

Ludwig J. Andolsek Oral History Interview – 11/26/1976
Administrative Information

Creator: Ludwig J. Andolsek
Interviewer: William J. Hartigan
Date of Interview: November 26, 1976
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 20 pages

Biographical Note

Andolsek, Commissioner of the Civil Rights Commission from 1963 to 1977, discusses President Kennedy's work on reorganizing the civil service retirement fund, the 1960 Democratic National Convention and presidential campaign, and John F. Kennedy's Senate years, among other issues.

Access

Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed on October 28, 1992, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of 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. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

Ludwig J. Andolsek, recorded interview by William J. Hartigan, November 26, 1976,
(page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of
LUDWIG J. ANDOLSEK

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Ludwig J. Anolsek, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of personal interviews conducted on November 26, 1976 at Washington, DC and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

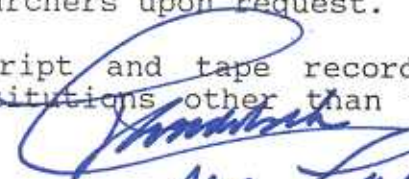
(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.


Donor


Date


Archivist of the United States


Date

Ludwig J. Andolsek

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Meeting John F. Kennedy (JFK)
2	1956 legislation to reorganize the Civil Service Retirement Fund
4	St. Lawrence Seaway
6	1960 presidential campaign visit to Northern Minnesota
9	JFK's work on international issues during his Senate years
10	Various efforts to reorganize government
14	Agricultural issues
17	1960 Democratic National Convention
18	1956 Democratic National Convention
19	Kennedy assassination

Oral History Interview

With

LUDWIG J. ANDOLSEK

November 26, 1976
Washington, DC

By William J. Hartigan

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HARTIGAN: Without any further introduction I want to thank you, Commissioner, for the time you're giving us this day after Thanksgiving.

ANDOLSEK: My pleasure.

HARTIGAN: And we'll open up by asking you if you can recall when you first met the late president, John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

ANDOLSEK: Somewhere along the summer of 1951. I was working for Congressman John Blatnik [John A. Blatnik]. Congressman Kennedy and Congressman Blatnik used to play some tennis together at the Army-Navy Club and in connection with setting a date or scheduling a tennis match, I was privileged to be introduced to Congressman John Kennedy.

HARTIGAN: You recall any of his activities as a congressman? You weren't familiar with him when he first went to Congress as a freshman, is that right?

ANDOLSEK: No, that's true. I didn't come to Washington til '51 myself.

HARTIGAN: So your knowledge of his activities would commence around 1951.

ANDOLSEK: Late '51, middle '51 and into--from there on in. I recall vividly when he was a freshman senator and I was president of the Congressional Secretaries Club, we in the Congressional Secretaries Club were anxious to improve our retirement provisions and we tried to borrow from the separate schedule that was, which prevailed for members of Congress. And as neophytes we first made the mistake of not having the author of the Reform Act of 1946 sponsor the legislation. And we chose the two Republicans who at that time had control of the House, Harold Hagen [Harold C. Hagen] of Minnesota and Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, both of whom we thought should be very solid in our support, in as much as they had a vested interest in the proposals in that they both were formerly employees of the House. Senator Margaret Chase

[-1 -]

Smith worked when her husband [Clyde H. Smith] was a congressman before she got elected in her own right and Harold Hagen worked for a Minnesota congressman in that administrative capacity before he became, before he was elected to the Congress. Well, as it turned out, the House and the Senate had different versions of this proposal and we had to face the author of the Reorganization Act of '56 [Public Law 556], Senator Mike Monroney [Almer Stillwell Mike Monroney] of Oklahoma, Senator Kennedy and Senator Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] of Minnesota who were the conferees on the Democratic side. Margaret Chase Smith was a conferee on the Republican side, and I've forgotten who the other two members were.

But I remember then how seriously concerned Senator Kennedy was about the fund having sufficient monies to pay the people who were in retirement so that these people in this golden years of their lives wouldn't be caught short in the fund. And he fought desperately for two amendments to the House version which, 1) limited the time that the employees could get the 2 1/2 percent formula to a maximum of fifteen years and thereafter all service would revert to the former civil service formula of 1 1/2 percent for the first five, 1 3/4 for the next five, and then 2 percent for everything else, and, 2) he added an amendment that before an employee of the legislative branch could participate in the accelerated formula he or she would have to spend the last eleven months as an employee of the House or the Senate, which would have made it impossible for people like me to go downtown to a different job without being a severe penalty to our future retirement. But I remember how he was concerned that the fund would not be sufficiently sound to pay the obligations and, as I think now, when I have much more concern with the fund than I had then as a member of the Civil Service Commission, I have to feel that many of the statements that Senator Kennedy made concerning the retirement fund and his concern were probably very instrumental in later legislation in the '57 era where the government was compelled by law--the government agencies, that is--to put in their share on a bimonthly basis concurrent with their pay days.

