scotland was never a lost cause." He laughed, he said, "Come back, come back after."

So after it was all over—they played for about an hour. They had two immense tables lined up, in the East Room. They had Scotch whiskey on one side, tea on the other. She'd gone up to Magruder [Magruder's Grocers] and practically raided the place. There's Scotch shortbread, scones, jam, treacle to make the pipers feel at home. So they invited in the whole band, and it was a riot to see

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some of the pipers, these six-foot characters with Scotch in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. And then John [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] and Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] taking them upstairs into the private quarters. He told me, he said, "This was wonderful. I really enjoyed this." And then he said, "I enjoyed it better than the other one." So after the poor devil was killed, I wondered what in God's name did he mean by that. So finally one day, at the Democratic convention at Atlantic City, they had a reception. I was invited to it, and I went to it. I said to Jackie, "Jackie." I said, "what did Jack mean when he said he liked this one better than that one, the other one?" She said, "Oh, didn't you know?" She said, "He was most uncomfortable when Mr. Casals [Pablo Casals] played." [Laughter] This was good. This was a good insight into Jack Kennedy. But what I like, can you think of an American President having a foreign regiment in. I mean, he wasn't afraid of innovation. This is what was good.

And of course, hindsight is always good. He had a devil of a time trying to persuade the Congress, both the House and the Senate, to do it and to get legislation through. Johnson

[Lyndon Baines Johnson] is.... Lyndon had far more experience in that score and scope. But here's an interesting thing, looking at things as of today. Kennedy couldn't get beans through the Congress. Yet, despite the fact that Johnson got a legislative record that is the equal of Wilson [Woodrow Wilson] or Roosevelt—in my opinion, any day, maybe not on quality, but at least in quantity—yet people don't seem to—they wonder, they don't like this so-called arm twisting. Some of that's overdone, but there's a failure in Johnson in this thing to portray character or the things that Kennedy portrayed to people. I may be wrong, but this is the way I feel about it. It's amazing. Johnson's record can't be taken from him—maybe history will be kind to him, but despite this record he hasn't endeared himself to the American people and to the Public, by and large, the way Kennedy did, despite the fact that Kennedy's record, till the poor devil was killed, was no record at all. And he didn't resort to the things that Johnson did, but having been majority leader and having observed Johnson—the way he works and all that—but having said all of that the second session proved even the best of them....

You get up to a point, they know all the tricks, they know what you do, the next time you try it their attitude is "auch." In other words, you accomplish this stuff in the beginning, when you have momentum, but after a while it kind of peters out. Maybe the road that Kennedy was pursuing, he would have gotten his legislation through eventually. I don't know.

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STEWART: The end of the second session...

CHRISTIE: Second term around, right.

STEWART: I think you mentioned something about Kennedy's concern with public power in New England. How were you involved in this, or how did he come to seek your advice?

CHRISTIE: When I was on the staff of the Joint Committee on Labor Management and Relations I wrote a report on *Labor Management Relations* in TVA. And this was TVA, public power; and President Kennedy, at that time, was a member of the House Committee on Labor and Education. And I was over to talk to him about this report. Right then and there we had quite a session about it, and then he revealed to me, did I think there was any feasibility of getting a TVA setup into New England? He thought that what New England needed was cheaper power than they had now. Your New England rate is the highest in the nation.

STEWART: Southern New England.

CHRISTIE: Yes, right. And that's principally due to coal. It's coal generated, steam generated. Now an interesting thing about this is that John L. Lewis detests the whole idea and conception of TVA because it's hydro power. According to

the mine workers, federal money goes into this field to buttress this industry up whereas over and against coal, coal has to make its own way. Even to this late date, the mine workers are violently opposed to atomic energy. They're doing all they can to buck these so-called atomic energy projects, or atomic energy going into the generation of electricity. This was another thing that entered into Lewis' kind of looking the other way as far as President Kennedy was concerned. You know, as a senator, he didn't like his pushing public power. Because the mine workers' feeling was that you have so much coal around, let's use it.

But on the other hand, in all fairness, look at the distance you have to go to ship coal into New England. This all adds to the costs. And, of course, the Senator wanted to get he was interested in cheap power as a means of bringing industry into New England; and New England at that time, wasn't in the good economic position it is today. It was in need of help. And he worked with Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall] and Lodge [Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.], and all of them. They were all united on this one, tried to get more industry into New England. One of the means of doing it was to get cheap power.

