

FOREWORD

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

- * * * To indicate a pause in the recording while the speaker listens to the person speaking at the other end of the telephone. Used when only one side of a telephone conversation is recorded.
- [?] When the transcriber is not certain of what is said on the recording.
- To indicate a sentence which the speaker trails off without completing it.
- . . . When a speaker is interrupted before a sentence is completed.
- _____ To indicate the speaker's emphasis.
- [/] Used to enclose editorial comments of the transcriber such as */Meeting appears to be breaking up/* or */Several speakers speak at once and none of the words are intelligible./*

Names:

The first time a name is mentioned, the full name is provided whenever it is known. "JFK" and "RFK" are used for President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, respectively. When the identity of a speaker is unknown, "Speaker?" is used; when the identification of a speaker is uncertain, a question mark follows the name. The heading of each transcript gives the names of all participants listed in the President's Appointment Books as scheduled to attend the meeting.

Preparation:

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the audiovisual research room in the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made.

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 19B

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Clinton Anderson

May 22, 1963

[Continued from Dictabelt 19A, Conversation #5]

President: Wouldn't it . . . without having the controls on the production, though, wouldn't that be awfully expensive?

Sen. Anderson: I don't think so.

President: Don't you?

Sen. Anderson: No, I don't. I think if the price is at all reasonable, you get, uh, I mean I would make the price considerably better than the . . . than the opponents of the bill have been predicting.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: It is going to go way, way, way down at a dollar wheat. I would make it somewhat better. But I wouldn't make it good enough to be stimulant to production.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: In other words, I could have kept my farm if I had known this was going to fail. I had to give it up because I wouldn't produce wheat. Couldn't produce wheat and sell it at high prices and throw a lot of it out of production. Now, I think, that you can remedy it by sitting down with a group of folks, and I would be very happy to be helpful. I wouldn't want to be a leader in it because my views are too well known. But I would be happy to help. I like Orville *[Freeman]* very much and would like to help him in any way I could. But I think that you ought to get a small group together at the White House

someday and say, what could you men come up with that the Congress will pass and the country will take.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: It is possible to do that.

President: You feel this idea that a . . . that a . . . when that wheat goes, uh, when they over-produce and we have this terrific surplus that a . . . that a . . . they won't decide that they don't want that free market they keep talking about?

Sen. Anderson: Well, they will just blame the Administration for it. They did that all the way through. I went back and studied the history of price legislation, uh, price support legislation; and when Henry Wallace came in and proposed that they plow under every third row of cotton, why, they knew that was going to help them, but oh, my, what they did to him. They just butchered him all across the country. Even though his proposal was sound. And I think that is the situation now.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: If you let the price of wheat go away down to the bottom, then they will say, "that guy Kennedy is just a Wall Street banker. He didn't pay any attention to the farmers."

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: That isn't true and I know it isn't true, but it's what people believe is what counts in this world.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And I think if you made one final move and put that up to the Congress as something that the Administration would finally agree to support, you would find that it would have a much easier sledding from what you've had thus far.

President: What is our timing? What timing would we have to have on a legislation?

Sen. Anderson: Well, you've . . .

President: When do they start planting?

Sen. Anderson: I would do it the next two or three weeks.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: I wouldn't go beyond that.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: Well, I would call my group together soon. This is the day after the referendum, and I would just call them together and say, "now can't you men who are in this room who have divergent points of view" -- [Senator] Spessard Holling the one man I am thinking of particularly, because he is a very good man. He and I have been together on all these farm programs, but he has got a good point of view, and he is on the committee and willing to help -- "Can't you people come up with a . . . with a . . . program that the country will take and the Administration can support." Saying this frankly, this is a second position we are driven to because of the action of the farmers themselves. And I think you could then keep more heat on the farmers and have them realize they made their own mistakes.

President: [] Schuman, what about Schuman. He's . . .

Sen. Anderson: I don't want this to sound improper, but I think I can get Schuman to take a pretty sound point of view.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: He called me two or three times and tried to get me in this wheat debate and I wouldn't . . .

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: . . . get in. Because I am not trying to help the opposition.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: Even though I can't vote for it. But I can talk to Schuman and I am sure that he will help.

President: What is your, uh, well, I think today we will just say that we just have to wait and see.

Sen. Anderson: That's right.

President: That is fine, good. I will follow up on that.

Sen. Anderson: I think that you ought to get a strong, uh.

President: Who would you get, [Richard] Russell, [Allan] Ellender, [Harold] Cooley.

Sen. Anderson: Oh, yes . . .

President: [Spessard] Holland.

Sen. Anderson: Holland; don't leave him out. And Olin Johnston. You have to have Milton Young almost in any big program.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And he is alright.

President: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And fellows of that nature and sit down around a table. All [Harry S.] Truman did when he got, uh, and I keep going back just because I had experience with it in '49. We turned down the [] Brannon plan. There was naught but one vote in the whole committee for it. And that was the chairman of the committee, [] Thomas. Everybody else in the Senate committee was against it. Truman then said, well, here we are with a new farm program that got kicked in the teeth, and he invited this group down to the White House and put them in the Cabinet room and had about 25 people there. We discussed the general broad lines of what a bill might be that could succeed, and he said, alright, I designate Clint in charge of drafting it and presenting it; and we are going to pass it. We did pass it in both houses and it went on right along. We had no great difficulty with it because these men were committed to it.

President: Yeah, yeah.

Sen. Anderson: You get Dick Russell committed to it and he can get around to his Southern group, and they will all lay off voting against it. They will all vote with it, then.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And the same thing with Milton Young, he can influence a lot of folks. And the same thing with [George] Aiken, as far as that is concerned. Now, Aiken has been off reservation recently . . .

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: . . . but I think that he can be brought back to the fold.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: And I wouldn't have the Farm Bureau people actually in the meeting the first time.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: I would have them waiting in wings.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: But I think that you ought to make one final effort to salvage it, and then if it goes down the drain, you certainly got something that you can stand up and tell the farmers about.

President: Yeah.

Sen. Anderson: That you have been misled by their farm people, and you were into an indefensible position.

President: Yeah. Good, fine. Well, we can just keep that to ourselves then I will get working on it. Thanks, Clint.

Sen. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. President.