There was considerable slippage in the government's matching the fund as far back as the Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] era, when monies were used from the retirement fund for social programs, and in other times agencies didn't pay their share because they ran out of appropriated funds. And I think it's right to say that after World War II many of the civil servants got advancements and then had many years of service and Congress provided

for the lump sum payment on the annual leave. But, more important, they all enhanced their high five and when these employees left there were burdens against the retirement fund. And, again, the agencies didn't have the money to--out of current appropriations--to pay their share and the result

[-2-]

there was considerable unfunded liability established by the fact that the agencies did not put in their proportional share. The fund was pretty much sustained by the employees' contributions.

Since I've been on the commission, legislation has been passed which corrects this measure in that the unfunded liabilities are to be repaid back on a thirty year amortization schedule but each July one the Treasury [Department of the Treasury] pays the fund the total interest on the total unfunded liability. I honestly feel that Senator Kennedy's strong stand--in '54, I believe it was, or '53 when we tried to enhance the kitty for ourselves--the fact that he brought this to the light of the Congress was very helpful in the later legislation which now is running efficiently. And the agencies as well as the employees are making their contributions on a bimonthly basis.

HARTIGAN: So, in this particular instance, he had some foresight that was not readily accepted by everybody at the time?

ANDOLSEK: Foresight? Yes, but more important, guts. It was not a popular stand to take, on behalf of the staff members of his colleagues, to not get the 2 ½ percent which we all desired. So he was actually taking on his colleagues in the Senate and his former colleagues in the House, because this all affected the staffs of his colleagues.

HARTIGAN: Now, his position prevailed, is that right?

ANDOLSEK: His position prevailed at that time.

HARTIGAN: And then, shortly thereafter, though, ironically enough, at the time he became president, was that reversed?

ANDOLSEK: Yes. It wasn't shortly after. It was in the fall of 1960, when some of the people from the Hill had aspirations of going downtown, such as myself.

HARTIGAN: When you refer to downtown, for the record, you're talking about people that worked up on the Hill, the Congress and the Senate, who at some point decide they want to go into some government agency rather than being on the Hill, that's what you mean by downtown?

ANDOLSEK: That's right. I aspired to be a civil service commissioner from way back

in 1938. But I had to get my training and experiences in the political arena before I could venture downtown. So, in the fall of '60 legislation was passed--during the campaign, as I recall--

[-3-]

which deleted the two, what I call the Kennedy amendments to the retirement fund as it pertained to legislative employees and no longer were they confined to fifteen years. Also the other amendment requiring the last eleven months to be on the Hill, both of these features were deleted. So now the legislative employees get the 2 1/2 percent formula just as the members of Congress do.

HARTIGAN: And the activity on behalf of our good friend Bill Brawley [Hiram W. "Bill" Brawley] and Freddy Belen [Frederick C. Belen] was important in bringing that about, that repeal?

ANDOLSEK: That's right. Both Bill Brawley and Fred Belen were in charge of their respective committees of the House and the Senate dealing with post office and civil service matters. At least the word at the Hill, at that time, was that they were instrumental in getting these two amendments deleted in as much as they had a personal interest in an appointment in the new Kennedy administration, if Kennedy were to win.

HARTIGAN: And interesting enough, they did become highly appointed, appointed to high positions: deputy postmaster general for Mr. Brawley and assistant postmaster general for operation for Mr. Belen, in the Kennedy administration.

ANDOLSEK: In the Kennedy administration they were colleagues of yours when you were at the post office.

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, while we're on legislation during the time that you were in a position to witness some of the activities of the.... I believe most of your contact with John Kennedy was while he was in the Senate more than when he was in the House, is that correct?

ANDOLSEK: That's right.

HARTIGAN: Do you recall any other piece of legislation that you were familiar with that he was active in?

ANDOLSEK: Yes, I recall very vividly how much I admired him on his stand on the St. Lawrence Seaway--the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. My boss, Congressman John Blatnik, coming from Minnesota where the seaway was very important to the economy of that area, and every congressman for the

previous forty or fifty years was sponsoring a seaway project. About this time Congressmen Blatnik and Dondero [George A. Dondero] of Michigan were making some headway. I was surprised at the courage and the guts of a young senator from Massachusetts who came from an

[-4-]

area which was vividly and actively opposed to the St. Lawrence Seaway for all the years that we were so strongly supporting it. And yet he had the courage to get to the facts and came up with a decision to the effect that both nations, Canada and the United States, need the St. Lawrence Seaway for security as well as for economic reasons and was very helpful in the Senate in getting that legislation passed.

HARTIGAN: Your impressions of him, then, as a United States Senator--just reflecting on these two pieces of legislation you talked about.

ANDOLSEK: Well, first, my admiration for John Kennedy--the senator, congressman, and president--is nothing but the greatest. A person with all the resources at his command who could have gone into any field of endeavor, and certainly it would have been a profitable field, to devote his lifetime to helping human beings. And most of the legislation that he was supporting always had some element of helping the poor, the sick, the elderly. And to give up his life in the public arena.... I mean to give up his life in the private arena and devote his life to public service, I just admire him tremendously.

HARTIGAN: You noticed this reflected in his activities in the Congress?

