

Brooks Hays Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 05–06/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Brooks Hays

Interviewer: Warren Citkins

Date of Interview: May and June 1964 (several days)

Length: 59 pages

Biographical Note

Hays was the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations in 1961 and Special Assistant to the President from 1961 through 1963. In this interview Hays discusses early interactions with John F. Kennedy [JFK]; obstacles to becoming an Assistant Secretary of State and his work in that position; Hays' trip abroad to visit the Pope; moving over to the White House and his work as a Special Assistant to the President; Federal-State intergovernmental relations; visiting Africa and various Peace Corps installations; the relationship between JFK's Administration and different African countries; JFK and humor; making speeches and acting as a spokesman for the Kennedy Administration; and Hays' last interaction with JFK before the assassination, among other issues.

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to the

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By Brooks Hays

to the

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

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Marion P. Hays
Donor

July 1, 1989
Date

[Signature]
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Oct. 31, 1985
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Brooks Hays – JFK #1
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INTERVIEW OF THE HONORABLE BROOKS HAYS.
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR THE
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY LIBRARY

Date of Interview: May and June 1964
(Several Days)

Interviewer: Warren Cikins

Warren Cikins: Mr. Hays, when was the first time you ever got to meet John Kennedy?

Brooks Hays: Soon after he had taken the oath of office as a Member of the House of Representatives, and, of course, at that time he had had some publicity. He was prominent as a member of the Kennedy family. He was known as the son of very prominent parents in Boston -- and as having been elected under rather unusual circumstances, displaying considerable political ability when he had not been regarded as a political factor. This was all a matter of publicity, and so I, along with a lot of the senior members of the Congress (I was not a senior member at the time, but at least I had been in Congress four years ahead of Mr. Kennedy), we were all aware of his unusual feat in winning that election, and there was a good deal of interest in the young member from Massachusetts. I remember how impressed I was with his youthful appearance. This was, of course, a matter of very common comment, but one thing that I observed about him in those early days of the session, 1947, the first session of his first term, was a sort of shyness that to me is a becoming quality. He was not assertive of himself in any way. He accepted his honors with dignity, and it was obvious that he wanted to find his place in the political fraternity. So this is my first impression, my earliest recollection, of the man that later was to win such distinction.

W.C.: What about his legislative activities in the House? Was there anything that stood out particularly in your recollection, Mr. Hays?

B.H.: Well, the only thing that I recall in the way of activity was his appearance on the floor in his first term to argue against the Labor Committee reported bill, which was, you might say, the Hartley version of what became the Taft-Hartley Law. And I remember this vividly because he was very

effective in his presentation. Now it is well-known, of course, that freshman members are supposed to be very quiet and non-prominent in their activity, but he must have done his homework well; he must have worked hard in the Committee in preparing this legislation because the version that was reported by the House Committee did not appeal to him, and he had his points well summarized. I don't recall very much about that debate, but I can see him now standing in the well of the House, and, as I recall my own reaction, there were three vulnerable places in this legislation. This has a great deal of significance for me personally, because the sentiment in my own district was strongly in favor of labor legislation. The sentiment was so strong that there was no interest particularly in the form it should take. They just wanted legislation. I remember that two of my most vigorous supporters, who had been active in my campaigns for Congress and previous campaigns for governor, called me on the phone, and they were on the line some 40 or 45 minutes pleading with me to vote for the Committee bill. But I had been convinced by that time that it was not a good bill, that is, that there were these weak places in it and objectionable features, and I was influenced in this partly by the speech of the young Congressman from Massachusetts. There were three principal points, as I remember it, and I can only recall two of them.

One was the prohibition of a welfare fund for the unions and the other was the prohibition of bargaining units that extended over an area that was more than a hundred miles wide. His arguments, of course, impressed me and while I had no opportunity to get to know him well, since I was on another Committee and not socially identified with the New England group, his performance won my admiration. I didn't seek to develop any full companionship with him.