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STEWART: This concern of New England Senators in general, of course, later led to a close organization, and one of their concerns naturally was the movement of textile mills to the South. This was related, of course, to the whole business of organizing workers in the South. They were, of course, unorganized there and organized in New England. Did Senator Kennedy ever discuss this whole problem with you as far as the...

CHRISTIE: It's a good point you brought up. As far as textile workers are concerned, he could never understand why the unions had failed to organize them better than they've done up to this point. He couldn't understand it, and yet there was....He had a good point there—the failure to organize industry in the South. In fact it was due to some needling of then Senator Kennedy with Paul Daldanze, the president of the textile workers, that they finally got down to bedrock and started at tempting to really organize. But they've always been trying to organize themselves, and they've never gotten anywhere, particularly textile workers. The steel workers, and many of your unions, the big ones—teamsters, the mine workers, all of them—spent millions of dollars. Right now the Industrial Union Department has a man assigned to it; the man's name is Nick Zonarich [Nicholas Zonarich]. His job is nothing but heading up the organizing drive in the South.

MCHUGH: Was there a reason why they were particularly ineffective in the South?

CHRISTIE: Well, initially they sent the wrong people down. An interesting aside to that is, when the so-called "commie-dominated" union had been kicked out of the CIO, Phil Murray sent this Nick Zonarich out to organize or take your Irish miners in Butte away from mine mills and come over and work for the steelworkers union. Well, it's the old story. You don't send a Polack out to tell Mike [Mike Mansfield] what the hell he should do. Mike turns around and says you can go take a screw to yourself. I mean, this is just keeping it as simple as anything.

Now the trouble was in the South, the same thing happened there. The wrong people went down. It was only when they started using Nathers, who saw that individually they could get nowhere, and they started swinging into it. But it's been exceedingly difficult to organize the South. There's not the base there, and your companies in the South, they're not above using means that have long since gone by the board in the North. There are all kinds of sort of tactics. Look at this last one here of Stevens [J. P. Stevens & Co., Inc.]. This one is a doozie. Those sort of tactics went out at least two decades ago.

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MCHUGH: You mean Stevens Mills.

CHRISTIE: Stevens, Clark's Thread [Clark's Thread Company], J. & P. Coats, they're all in with Stevens. Tremendous company, an international company. I remember Stevens [Robert T. Stevens] was secretary of war under Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. He's the one who tangled with Joe McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy]. But the Senator speculated about this. And another thing that he was good on as far as the mine workers were concerned—he was greatly interested in safety.

STEWART: While as a senator, you mean.

CHRISTIE: And as a president, he helped the mine workers on their—the mine workers made a fatal blunder back in '48 when they were getting their Mine Safety Bill through. They cut it off at fifteen. In other words, a mine that employed less than fifteen was out from under the Act, and they lived to regret that one. The Senator pointed this out a way back. He was a voice in the wilderness. Lewis' attitude in '48 was that the United Mine Workers were not interested in dog holes. John L. has lived long enough to see where they have to get the dog holes in because the dog holes were beginning to put a dent in the big....

STEWART: Did Kennedy as a senator or a congressman ever speculate with you on the powers that the Executive Branch or the White House had as far as settling labor disputes were concerned? In other words, did you have any indication of how he would react once he got in the White House to the whole problem of settling disputes?

CHRISTIE: No, there was never any indication from him as to how he would act. He did speculate on your industry section, the ability to set industry-wide disputes under Taft-Hartley, and the whole eighty day set up. He did speculate about that. He asked me how this came about in the Act. He was a member of the House Committee on Labor. At the time he knew better than I did. I was on the staff that—I sat in on a good many of the sessions, not all of them, because the Republicans were in charge. Shroyer [Thomas E. Shroyer] was running the show, but he pulled me in on some of them. But there was never any indication that he would—what he would do. But he did wonder about it as to its effectiveness. But there was never any doubt in my mind that if it came to a

showdown, President Kennedy was quite capable of putting the welfare of the country over any union, or anything. There was never any doubt in my mind about that one. But what he was

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looking for, he questioned the effectiveness of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 and particularly the machinery that was there to handle these disputes. And the machinery is, by in large, pretty inept and creaky. He asked me, why hadn't hearings been held on this, what had been done? My point was the senator wasn't the one to talk; it was Wayne Morse on that.

MCHUGH: Was there any concern expressed about the government increasingly taking a role in settling these disputes, rather than the unions doing it themselves.