ANDOLSEK: I sure did. And in addition to foresight.... I started out in government in the National Youth Administration back in 1936. I remember then the keen interest the NYA, under the leadership of President Roosevelt, had in the Passamaquoddy Project where they were going to harness the tremendous tides and create electricity and power so that the New England area could have sufficient electrical power. I recall somewhere in the sixties as a senator from Massachusetts he picked up the Passamaquoddy Tidal Power Project and passed enabling legislation to provide for the immediate study of the economic feasibility of harnessing these huge tides which surge and recede every day through Passamaquoddy. The vision that not only the New England area but the United States as a whole was to be now in 1975, '76 having such serious concerns about where the power is going to come from. Hopefully with his interest and the studies that are being made, hopefully others will pick these studies up that we can someday harness that tremendous tidal surge for electricity in the New England area.

HARTIGAN: Do you recall any of the other legislative activities that the then Senator Kennedy, or Congressman Kennedy, participated in? He was very active on the labor committee both in Senate....

ANDOLSEK: He was very active in the labor committee. In fact, he was very active in anything that he participated in. My experience with his activities on the labor committee [U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare] was more with his staff on the McClellan [John L. McClellan] Committee [U.S. Senate Select Committee to Investigate Improper Activities in Labor-Management Relations] of which Senator Kennedy was a very active member.

I've forgotten the year now, but along in there when the interstate highway system started there was considerable hanky-panky going on in land sales and so forth. The House established a special subcommittee for the interstate highways and Congressman Blatnik was designated as chairman of this special subcommittee by Chairman Charles Buckley [Charles A. Buckley] of New York [House Committee on Public Works]. And when we were searching around for staff we learned that Senate education and liberty--I forgot the full name of that committee--but they were dismantling their special committee on something to do with racketeering and so forth and Congressman Blatnik hired practically the entire staff out of the Senate committee. Except for one or two secretaries I think the staff was in toto from the Senate committee, which did a tremendously good job in the House side in checking into the hanky-panky going on with the interstate highway system. And, again, to show the caliber of people that he attracted around him and the determination that they had for doing good for what's good for the citizens of this country was a great inspiration to me.

HARTIGAN: Congressman Blatnik, did he keep in good contact with the late President Kennedy when Kennedy went to the Congress? I know they were very friendly as freshmen in the House.

ANDOLSEK: Oh, yes. They stayed, they kept in touch even after Congressman Kennedy went over to the United States Senate. In fact, when he ran for the Congress, Blatnik was one of his strong supporters in Minnesota. I remember actively participating in that campaign in the fall of '60. Congressman Blatnik and I had some words with your friends--and I think you were part of it--in the scheduling of the candidate's activities. Both Congressman Blatnik and I felt it was important for John Kennedy to visit northern Minnesota where the ethnic people turn out to about 95 or more percent on election day and most of those votes are in the Democratic farmer, labor column if we can get them out. We were told that he was going to spend some time in the twin cities, Minneapolis-St. Paul [Minnesota], which comprise three congressional districts. It was our honest belief that he could have spent a month there and still wouldn't carry the state unless he had a very heavy majority from what was then

the eight congressional district. Blatnik and I had hurriedly calculated it and we figured that he'd be about twenty thousand votes short outside of the Eighth Congressional District, and if we could produce about a forty thousand majority for him in our district that he would win the state by about twenty thousand and he'd have about twenty thousand votes to spare. I've

forgotten the actual figures, but I think when the election was conducted it was almost on the button that Senator Kennedy carried the Eighth Congressional District by forty thousand votes and he was trailing Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] by about twenty thousand before the eighth district reported. I think I'm right in this, that Nixon, then when he saw the Minnesota report threw in the towel and conceded the election to President Kennedy. This was the year when Orville Freeman [Orville L. Freeman], our governor, got beat. And again, his full vote fell off in the Eighth Congressional District from some fifty-six thousand to twenty-nine or thirty thousand, as I recall.

So we felt very strongly that the candidate for president of our party, in order to carry Minnesota, should make a personal appearance in the Eighth Congressional District. We were given one day. We had a big rally at the University of Minnesota at Duluth auditorium. We shuttled by air some of our other candidates to keep the crowd at the Hibbing arena-- which was about sixteen thousand more people in the ice rink--keep them happy until we finally finished the part with Kennedy at Duluth and then flew him over to Hibbing [Minnesota]. We just had a tremendous rally. Having a little bit to do backstage, I was a little bit upset about that time because everybody demanded that we erect a platform for the camera and for the news cameras and what not and it was just going to be a lumber platform. We had to get metal platforms from some contractor. And then much to my disgust, particularly, when they saw the tremendous crowd and the place was full they didn't even take their cameras off the plane or train to show the crowd that was in there. We literally had them hanging from the rafters.

I remember riding to the arena with the press in their bus and they were flabbergasted. How in the world could we expect fifteen, sixteen thousand people at a rally in Hibbing when the population of the whole town was only about fourteen thousand. They wouldn't believe that they were going to come in from a radius of a hundred miles or more. Which is true. They came in from Ely, Minnesota, from International Falls [Minnesota], from all that backwoods country. We really had a wonderful program. He was so profound in his statements. He carried that dignity. I'm sure, I can vouch that nobody laid a hand on him; in most places they tore at his clothes and what not. It was so well organized that people were so respectful of him that he was treated with every courtesy,

[-7 -]

with every dignity. He made his presentation. On the stage we had some other speakers, some bands. I remember because of the tight schedule he had to be someplace in Kansas City, I think, that night. We literally backed his limousine into the arena auditorium back of the stage and had him go from the stage right into his car and off to the airport so he could make that commitment in Kansas City.