I remember once in the House he came and sat down by me. It seems to me he was on crutches then -- for a while in that first term I think he had the problem of a back injury and it later was to plague him considerably -- but it was either in his first or second term in the House that he was invariably seen on crutches when he showed up on the floor. And I do recall that he came over and sat down by me one day. It was a sort of gesture that some young men use in seeking the friendship of older men. I don't recall enough about the conversation that took place that day to dwell on it -- well, there is nothing in it except the fact that he did choose a

seat by me when there were dozens of seats around us, made me feel that he was interested in talking with me about something, so I was rather pleased about that because of the favorable impression that he had made upon me.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, after Kennedy went on to the Senate, was there any recognition on his part of your activities in the Little Rock crisis, for instance? Is there anything that you recall on that matter?

B.H.: Yes, and except for that, however, his service in the Senate to me is a sort of blank. We had no opportunity to be thrown together. I did read occasionally of his participation in the Senate debates and have some impressions, all favorable, of his part in those debates. But it was not until I was defeated in the Little Rock situation, that is, as a result of the Little Rock racial crisis, that I even had any indication that he remembered me. And I am told -- I think actually, Warren, that you were the source of my information -- that the second telegram that came to the office in Washington after my defeat was from Senator Kennedy. Now the first telegram, interestingly enough, was from the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, and this to me was a symbol of the bipartisan friendships that I had developed in the House in the sixteen years that I was there. Of course, as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, it would be understood that Mr. Dulles would have some interest in my political fortunes but Mr. Kennedy had not had occasion to be identified with me legislatively or politically, and this was something of a surprise. Later, after it drew some attention -- my rather dramatic defeat, you might say -- Mr. Kennedy joined with others in forming a committee to honor me, and he was a formal member of the committee that issued invitations to a dinner. They had a very attractive plaque made, a beautiful scroll, prepared by artisans in the Library of Congress, and he signed it, along with several other senators, congressmen, Cabinet members, and leaders in the Government in this little tribute to me, which, of course, I cherish.

W.C.: To double back, Mr. Hays, it dawned on me that you, as a delegate to the 1956 Democratic Convention, might have some recollections about the situation which led to Mr. Kennedy almost getting the Vice Presidential nomination at that time.

B.H.: Yes. Well, now, here I must disclaim any activity in behalf of anyone. Actually, I don't recall that I favored Senator Kennedy over one or two others that I had been very close to, but I was certainly not opposed to the delegation's final action when they did throw their support to Senator Kennedy. As I recall this '56 Convention at Chicago, I had

anticipated that Mr. Stevenson, with whom I was closely identified, would make the decision so I just hadn't thrust my thinking into the situation at all. And, of course, the Governor and the two Senators were more influential than the rest of us on the Arkansas delegation. I think the thinking that resolved the delegation vote for Mr. Kennedy over Senator Kefauver, when the issue was finally formed, was the favorable impression he had made in his nomination of Governor Stevenson for the presidency and perhaps in an appearance he made before the Arkansas caucus. At any rate, Arkansas did support him in that crucial situation.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, to move from there to the 1960 election and the events that took place prior to the actual election of President Kennedy, what do you recall about your relationship with him during that period?

B.H.: Between 1956 and 1960?

W.C.: And also including the period that led right up to the election of President Kennedy.

B.H.: Well, his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith -- Steve Smith -- called me during the campaign, even before it was apparent that he would have all the advantages in the world at the Los Angeles Convention, to ask my advice on the handling of the religious issue. Now I had been immobilized politically. I had been appointed a member of the Tennessee Valley Authority Board, and my colleagues on the Board -- and they were sustained in this by tradition and by sentiment -- felt that I should not be active in the campaign. That was my own inclination too, because I felt that the agency was a non-partisan agency, and I more or less retreated, certainly at this stage. But Steve Smith called me, and I presume this was more an indication that he respected my position in the Baptist Community, my having been President of the Southern Baptist Convention. He felt this gave me some authority in that field, and that I would be happy to advise them, which I certainly was. And I recall the conversation over the phone in which I suggested certain ways of helping candidates of the Catholic faith avoid some of the tension that could grow out of the conflict between Protestant and Catholic ideologies. Since there had never been a Catholic president this was something that naturally concerned his campaign advisers and created some anxiety among them. Well, I felt complimented that Steve, speaking for the Kennedy Campaign Headquarters, wanted my advice and I gave him the best advice that I could on this matter of