CHRISTIE: That came up, and you see, as a senator and then as a president—I can tell you what happened as a senator. But when he became president, it was kind of a horse of a different color. But as a senator, his feeling was that the government should more or less keep out. He felt that collective bargaining would be enhanced by both parties settling the dispute without the government constantly intervening and stepping in. But after he became president, I think he saw, I think he realized it wasn't as simple as all that. There is a point or there is a time where the government has to intervene. You can't just let the thing go willy nilly.

MCHUGH: Well, do you think that part of the problem was that perhaps labor expected a more equitable settlement from the government than from other . .

CHRISTIE: You hit the nail on the head. Quite a few of the unions—now here's what you've got to watch out for when you say "labor." Now don't get me wrong. All these unions are all entities and bodies and empires unto themselves.

When you say labor, American labor, it's a pretty broad term, in fact, it's meaningless. If you can say steel workers, or teamsters, then you're being specific.

Now, having said all of that a lot of the unions, the building trades, the steel workers, not the mine workers, they expected great things from President Kennedy. Now by great things, I mean they wanted certain things done. They wanted Taft-Hartley Act amended, and all these other things. This is the perennial cry. This is what they wanted done. The Act should be amended. But they were looking for things from the President. Some of the unions, not all of them. The Building Trades were. He had made a commitment on Davis-Bacon, [Davis-Bacon Act]. This was the Magna Carta of the Building Trades as far as their contracts with government agencies were concerned. Rightly important, too.

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He made a commitment to them, and he came through. They were just getting into situs picketing, and I know for a fact he wouldn't have bought that. But some of the other unions

expected more than was fair to expect. Of course, some of them think, if they back a man, and he gets in, you're supposed to deliver. Well, that wasn't President Kennedy.

STEWART: What part did you play in the whole 1960 election? What were you doing in 1959 and '60, and what part did you actually play in the campaign? Why don't we get into your involvement first in the West Virginia primary, which, of course, was so significant?

CHRISTIE: I prepared a memo for Senator Kennedy on the West Virginia primary. This primary was of vital importance to the Senator at the time, and he, in fact, was worried about going into this state. He was kind of here and there, wondering whether he should have gone in after he got in, and before that he was worried. Now one of the things that was bandied about was that West Virginia was a Protestant state, maybe some of the Bible belt and all this silliness—I'll call it silliness—and that they might not buy a member of the Roman Catholic faith. Well, I had heard this, and I told the Senator that that wasn't true at all, that he could go in there, went into the state, told the people what he stood for, they saw him, heard him. In the meantime, I would get in touch with many of the members of the United Mine Workers of America, play up the Mine Safety Bill, which is of vital importance to the United Mine Workers.

Also, at that time, Mr. Kennedy [Thomas Kennedy] was president of the United Mine Workers of America, Mr. Lewis having since retired. Mr. Kennedy was a former lieutenant governor of the state of Pennsylvania, a great admirer of Senator Kennedy; and in other words, the mine workers being the largest union in the state of West Virginia, playing a vital role in the state, these were the people to seek out. And this is what I attempted to advise Senator Kennedy to do. I emphasized the importance of the Mine Safety Bill, the Mine Safety Law, to the Senator, Senator Neely [Matthew M. Neely] was highly thought of by the miners in West Virginia and particularly the United Mine Workers of America as an organization.

[BEGIN SIDE TWO]

STEWART: Okay. You were mentioning Senator Neely.

CHRISTIE: Senator Neely was highly thought of by the mine workers, particularly the miners in the state of West Virginia. Having been a senator and governor of the state and having led the fight for the Mine Safety Law,

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which became known as the Neely-McConnell Act [Neely-McConnell Mine Safety Bill]. The president of the United Mine Workers, as I previously mentioned was Thomas Kennedy. Thomas Kennedy played a leading role on behalf of Senator Kennedy at the 1956 convention. He was a delegate to the convention in LA and swung the Pennsylvania delegation in back of Senator Kennedy for vice president. He's well liked and respected

throughout Pennsylvania and West Virginia. I urged the Senator to mention Thomas Kennedy's name whenever he was speaking in West Virginia.

I also urged him to seek counsel on the serious problems confronting the United Mine Workers of America, especially in relation to West Virginia. What I was getting at there was this business of trying to get greater markets for the export of coal beyond the domestic shoreline and also a greater usage of bituminous coal in the generation of electricity. I urged him to "set up an appointment in the United Mine Workers headquarters," and to talk to John L. Lewis. I also urged him to, "Praise Mr. Lewis for his foresight as regards to automation and mechanization of the mines, in contrast to the archaic policy of the British miners," and the British Miners Union that put the British coal industry in the hole, and led to nationalization.