I was proud that Congressman Blatnik gave me the opportunity to work so closely with the Kennedy people in planning the 1960 campaign and I treasure some of the photographs I still have of those, of some of the occasions during that rally.

HARTIGAN: Just for the record, when you previously mentioned about your discussions on differences of opinion with the staff, myself included, I'm assuming you're referring to Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P.

O'Donnell].

ANDOLSEK: And Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien]

HARTIGAN: And Larry O'Brien. I think for the record, though, I don't think that it interfered with the friendship...

ANDOLSEK: Not at all. Not at all. I've got the greatest respect for Larry O'Brien and Kenny O'Donnell and you and it's held over the years. If I have any occasion to be in Boston, you know, well, I call you, I call Kenny, I call Larry, if he's around. It's been a pleasant relationship and association.

Also, one interesting thing at the Hibbing rally. As you know, President Kennedy didn't wear hats and I think many of us have since adopted the same custom--I haven't worn a hat since he was President of the United States. But, we had a tough mining, miners up in our area. The United Steelworkers of America were very strong. Phil Murray [Philip Murray] came in there in '37 and organized the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] which later became the Steelworkers of America [United Steelworkers of America]. I remember a fellow by the name of Keller who was an officer from Coleraine, Minnesota. And in his broken English he dramatically put a helmet, a miner's helmet, on the candidate's head. And we actually have some photographs of Jack Kennedy with a miner's helmet. I'm sure he didn't like it but he behaved beautifully and carried it on.

HARTIGAN: Anything for a vote.

ANDOLSEK: Anything for a vote, anything for a vote.

[-8-]

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, John Kennedy, in his Senate years particularly, was very active on international activities and foreign relations, foreign affairs, and from his activities in his history he was very active and concerned with reference to the Polish nation. Do you have any comments?

ANDOLSEK: I didn't watch his Polish what-do-you-call-it, but I recall very vividly how, being of Yugoslav origin, my folks coming from Austria-Hungary, and now Austria-Hungary being part of Yugoslavia.... In '53, as a young senator, he did a yeoman job in establishing a plebiscite for the settlement of the dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia concerning Trieste. It just happened that the one time that I was privileged to be in Europe--Congressman Blatnik and I went to study public works projects in late '53--we were in Trieste. We went through no man's land where the Italians were on one side with fixed bayonets and Yugoslavs were on the other side. It was a very tense situation which could have easily erupted into another war. Here, again, was a Massachusetts senator of Irish descent very concerned about peace and was instrumental in getting the Trieste situation resolved by communication, by talking. I know he was very interested in Polish areas as well.

HARTIGAN: Well, all through those European countries that suffered during the war, I think, as a group....

ANDOLSEK: I think that's a true statement. He was very interested, as I said, in preserving the peace and had the courage, again, to stand up for things that he believed in that may not have been very popular with his own constituency. Unfortunately, I was in Minnesota campaigning during the Cuban crisis but again the admiration that all Americans had for his stand against the, up against the Russians at that time.... As a result the Russians took their missiles and went back home.

The inspiration that he gave to young people was just something unbelievable, and the hope and aspirations he gave to older people. Then the fact that I've spent my adult life in the public service. How honorable he made public service! The people are reaching to get into the public service, not so much for their own personal good and welfare, what they could earn, but more with that challenge of "Don't ask what the country can do for you but what you can do for the country." He brought a lot of key people into government who have made their marks since that time.

HARTIGAN: Did he frequently seek out advice from his colleagues in the House during his senatorial years, and later on as president?

[-9-]

ANDOLSEK: Really I.... Except that when he was in the House he and Blatnik had a very good rapport. What he did in the Senate, except that I know I'm just reading Humphrey's book *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics*, that he certainly did seek out advice from his colleagues. And even after he was President of the United States. It's evident on the commission; unfortunately, he was here for only a short time and most of his dealings would have been with the chairman of the commission. I was a vice-chairman but I was very close with his key staff and many of the things that he was concerned about would come through the staff which in turn would be reported.

I felt a sad loss when we lost the President because I was just about getting to the point where the White House would have made a more definite input into our field, the civil service. I know that the President was very interested in the central recruiting effort, which I believe in, but so far we haven't been able to establish it as such. On one or two occasions he asked me when I was going to get the recruiting centralized so that the agencies wouldn't be sending recruiters falling over each other. Well, we have made some improvement but we still have the legal question as to whether we have the authority to centralize it or whether each agency has the right to send their own recruiters. I look forward to the day when the Civil Service Commission will either on the reimbursable basis or an outright appropriation do all the recruiting for the federal government except for certain very rare types of occupations.

HARTIGAN: Since you became a commissioner of civil service your activities as

such almost by its very nature forced you to deal very closely with his close advisers and appointees. Is that correct?

ANDOLSEK: That's right.

HARTIGAN: And you've had the opportunity to compare these dealings with other groups, and even though as you say it was a very short time, did you feel as though they were on the right track? Because, let's face it, they were young and inexperienced, the same as the groups that are coming in today.