interpreting Mr. Kennedy's religious ideas and religious position and background. Then later, of course, after his nomination, I had quite a problem. Here you see, I was freer than I had been in pre-convention activities when there was a contest involving several of my friends, so my neutrality more or less vanished and I became a Kennedy man. I was for the Kennedy-Johnson Team, not necessarily with any intention of activity, that is, of making speeches or being prominent, but everyone knew that as a good Democrat I would be supporting the ticket in proper ways.

I recall that one day I had a call, I believe from a former Executive Secretary of mine, Claude Curlin, who had been in my congressional office, saying that Campaign Headquarters, perhaps Senator Jackson or one of his staff members, had indicated that they wanted me to come up to Washington to discuss campaign activities and to see to what extent I could be useful in avoiding the impact of potential anti-Catholic sentiment. And I had a marvelous conference at that time. Senator Jackson saw me first. He asked me to come up to his office -- I think I first talked to Senator Jackson over the phone. At any rate I went to his office pursuant to the arrangements that Mr. Curlin had made, and then he told me right off that our nominee, Senator Kennedy, wanted to talk with me, and he felt me out on the proposition of coming up to Washington to help in Headquarters in this matter of Catholic-Protestant conflict. Well, I felt that this was something I would have to examine very carefully; that I should use extreme caution in that decision, and not because I wasn't willing to give up the TVA job. I enjoyed the work at TVA but the appointment had come rather late in my political career, and my activities and interests had been over in the political rather than the administrative side of public service, so I was not averse to leave TVA if there were good opportunities for service elsewhere. But the thing that really pressured me into a negative attitude was the fear that the Baptist people would resent any appearance of exploiting my religious affiliation.

W.C.: It might do Senator Kennedy more harm than good, is what you mean.

B.H.: Exactly. That's right. It would really reduce my usefulness and that would be the primary consideration, and I finally resolved it on that basis. I think that both Senator Jackson and Senator Kennedy fell in with that thinking, particularly in the light of arrangements that I had previously worked out with Mr. Curlin and with Senator Jackson. It appeared that I would make my contribution backstage and in a

quiet way so that we wouldn't be paying for my contribution in terms of a backlash -- a reaction on the part of my Baptist friends.

W.C.: The kind of speeches that you were making at that time, as I recall, did emphasize the need for religious tolerance and understanding.

B.H.: Yes, they were a very indirect but, I would hope, substantial contribution. I had been making that point all through my service as a Baptist official. I think I should say too that the meeting with Senator Kennedy that day was a moving experience for me. We were going --

W.C.: You mean the day Senator Jackson arranged for you to see Senator Kennedy?

B.H.: Right. There was an office he used, I believe, the Senate Whip's office. I think Senator Mansfield, perhaps, was the Whip at that time. At any rate, it was an office on the Gallery Floor of the Senate, a rather obscure little retreat where he was meeting his friends. So Senator Jackson said, "We'll go up there after a while", and I was waiting for the Senator to come off the Senate Floor. The Senate was in session, and Senator Kennedy came out of the Senate Chamber with someone and was going to the elevator with him, talking very vigorously to someone, and all of a sudden he spied me standing near the door, and he left his friend and ran over to me and said, "Brooks, I am so glad to see you and I'll be meeting you in a minute" so I believe he was looking forward to discussing this question with me. In the course of the conversation he said something that pleased me. I suppose that I should record this -- I'm immodest to that extent. He said, "Well, Scoop, we want to use Brooks. You know, he has guts." He used the short, strong word for what he had indicated in his telegram to me -- he appreciated it, and that was a sort of revelation, it seemed to me, of his sympathies and his feelings about my part in the Little Rock experience, because he must have hinged his comments on that. There had been no other incident in my life that would have suggested to him that he use such a characterization. A meaningful part of the conference took place. It was the last time I called him "Jack." When I saw him next he was "Mr. President." Before we parted I said, "Jack, I am your elder, you know -- I've lived longer and have been buffeted more often -- politically -- than you. So forgive me for talking like an elder to you. You are beginning a great adventure and I want you to enjoy it. Don't let the religious issue or anything else keep you from enjoying