I urged the Senator to tell the miners in West Virginia about his health bill, and what an improvement it was over the bill as introduced by Aime Forand, [Aime J. Forand]. I also urged him to praise the Forand bill in a general way, but point out "your bill as better because of its home nursing features."

I also urged him to, "Put in a strong plug for the United Mine Workers Welfare and Retirement Fund." I urged him to, "Praise Mr. Lewis for his foresight and perseverance as regards the fund. Mention Josephine LaRoche, the director of the fund, she is an outstanding woman. The success of the fund can be traced to her astute direction." Fuel and Iron. There's an interesting one, they were the ones that had those hell of a riots in 1917, out in Colorado. Seventeen coal miners were shot for trying to organize a union.

I also urged and advised him to "try and visit some of the fund's hospitals." The mine workers in those days had these wonderful hospitals throughout the state. "Note the splendid advanced design of the physical plant and equipment. Talk to some of the surgeons." Then I also pointed out some of the United Mine Workers' journals. At times I think I must have been a spokesman here for the mine workers. "I would like to suggest you go over these items as they will be most helpful."

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"Have a good word for the Bureau of Mines." I'm kind of proud of this one, what I say here. "But tell them that if you're elected president, you'll recommend more funds to the bureau, so that this agency can render the service that it is capable of doing with more funds under a Democratic president concerned with safety in this most hazardous of occupations—mining."

He was tickled with that. Called me in there, to his inner office, and praised me highly. Said, "I don't want you to think that I had forgotten about it."

STEWART: Very good. What other involvement in the campaign did you have?

CHRISTIE: The role of the economic advisors, in my opinion, has always been kind of loose and lackadaisical, and not enough discipline to it. In other words, they're economists and they advise the president. This was the way it was, and I wanted it to be....In other words, the president is not a—Kennedy was an economist in his own right, but very few of them are. He may have been the first one, perhaps, outside of

Woodrow Wilson. But any way, they put the president in a spot when they hand him this advice and they say, "Well, here it is." In other words, he's got to make up his mind what they....What I was trying to do, was make them responsible. They advised the President on this, they stick by it. They're not out on cloud nine where they have no responsibility to this thing. In other words, they have to weigh what they're saying very carefully, be accurate, down to earth, and many other things. And I proposed....

MCHUGH: They were meeting in secret, weren't they? Didn't the president have to get some representation on the council?

CHRISTIE: That's right, he did.

MCHUGH: He wasn't very successful.

CHRISTIE: Just a second. You can have that copy. I want to get this other one. There it is. It was given some name.

STEWART: Commission on Continuing Prosperity.

CHRISTIE: Right. What I'm getting at is that the present commission on Labor Management Relations in the White House, that present commission came from this. Senator Kennedy, he was the one that pushed it—none of

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the characters that thought it up. As I tried to say, I draw it on my experience with the economic advisors. They would propose plans. Well say, if the country started to go into a slump, the government's spending money, not realizing that by the time GSA [General Services Administration], or the Defense Department gets the contracts going, invites the Department of Interior, Reclamation, they invite contractors to come in and bid, they get the specifications set up, and then bids are opened, my God, a whole year elapses. I was for a general speed-up in the thing, and incorporated that in the bill. I just want to get....He made a speech on it, and he told me later, he was tickled pink. Joe came up with a good one there. Are these newspaper clippings any value to you?

STEWART: Yes, they could be.

CHRISTIE: Here then, Stewart.

STEWART: Make copies of them and then...

CHRISTIE: Here's a speech that—"Kennedy Pledged to Wide Program: Study Shows that he Stressed a Rise in Defense Outlay and Action on Jobless." Now this is one of the things I kept telling him to hammer away at. It says here, "We must

establish a committee on national economic goals"—which was a damn sight better than prosperity—"composed of leaders of labor and industry, as well as the best economic talent of our universities and research institutes. This committee will assess our national productive capacity and the needs of our nation." He delivered that speech in Saginaw, Michigan, October 14. But the *Wall Street Journal*....

MCHUGH: Did you ever hear him express any opinions about this Council of Economic Advisors?

CHRISTIE: He thought at times they were— Just weren't with it. He appreciated the difficulties of their task, the task in front of it, but he wondered at times, were they really on the beam? That's some language, but that's it.