ANDOLSEK: Yes, but even though they were young, they didn't go off half-cocked and half-charged. They asked the right questions and got the proper blueprints before they proceeded. I have the greatest admiration and respect for which I commonly refer to as the Kennedy Mafia. They were all sincere, dedicated. They were inspired by the leadership of the President. I gathered from what, from our conversations that they could disagree without being

[-10-]

disagreeable in their conversations with the President. I think he's done a great deal to then unite the country and to go forward.

I know when I watched him at the, during the campaign how literally the old folks had tears in their eyes because of the hopes and dreams and aspirations that he instilled in them. And the sincerity that he conveyed. I think a lot of this carried on to his top lieutenants. They were very interested in the country and in peaceful solutions to our problems overseas and in employment here, in education, in all of the things that are necessary and are good. Since I've been a minority member I don't have the same access to the staffs at the White House as I had during the Kennedy-Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] era when I was the vice-chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

[INTERRUPTION]

HARTIGAN: Back in 1956 there was quite a bit of activity with reference to a subcommittee's work on reorganizing of committees of the government on operations. Did you have any thoughts on that?

ANDOLSEK: Yes, that was.... Some years ago there was a Hoover [Herbert Clark Hoover] Commission [Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government] established to study the reorganization of the government and about this time, I think they were doing their second shift of reporting and so forth, and both the House and the Senate parent committees and subcommittees played an important part in passing legislation which the Hoover Commission had proposed which would tend to make our government more efficient and save money. But I've always said that government is like a garden and if you don't continually weed out the weeds you're not going to have the produce come out. With so many new laws passed since that time and

with so many new functions established by law plus the fact that our population has increased tremendously, there's always need for reorganization in government and a look-see at the functions as they work.

I remember when I first came to government in '36, I recall President Roosevelt vividly talking about a hundred-twenty million Americans, one-third ill-fed, ill-clad and so forth. Now we're talking about two hundred and eighteen million Americans, one-fifth ill-clad and living in poverty and all. Quickly figuring, if my computation is anywhere near accurate, that means that only about ten or eleven people out of a hundred have improved their situation since the great depression of the 1930's. So, sure there's always a need and some things have to be looked into.

[-11-]

Personally, I think the reorganization plan number two, which was sponsored by President Nixon giving all that power to the Bureau of the Budget and renaming it the Office of Management and Budget, was very wrong. I don't think any one agency should have that kind of power. I like to think of the Bureau of the Budget as more the president's bookkeeper and let him know where funds are not being used wisely or where they're being used inefficiently and so forth. I would like to see the time come where the cabinet officers and the agency heads would be permitted to run their own operation and have the Bureau of the Budget just watch the, what I call the bookkeeping aspect. I think, and many people disagree with me, that the Bureau of the Budget's numbers game is one of the most wasteful and inefficient things we got in this man's government. They hold the agencies to certain numerical quotas and the agencies have money they can't perform their jobs within the limitations on their numbers and results in some contracting out and all other kinds of methods of trying to get the job done. I would much rather see that agency, when they're given an appropriation by the Congress and the tedious procedure they have to go through to get their appropriation, that the appropriation would determine how much money the agency would have to spend. And if it's not spent wisely, the Congress can cut 'em next year round. If it's spent wisely and they need some more they could give them some more. So I'm hopeful that as time goes along that some of the discussions of the government operations committee which Senator Kennedy participated in will continue to be reevaluated and brought up-date. Particularly now when the presidential campaign of '76 considerable mention has been made by our nominee for president about the organization of the government. There's got to be reorganization. Some agencies have outlived themselves. Some activities have finished and they should be wiped out. But again, we have to provide for the other things that Congress authorizes and the people have a right to expect from their government. I'm hopeful that discussions both in the House and Senate on government reorganization and the proposals of the Hoover Commission with some of the inputs of President, Senator Kennedy then, and my former boss and friend John Blatnik, Chet Holifield and Humphrey, and some others had a great to do and say about it at that time, a lot of words of wisdom in there. Hopefully these will be regenerated now that a president like Carter [James Earl Carter, Jr.] is talking about reorganizing the government.

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, let me just shut the tape off for a second. I've got a

question I'd like to ask you and I want to make sure it's going to be proper...

[INTERRUPTION]

[-12-]

HARTIGAN: On that committee to streamline government operations that Senator Kennedy was a member of and was chaired by Senator McClellan, there were some definitive pieces of legislation that came out of that that tend to help the government. Would you care to comment on that?

ANDOLSEK: Oh, yes, very definitely. Senator Kennedy sponsored S. 2364. The title was to centralize records management in the General Services Administration and it was passed in July of that year. He also authored S. 2591 to centralize disposal of surplus property in the General Services Administration which also passed. And he authored S. 3362 to expedite payments of certified claims where appropriations have lapsed which was very helpful legislation and that passed. Also, he authored S. 3693 to authorize donation of surplus property for civil defense purposes that became Public Law 655 -- Eighty-fourth Congress, if I remember correctly. And that did a tremendous amount of good whereas otherwise the property would have probably just rusted away or been stolen and what not. It did, it was transferred over for civilian defense, civil defense purposes and was very useful and very helpful. Then I recall he passed, he was the author of S. 3897 to revise budgeting, accounting, and appropriation processes and that was passed both by the Senate and the House. So these are the kinds of things I'm talking about that have to be taken into consideration and certainly since that time, since '56, a whole decade, really twenty years, has passed and some of these things will have to be looked at again. I'm sure that there's some revision that should be done in the present day budgeting and so forth.