this campaign. Promise me, win or lose, that you will enjoy it." I don't know how much this exhortation meant to him. Perhaps the pressures were already so great that it was a bit of philosophizing he did not have time for. But I am glad I had an opportunity to say it to one of our greatest philosopher-politicians.

Now there was one other factor in this Fall activity that should be recorded. The late Philip Graham, the publisher of the Washington Post, a very warm and devoted friend of Senator Kennedy's, was eager for me to make this contribution, and he knew of my Baptist ties and my sympathies, philosophically, my strong feelings about religious tolerance and the fact that affiliation with the Catholic Church should not be regarded as affecting the presidential race. Mr. Graham was aware of this. So he called me one day to tell me that he felt -- this was after the Washington meeting that I have described -- he called to say that it was felt in Washington -- I'm not sure that he talked to Senator Kennedy about it -- but if I had learned later that he had it would not have surprised me -- it had all the indications of a high-level conversation -- it was felt that I should get in touch with Billy Graham; that Graham was understood to have leanings towards the Republican ticket; and it was feared that he might make some public declaration. Well, there were several reasons why I didn't want this to happen.

W.C.: You mean, you didn't want Billy Graham to go the other way?

B.H.: I certainly didn't. One reason was my loyalty -- of course, my interest in the Democratic ticket; and the second reason was that I felt this would really hurt Billy Graham, and it would hurt the cause of our -- well, it would mar relations between the religious community and the political community. Billy Graham had become a symbol of something that's very fine in American religious life, and in American public life. And I recall that Phil Graham was concerned enough about it -- he said, "Brooks, Billy Graham is in Germany now and I'll pay your way if you'll fly to Germany to talk to him, because we're worried about this." And I said, "Well, let me find out just where he will be physically within the next few days. Maybe he will be coming back soon enough for me to intercept him before he does anything." I don't recall what conversations I had over long distance to resolve that but I do recall very well the conversations that I finally had with Billy Graham, and I don't think it was a trans-oceanic call. I think it was

a call to North Carolina, as I recall the conversation. At any rate, I can give you the substance of that talk. I started out by saying, "Billy, I'm eager to talk to you about the political situation. It's getting a little involved, it's tense, and there are some things that I feel that you and I should discuss just as two close friends who are congenial in these matters" -- I said, "You see, I feel that perhaps in a very unique way you and I represent something in American life and if you agree with me, this is something that calls for examination. I think that we should examine it together, because you symbolize leadership in the religious community and I have been identified with the political, but in a special way you and I are bridges between these two communities." And it was this that apparently appealed to him. He said, "Brooks, I thoroughly agree." Now I had had intimations, perhaps the same intimations that Phil Graham had had, that Billy did respect my opinion. I know that this tended to confirm any impression, great or small, that I had along this line because he was very satisfactory in his response; he thoroughly agreed, he said, that we should do nothing to hurt our influence or to destroy or impair our usefulness after the election in interpreting to each of these two areas, the people of the religious and the political communities, as I phrased it, the problems in the other community. And I think he was convinced as a result of that conversation -- I don't believe this is claiming too much -- I think he was convinced that he should not endorse the Republican Ticket -- or any ticket for that matter. So that was really my contribution to the Democratic Ticket.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, once Senator Kennedy had been elected President and took office, what happened then in your relationship with him which led to your becoming Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations?

B.H.: Well, after the announcement was made that Adlai Stevenson would be our Ambassador to the United Nations, I had a telephone call from Mr. Stevenson, a very terse little call. He said, "Brooks, can you fly up to New York and see me tomorrow?"