Well, Stewart, I'll have to hunt up—I thought I had that other one in here. Then some of the others that I got in—here's one here:

October 25, 1960:

I have just completed a three day swing through Northampton County. On Saturday, October 22, 1960,

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Senator Mansfield addressed the Northampton County AFL-CIO COPE [Committee on Political Education of AFL-CIO], which was presided over by William Moran, a district director, United Steelworkers of America.

I strongly urge you to hammer away at the more than six percent rate of unemployment in this region—and more important than that, what you propose to do about it.

These people are slowly losing hope, let alone the dire economic status in which they now find themselves in danger of losing their homes, etc.

If you can but set forth this promise and idea of yours that you made in Canton, Ohio [it's in addition to that in Saginaw]—the result would be all to the good.

The city of Easton is all for you, a firm statement such as the Canton, Ohio, one will be all to the good in this hard-stricken region.

STEWART: Why don't we make copies of these and we can attach them to your transcript?

CHRISTIE: All right. Here's another one. I'd like to read you this. In every campaign there's sniping. So I said here—I gave the Senator this memo through Evelyn:

October 31, 1960:

Subject: Senator Wayne Morse Campaign on Behalf of You [Presidential Nominee].

I write this because I thought you would like to know what had been taking place.

I had the honor of being at a dinner in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where Dave McDonald and Senator Morse were the principal speakers.

Senator Morse delivered the finest speech on your candidacy that I have heard or read to date. The Senator had made a total of seventy-five speeches throughout New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Oregon; this in addition of his attendance at the United Nations. He had been spending

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the weekends in Oregon and will remain there from the third of November until after election day, speaking all over the state.

If you can find time to call Senator Morse in Oregon that would be all to the good.

Here's a—Bobby and Goldberg expressed a rather snide comment to me one day, "What's your friend Wayne doing?" You know, "Not doing much?"

November 21, 1960

Your meeting with George Meany and others on Wednesday evening, November 23, 1961.

I urge you to call to tell Meany that you are going all out as far as this cruel, vexing problem of unemployment is concerned.

Remind Meany of your detailed statements which you made in Canton, Ohio, Saginaw, Michigan, and Easton, Pa.—to name but a few—that you're going to see that a bill will be introduced along these lines and that you will throw the full weight of your office behind it.

Now here's one:

September 2, 1960

Speech before the International Association of the Machinists

One of the things that I tried to do was—suggested to him—when he went before these groups was to try and orient himself into the problems that were bothering the group as a whole, specifically. He appreciated this. Because having said all of that, you can put something under Senator Kennedy and go on, knowing that—but anyway, eventually he read them.

But anyway these are some of the things that I said:

These are the issues that are of immediate interest to the Machinists and should be mentioned in your speech: Now they were a little bit teed off at him on Landrum-Griffin, the Machinists as a union were.

1. Insuring useful employment for the union's older members who find themselves discarded from the work force at forty.

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2. Protecting union members whose skills are outmoded by automated tape-driven, electronic equipment.

3. Finding ways and means of increasing purchasing power for the men and women working under IAM [International Association of Machinists] contracts.

4. Stemming the steady flight of American capital and American jobs to tax-free factories overseas.

5. Checking the inroad of politics and politicians on free collective bargaining and traditional union activities.

Boy, I had my tongue in my cheek on that one.

Inasmuch as the Machinists have been severe critics of the Landrum-Griffin law since it became enacted, I would lay it on the line as to how, when, and why, the Landrum-Griffin bill became enacted.

They were the one union that blasted Kennedy, the Senator for a stand on Landrum-Griffin.

I would spare no punches on this one. A forthright approach by you will help remove a lot of doubts among the delegates and the rank and file Machinists.

I strongly urge you to make this a major effort, go all out and in detail as to how this bill became enacted.

Senators Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] and Symington [Stuart Symington, II] will also address the convention.

He did and he came through with a bang.

STEWART: Did you ever have any contact with Sorenson [Theodore C. Sorenson] or Feldman [Myer "Mike" Feldman] or Lee White [Lee C. White] or any of the other people who were working as...

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CHRISTIE: I had contacts with Mike.

STEWART: During the campaign, I guess.