But it takes the kind of incentive and courage and determination that Senator Kennedy had in the problems of government and running government. And, as I said earlier, to give up his time to devote to the public service where certainly with his position in life and his assets he could have gone into the private sector and increased the fortune which he already had. But instead of that he was perfectly willing to give up his time for the good of the country and for the public. It has often been said that he didn't even take his salary, that he turned that over to charities. Whether that's true or not I don't know but I've heard it many times.

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, we're running out of one side here. I think I'll change this so that we won't be interrupted in the middle of a thought. If you'll just have a little patience with me while I change the tape.

[INTERRUPTION]

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, do you recall, do you want to continue with your trend

of thought?

[-13-]

ANDOLSEK: Oh, yes. For instance, the Senator and my former boss were very concerned in the economically depressed areas because we experienced it in our own area when our direct shipment of oil was depleted and we had not yet perfected the technic process and people were out of work. We had 12-14 percent unemployment area. I remember in the middle '50s, '56, I think, where Senator Kennedy promoted S. 2663, which was of help to certain economically depressed areas, which was a tremendous help to those areas that were economically depressed for no fault of their own. There was provisions there for loans, grants, training, retraining. Just showed a lot of vision, again, and a lot of foresight. I can't remember just how many areas were involved but I know where there was distressed economic areas they were very helpful, and since that time it's been improved where they have commissions. There's a four-state commission on the West Coast. There's one that has a commission that deals with the states that border on the Great Lakes, the Appalachian Commission. There's all the offshoot of the program that Senator Kennedy then foresaw in the fifties. Again, there must have been vision on the part of Senator Kennedy that this kind of legislation was needed, was going to be more needed in the future as the people left the rural America and moved to urban America. Nobody foresaw the problems that were going to face us as the little farmer became extinct and he went to town to the big cities and other people trying to make ends meet crowd into the cities, and the cities weren't prepared to handle that influx. The rural poverty became worse and I'll tell you what happened in the burning of the cities and the other problems that we've had as a result of that. He was so right on the issues of the time, on civil rights, on minorities, on the depressed areas that certainly would be a great asset to students to read of his interest, and so forth, and hopefully stimulate them to make similar contributions as they pursue life in either political, private or public arenas.

HARTIGAN: In 1960.... The reason I raise this is because the area that Congressman Blatnik came from was heavily involved in agriculture and a lot of people, colleagues of Senator Kennedy, were not aware of his concern for the agriculture problems in the country. You recall the twelve-state farm meeting that took place back in the--I think, it was one of the last things that took place in 1960.

ANDOLSEK: Yeah, I recall and I think it would be fair to say it was more Senator Humphrey, rather than John Blatnik, who worked with Senator Kennedy on the farm problem because in our area we don't have farms as such. Everybody has a little garden and so forth. Our economy is dependent principally on the iron ore mines. But the western part and central and southern part of Minnesota is all farming

[-14-]

and I know that Senator Kennedy was very interested and worked very closely with Senator

Humphrey and some of the other mid-western senators on the problems of the farms, which was again related to the distressed areas too.

And, then also, when he became president of the United States he nominated our former governor Orville Freeman of Minnesota who was knowledgeable in the farm arena to be the Secretary of Agriculture. I think it was a very wise choice. It again shows the wisdom the president had in the selection of a very key post which was so important to the economy of this country.

HARTIGAN: Commissioner, in the legislative category, are there any other general thoughts or specific thoughts you might have we might have not covered that....

ANDOLSEK: Well, the only thought I'd have is that Senator Kennedy was what I would call a working senator. He just didn't throw a piece of legislation into the hopper and then trust to the gods or the wind that it would become law. When he once was convinced that it was good legislation he'd do the necessary homework and buttonholing and cajoling and everything else that's necessary to make it a piece of legislation. I admire him tremendously for this. Too many people would just be satisfied by introducing the legislation, which is the easiest thing to do in the world, and then not give much concern as to where it's going to end or whether it's going to pass or not pass. I noticed that in every legislation that he authored that he was working to bring its passage around. I give him high marks on that, very high marks.

HARTIGAN: During your experience and activities in the Kennedy era, both in the Congress and in the presidency, did you have any dealings with his brother, the late Senator Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy]?

ANDOLSEK: Not too much. As I said, we hired, or Congressman Blatnik hired, on his special committee, the staff of the education and labor committee of McClellan's and we got everybody but Bobby, McShane [James J. P. McShane], who later became...

HARTIGAN: Jim McShane.

ANDOLSEK: Jim McShane...

HARTIGAN: Sheridan, Walter Sheridan [Walter James Sheridan].

ANDOLSEK: Who?

[-15-]

HARTIGAN: Walter Sheridan?

ANDOLSEK: No, I don't remember him. Carmine Bellino [Carmine Salvatore

Bellino] and we later got Carmine on a contract basis to do some auditing and accounting for the committee. And there's one other one that I don't remember now. Could be Sheridan. So I didn't get to know Bobby.