W.C.: Was this in December of 1960?

B.H.: Yes, it was. And conceivably in late December, maybe in early January. It was close to the deadline. Many of the announcements had already been made and it had been reported

around Knoxville that I would be returning to Washington -- I don't remember how authentic those reports appeared to be, but there may have been even newspaper references to it. At any rate, it was said generally that I would be in the official family, and I don't recall that I had any other intimations to that effect, except for this call from Governor Stevenson. And it was just that kind of call: "Brooks, can you come up to New York to see me tomorrow?" And I said, "Yes, I can get up there." Well, I knew what he wanted. I felt sure that I did. I don't believe he said much more than that. He told me where he'd be -- at my old stomping ground, because, you see, I was a delegate to the United Nations in 1955 and our headquarters then -- the United States Mission to the United Nations -- was on the 21st floor of the building at No. 2 Park Avenue. So I met him there at the appointed time and we got down to business pretty early. He and I generally used to exchange pleasantries, and I would give him a story or two, a new one -- not just to entertain him particularly, but because he sort of relied on me to give him certain anecdotal material. I tried to give him a little chuckle with a poem that had some significance, so we may have lost a little time there as we generally did. But he came to the point pretty early, as I remembered. "Now Brooks", he said, "I want you to come up here and be my deputy. I probably will shift the pattern a little. Instead of having just one deputy, the job that Jerry Wadsworth had with Henry Cabot Lodge, I think I want two, and I'm going to divide the functions in this fashion." And he said, "I want Mr. Plimpton to be one, and I want you to be the other one", and I said, "That's what I want." I was just delighted. It was very appealing to me for two reasons: one, I loved the UN work, and two, of course, was my personal devotion to Governor Stevenson, who was involved. So as we were winding it up, he said, "By the way, you must stop in Washington and talk to Dean Rusk because he has different ideas. He may have different ideas about it. Just let's call him and make an appointment now and let you take care of that side of it because he'll have to be satisfied -- you'll want to satisfy him about it." So when he couldn't get Mr. Rusk, he talked to Chester Bowles, and Chester said that he'd arrange for me to see Mr. Rusk. I didn't go on through to Knoxville. I stopped in Washington the next day, met Mr. Rusk at the appointed time, and I remember all the details of that conference. When I walked into his office -- they had given him quarters in

the State Department, that is, in the New State Department Building -- he said, "Brooks, let's sit over here now." He didn't go back to his desk. He went over and sat down by me on one of these long couches, and he came right to the point. He said, "Now I have just come from seeing the President and he has asked me to say to you that he would like you to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, and I hope you'll do it. He wants to give this office considerable dignity and he feels that you have the acquaintanceships and the friendships on the Hill that will be invaluable in our work, and that's his decision -- he wants you to do it and he's going to give this announcement more than ordinary force if it's acceptable to you by inviting you out to his Georgetown home, and it will be (what was called then) a doorstep announcement. What do you say?" I don't remember how he put it up to me -- he just looked over and smiled. I said, "If that's what the boss wants, that's it." I said, "Frankly, I had other ideas but why burden you with them. I won't even tell you. I did have other ideas, other hopes, but if that's what the President wants, that's what I want. So that's it." And we got up, shook hands, and as we walked to the door, I said, "You know, it's like the Methodist Bishop -- the preacher might want to go to Centerville, but if the Bishop says 'you go to Clarksville', he goes to Clarksville." And I remember Rusk just said, "What do you know about Methodist bishops?" Well, of course, I could have told him a lot about that.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, that would have been early January, and as I recall, you did not take the office as Assistant Secretary until the end of February. Do you have any comment about the interim events?

B.H.: Well now, here, I have to speak from hearsay. There was an objection from certain sources. I think perhaps there was only a single source that we would be entitled to speak of, because I doubt that there were any other political voices supporting my adversary, Congressman Dale Alford. But, you see, after Mr. Rusk had given me this clear picture of the President's wishes, I went back to Knoxville. That must have been right around the first of the year. And I waited and waited and, of course, no official announcement was forthcoming, and I finally grew somewhat concerned. I called my friend, Phil Graham, and talked to him more than once because he was in a quandary about it. He had known of these developments, and, of course, Mr. Rusk had his hands full, was terribly busy in the transition.