CHRISTIE: Yes, and before. Mike in particular. Mike, Ralph [Dungan], but I was kind of a lone wolf. One day he told me, "If you've got anything to say, come to me, don't be going through.... Don't bother." So I was kind of flattered. One of the troubles, a lot of this type of work, you give it to maybe Mike—you never know. I felt I had a point to make, and if Kennedy said, "No." Okay. I can take that, but sometimes if Archie Cox, or Feldman said, "No." I rate my knowledge as—I'm not an attorney or a political scientist, I guess you could call me an economist. This is one of the things that I liked about Kennedy. "Keep it coming, don't stop." Cause I worried at times I didn't want to be taking up his time.

Another thing I urged him, I urged him not to talk on Davis-Bacon, to go before the Building Trades and lay it on the line. There, what I was trying to do was to undo the damage he himself and Bobby did on the McClellan committee as against the Building Trades. And he succeeded.

STEWART: Were you at the convention in 1960?

CHRISTIE: Yes.

STEWART: As a...

CHRISTIE: I'll venture why President Kennedy accepted Lyndon Johnson. I think that somewhere along, between night and morning, the Senator realized the awesome responsibilities of this job. He knew deep down in his heart that Lyndon Johnson had tremendous ability, especially with the Congress. Maybe Lyndon was a little better equipped for the job at the time than he was. You know, a lot of people have said that he did it to take up the Texas delegation. I don't think so. Maybe he had to, but I think Senator Kennedy looked around and decided that Johnson had it over Scoop Jackson [Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson]. Now this was an awful decision to make. Scoop worked with him, he knew Scoop; they played touch football together. Scoop was the campaign manager until Bobby ran the show. Scoop was there. There was Symington. There was Humphrey. But he appreciated the knowledge and the ability, the tremendous ability, especially in the Congress, that Lyndon Johnson has. You can't fault that one. He has it.

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STEWART: Were you a delegate at the convention?

CHRISTIE: No, I wasn't. I was assigned to help out in any capacity which I could.

STEWART: What did you end up doing?

CHRISTIE: I went after many of the union people, the Building Trades, in particular. One of the problems you had there, was Dick Gray was a republican. Through my knowledge of the Building Trades I wrote the original report on the Davis-Bacon Act. I kept telling the Senator, "Use this one." I kept dogging the building trades, and they had quite a squad of delegates. They were vital at a needed time in different states. One of the shocks that Lyndon Johnson got was when Arizona went for Kennedy. Now there were two key men there in building trades, in addition to Udall [Stewart L. Udall]. These two men were—Udall couldn't have done it alone—one was from Phoenix, the other was from Tucson. One was an electrician; the other was a laborer. But really astute, real good trade union men. And they were all out for Kennedy. I played a role in getting them there.

STEWART: What swung them?

CHRISTIE: On what he would do on Davis-Bacon as over and against this bloody McClellan committee. I did not attempt at any time to play down what he did or what Bobby had done. I said, "All right, it's past. I'm in complete agreement with you." I said, "Had I been doing it I ever would have done it. But let's go on."

STEWART: Was this the big argument you got from labor people against him?

CHRISTIE: Yes, particularly in the Building Trades. And particularly with the Teamsters. Your rank and file teamster voted for Kennedy.

STEWART: At the convention and before, in talking to other labor people, what were the arguments that most appealed to them as far as Kennedy was concerned?

CHRISTIE: Well he was knowledgeable. They felt that he felt more for them. He felt more for the trade union movement—he had feeling for it, he understood the problems—than any of the other candidates. In other words, he was getting through to them. This is the one thing that the President could do. He could get through to people, particularly the rank and file. Then he had a certain tone and a certain class about him that appealed to them. It isn't often you get a Harvard graduate coming down to earth. Another thing that I was grateful for, I had written this report

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on *Labor Management Relations in TVA*, and Kennedy's name, because he was a member of the House, that helped get this report out. The Government Printing Office originally got thirteen million copies out. I had it thermo-faxed and copied until I was blue in the face. Whenever I ran into a real tough character about the President, I'd say, "All right, now wait a minute, wait a minute. Here's a report." Invariably most of them would say, "Oh, yes, I read that. What's this got to do with Kennedy?" They said, "Yes, Christie, you wrote it, but what's it got to do with Kennedy?" Well, I'd say, "Here, look at the fly leaf. Who's the third name there? John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts." Well, they'd end up saying, "Well, I didn't know

that." Well, I said, "There you are." Then, of course, I'd put a lot of the blame on Bobby. I said, "He didn't know where it was going." [Laughter] That was effective.

STEWART: All right, very good, why don't we....

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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