I know just one little experience I had with Bobby was in Los Angeles [California] at the '60 convention. I think, I just remember vaguely that he didn't hold too much hopes for Minnesota and, of course, Congressman Blatnik and I disagreed with him. We thought we could carry Minnesota. His people had crossed off Minnesota. His people had crossed off Minnesota, and yet I felt that after it was all done that Minnesota was one of the key states in the election.

I've known Teddy [Edward Moore Kennedy] a little bit better than Bobby, not very closely either. I knew Teddy's former administrative assistant who passed away. He was preparing hamburgers for his family one Sunday afternoon and just dropped dead. His name escapes me right now.

But, again, I say, I've got to admire all of them. Supposedly to have wealth and could have gone to any business or gone to academia and been a professor on a campus and so forth. But to have this concern for their fellow citizens and have the compassion to devote their time--as I've said, I've heard many times that he gave up his salary to charity--for the good of mankind, just is something very inspiring to me.

I have the greatest regard particularly for Jack, of course, because he gave me my chance. I'm a son of immigrant parents who has been aspiring to the United States Civil Service Commission from way back in the middle thirties. Certainly if it hadn't been for President Kennedy, a Yugoslav of a small mining community, Roman Catholic and minority --extreme minority, there aren't a million bohunks in this country, you know--and to be privileged to serve as a presidential appointee with the confirmation of the Senate is a real honor to me. I'm forever grateful to John Kennedy.

HARTIGAN: Can you recall any interesting events during the 1960 campaign that you.... I know you were active and personally ran into you in several places.

ANDOLSEK: Well, basically, the one that I mentioned that I had up at Hibbing. I was in several rallies at Minneapolis, but at those places I wasn't so concerned except that I'd said that wherever he went there was a great respect and great stature, a man of dignity, a man of

[-16-]

destiny.

HARTIGAN: What about the convention, Commissioner?

ANDOLSEK: The convention at Los Angeles; I was an alternate delegate. Minnesota was, for want of a better word, mish mashed. Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] started it back the election before that. And we had a group that were sponsoring Kennedy. We had a group that were sponsoring Adlai Stevenson [Adlai

E. Stevenson]. I think, if I recall right, Hubert Humphrey was prevailed upon to run as a favorite son as a holding action. When we got to Los Angeles we were split down the middle three ways. I think in the end the Minnesota delegation went for Humphrey even though he had withdrawn. Orville Freeman nominated Kennedy. Gene McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] nominated Adlai Stevenson and our delegation was just caught in a vise between several thorns.

I think the caucus the night before the election, if I remember correctly, there was thirty-two half votes and sixteen went for Kennedy, fifteen and a half for Stevenson and a half for Johnson. Blatnik and I were kind of in a vise. I think if we had more of a say-so in what was happening in the southern part of the state and the western part, the delegates would have been much more unanimous in their choice.

Minnesota is a peculiar state. They're very independent. As you know we had the farmer-labor movement when Wisconsin had the progressive movement and North and South Dakota had the non-progressive league or nonpartisan league, whatever it was. So our delegates were extremely independent and it was quite volatile and quite tense between Humphrey and Freeman and McCarthy. Humphrey sure was aspiring to be president. Freeman had hoped, I think, that it is honest and fair to say that he was hoping to be tapped as the vice presidential candidate so he made the nomination for Jack Kennedy. Gene McCarthy--I know him real well--I haven't quite figured him out yet as to what he was after except that he likes a fight every once in awhile and he made that beautiful speech in nominating Adlai Stevenson. If I recall right, Minnesota dumped their ballots down the drain because I think they voted for Humphrey even though Humphrey had withdrawn. Outside of the fact that we were just constantly in caucuses and we had the differences of opinion of some of our leading delegates who were pro-Humphrey or pro-Stevenson or pro-Kennedy. My convention was pretty much just sitting in caucuses not knowing which way really to go.

HARTIGAN: What about the 1956 convention where.... Did you get to attend that?

[-17-]

ANDOLSEK: I attended as an observer, yes. That's the year that--'56--when Stevenson. . .

HARTIGAN: Stevenson opened up the convention for the vice president.

ANDOLSEK: Yes, but Kefauver carried Minnesota in the primary.

HARTIGAN: That was in the contest where Kennedy was running against Kefauver for the vice president.

ANDOLSEK: For the vice president, but Kennedy had carried, or Kefauver had carried the primary, if we did have a primary then. Maybe we didn't have a primary. We only had one primary in Minnesota for presidential and that's when Stassen [Harold E. Stassen] tried to become president of the United States and he took, got legislation passed as having Minnesota primary, presidential primary a week

or so before New Hampshire. But what he failed to check was that the New Hampshire legislature was still in session and Minnesota had adjourned. When they passed our date one week ahead of theirs they just merely moved theirs two weeks earlier, so they still had the first primary. That was the only time Minnesota had a primary which Stassen tried to get.