W.C.: As I recall, Mr. Hays, at least it had been in the newspapers that you were going to be appointed and people in Knoxville were sort of anticipating that you were going to be leaving the TVA, and I gather that that must have caused some little wonderment.

B.H.: Well, that created a very painful situation for me because one had to struggle to keep his foundations from crumbling. You know you don't want a political career to just sort of deteriorate, and the appearance to the public that I had lost face would be psychologically damaging to me and to my friends. You have to think of your friends and your family as well as yourself in those things. So I was distressed about the fact that we didn't hear anything and that there had been this publicity. Well, finally, after several calls -- and I don't think there was more than one call to Mr. Rusk himself -- I came up to Washington. The snow that had marred the Inaugural ceremonies was still on the ground and there may have been more snow. At any rate, I remember that I could not get a cab and I did a lot of walking in the snow that dismal afternoon. I went first to see Mr. Rusk. The Secretary was apparently embarrassed about it. I don't think he really opened his mind very fully to me on that occasion, but there may have been some confidences that he had to keep. But he was entirely friendly to me and terribly embarrassed about it. At any rate, he looked out the window at one stage and said, "Brooks, I think you ought to talk to Mr. Rayburn." Well, of course, that was all he needed to say, and the way he said it conveyed the idea that that's where it had been hung up, because Mr. Rayburn, as one of the great influences in the official family, would naturally be consulted about a lot of these appointments. Since I was a former House Member, it wasn't surprising that he had been consulted. It certainly was surprising that there would be any obstruction from that source, so I immediately called John Holton, the Speakers Assistant, and asked for an appointment, which was quickly made. I remember walking through the snow from the State Department to the Capitol and finding Mr. Rayburn in his office, after six o'clock in the evening. Well, there was a lot of conversation, but the only part that would be pertinent, I think, is that I confirmed that there had been some objection from Dale Alford and that because of Mr. Rayburn's traditional way of handling these problems, he had sort of momentarily held it up to explore the matter. He did tell me that he asked two of my former Arkansas colleagues to try to work it out, but it was just up in the air. As a matter of fact, I spent some thirty minutes with Mr. Rayburn, and before that conference was over he gave me an unequivocal assurance that the appointment would be cleared, and it was. And I came back and reported either in

person or by phone to Mr. Rusk or one of the key men at the top that it had all been worked out and I knew that once they checked back with Mr. Rayburn they would find that this was true. So, soon after that, the announcement was made and I came back to Washington and took the oath of office on --

W.C.: At the end of February.

B.H.: It was either the last day of February -- I presume it was actually the first day of March. I think that was the date I went on the payroll. I lost only a month and ten days.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, you were, I estimate, Assistant Secretary of State about nine months before moving over to the White House. What of the activities that you were involved with there, would you care to comment-- ?

B.H.: Well, I might say it was a very engaging task. I enjoyed working with Mr. Rusk and the other Assistant Secretaries. I think, perhaps, I should confine these comments to the legislative activity because that was my work. Among the principal items that I recall were the Foreign Aid Program, the initial Peace Corps legislation, the Alliance for Progress, and the Disarmament legislation. Those are the ones that were of principal interest to me. There were some other things that I worked on but --

W.C.: You did have a lot of close associations with your former colleagues and handled a lot of matters in general -- inundation by requests of one kind or another?

B.H.: Oh, yes, I remember particularly that my old friend, a very close and warm friend, Porter Hardy, Chairman of one of the Subcommittees of the Government Operations Committee, took a lot of our time. He was troubled about some of the alleged irregularities in foreign aid and was making an exhaustive study and I know that --

W.C.: Peru --

B.H.: Peru was one that had some rather -- well -- dramatic events that involved not necessarily overt violations of the law, but reflected some of the difficulties, maybe whims, of officials in the Peruvian Government. At any rate, Mr. Hardy, relying on our close friendship, would call me in, and I gave, perhaps, more time to Porter Hardy's Subcommittee, than any of the other Subcommittees. Then, of course, you had the Appropriations Bill coming up -- Foreign Aid. Now my office did not handle the regular State Department appropriations; that was handled by Mr. Crockett's office.