But, anyway, my memory's a little vague, but Kefauver prevailed and we had put all of our big guns--Blatnik, Humphrey, McCarthy, Freeman--as delegates-at-large on the Stevenson ballot. And Kefauver won. So, when we went to Chicago [Illinois] these leaders of our party actually didn't have floor credentials. I think through the courtesy of Bob Short [Robert Short] I was able to get attendance badges for Blatnik and me. I remember we were putting some of the people together. I remember one time Blatnik was very instrumental in getting Humphrey and Kefauver together upstairs at some restaurant or steak house right near by the arena where the convention was held. But I do remember when Stevenson opened up the ballot and I was sitting right in front of the New York delegation. The leader of that delegation...

HARTIGAN: Was that Carmine DeSapio [Carmine G. DeSapio]?

ANDOLSEK: ...Carmine DeSapio, felt very confident that Jack Kennedy would get the nod as the vice president. Then, I think, if I remember right, he decided to withdraw on his own. It didn't come to a contest which I think was a very good political move on his part because he earned the respect...
[Interruption]

HARTIGAN: One last question. I know that your schedule is bearing down on you. Where were you at the time of President Kennedy's assassination, Commissioner?

[-18-]

ANDOLSEK: I was having lunch at the Madison Hotel and then I had a call earlier from Jerry Haney and I told him that I would drop into the International Inn--it's got a new name now. So I walked from the Madison to the International Inn when a lady approached me with tears in her eyes saying that the President was shot at Dallas [Texas]. And I couldn't believe it and I quickly ran into the International and sure enough the radio had reports that he was assassinated.

HARTIGAN: What was your response to that?

ANDOLSEK: I was speechless. Tears in my eyes. Did a lot of praying hoping that he would have survived the assassination.

HARTIGAN: Did it have any vast effect on your activities?

ANDOLSEK: No, except that I say he gave me my opportunity in the field of civil service, which I continued and been reappointed twice since then as a

minority commissioner by both President Nixon and President Ford [Gerald R. Ford].

I think what effect there was, I think there have been a lot of different directions that this country would have gone had he not been assassinated. I think there would have been some things in my field that with his support would have seen the light of day which have not so far been accomplished. I think that the fact that I had a good working relationship with the White House staff and I was getting to know the system more, that certainly there are, there is a need for improvement in our own operation. I would like to see some changes in Title Five which would take the help of or assistance from a president before it will see the light of day.

HARTIGAN: Is there any final observation you'd like to make before we close the interview, Commissioner?

ANDOLSEK: Well, I'm just honored that I was given this opportunity to put a few words, as screwed as they may be, into a permanent record for a person that I just have the greatest admiration and respect for. I just hope that even though it was short, that his time in the political arena, particularly the time that he was president of the United States, will, because of some of the things that he started, will pay dividends towards this country's peace and full employment.

HARTIGAN: The library, as you know, in addition to its oral history department has a section for papers of those

[-19-]

individuals who served in the government under President Kennedy and also for keeping memorabilia that can be made available to the public in memory of the late president. And for that reason the library always likes to request that the interviewee considers turning over some of these memorabilia or papers that would be of interest to students and also be of interest to people that come years from now so they can get in depth knowledge of what really went on during the Kennedy years. Would you take the time possibly to look into what you've got in your vast storehouse of papers?

ANDOLSEK: Unfortunately most of ours are part of the central files and what part I'll be able to extract out of that I don't know, but certainly if there are any papers that would have value to the Kennedy Library I'll come charging to bring them in, believe me.

HARTIGAN: I'll tell you what you can do, if you do find any, you can set them aside. We'll have somebody from the archives come down and look them over and give you an idea of what is of value and what would not be and make arrangements to have them put in a proper place in the library. Commissioner Andolsek, I want to thank you very much for the opportunity of interviewing you and also personally thank you for the time you've given me to come in and sit with you.

ANDOLSEK: Anytime. My time is your time. God bless.

[-20-]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Ludwig J. Andolsek Oral History Transcript
Name List

B

Belen, Frederick C., 4
Bellino, Carmen Salvatore, 16
Blatnik, John A., 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16,
17, 18
Brawley, Hiram W. "Bill", 4
Buckley, Charles A., 6

C

Carter, James Earl, Jr., 12

D

Dondero, George A., 4
DeSapio, Carmine G., 18

F

Ford, Gerald R., 19
Freeman, Orville L., 7, 15, 17, 18

H

Hagen, Harold C., 1, 2
Haney, Jerry, 19
Holifield, Chet, 12
Hoover, Herbert Clark, 11
Humphrey, Hubert H., 2, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18

J

Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 11, 17

K

Keller, 8
Kennedy, Edward Moore, 16
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20
Kennedy, Robert F., 15, 16
Kefauver, Estes, 17, 18

M

McCarthy, Eugene J., 17, 18
McClellan, John L., 6, 13, 15
McShane, James J.P., 15
Monroney, Almer Stillwell Mike, 2
Murray, Philip, 8

N

Nixon, Richard Milhous, 7, 12, 19

O

O'Brien, Lawrence F., 8
O'Donnell, Kenneth P., 8

R

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 2, 5, 11

S

Sheridan, Walter James, 15, 16
Short, Robert, 18
Smith, Clyde H., 2
Smith, Margaret Chase, 1, 2
Stassen, Harold E., 18
Stevenson, Adlai E., 17, 18