W.C.: That's a standard procedure.

B.H.: That's standard. I don't know whether it applies to all the Departments or not -- whether the Congressional Liaison offices do it -- at any rate that's been the rule in the State Department for many years. Since I had a rather happy relationship with that Subcommittee, Mr. Crockett used me in conversations and contacts with the Hill.

W.C.: That would be with what Congressman in particular?

B.H.: Congressman Rooney. Well, those were the principal items in the legislative schedule. I remember the day that Sargent Shriver called me to say that he would like my advice about the Peace Corps legislation, and I spent considerable time with him, giving him some suggestions about approaches that he might make. He was certainly an apt pupil. I have never seen anyone pick up a program and execute ideas regarding legislative strategy, starting as a complete novice, any more effectively than Sargent Shriver did. He made a great hit on Capitol Hill and he continued to consult with me and keep me informed of his activities. We collaborated and I have a good deal of pride in the work I did with Sargent Shriver to lay the basis for his successful generalship in that legislative field. By the way, this is an interpolation just on the Peace Corps. I was beginning to make some speeches about that time and was trying to familiarize myself with the philosophy of the Peace Corps. I remember speaking at one of the colleges down in North Carolina. Well, you can imagine how excited I was later, maybe a year later, when I was in Africa on a mission for President Kennedy to have a Peace Corpsman come up to me to say (and this was in Ibadan, north of Lagos in Nigeria), "Mr. Hays, I am in the Peace Corps because of what you said about it when you spoke at Wake Forest, North Carolina."

W.C.: Mr. Hays, shortly after you took office at the State Department, an appropriation of five or six hundred million dollars for the Alliance for Progress was pending in Congress. Do you care to comment on your role in getting that passed by Congress?

B.H.: Yes, as I recall, the figure was \$600 million, and we were sure that we would have difficulties because of Congressman Passman's attitude. Mr. Passman and I were good friends. He had recommended me -- I believe my knowledge of this came from Mr. Passman himself -- for the position as head of the AID Program under Mr. Eisenhower when there was a vacancy, and maybe later he renewed it. At any rate, he had indicated that he would be glad to see me in charge of the AID Program. Quite aside

from any personal wishes I might have about a thing like that, I knew that he had a feeling of kindness toward me, growing out of our relations in the House, so I had no trouble seeing him; no problem at all. We were talking to each other every few days, and later on he asked me to bring Mr. Rusk out at various times -- once to lunch -- once or twice when he felt that the situation was involving matters that were serious and he wanted to talk to Mr. Rusk. Well, I was always the medium by which those arrangements were made. In connection, though, with the Alliance for Progress, I remember very well the day he received Phil Claxton and myself. Phil was helping me with this particular program and Otto Passman had just capitulated, voted for the whole amount. He made it quite clear to Phil -- I don't know that that was known around the White House -- that I had been influential in that.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, what about the Foreign Aid Bill? That bill that year was designed to reorganize the AID Program, give it the name AID and include a lot of new provisions, add a lot of proposals concerning the way the Program would be carried out. What about your role in getting that bill passed?

B.H.: I think perhaps I'll have to refresh my memory about that legislation. I do recall doing a lot of footwork -- going down the corridors -- I remember stopping in to see many of my old colleagues, trying to interpret the changes being made in a convincing way, and I think that it's universally true that a former member of Congress has that advantage -- colleagues are always eager to prove that membership in what we call the fraternity carries these amenities. So I had no trouble reaching my old friends in Congress on both sides of the aisle. I had friends on the Republican side, too. We were trying in this connection to make it a bipartisan matter -- just as I had helped Mr. Eisenhower and the Republicans in the years that I was on the Foreign Affairs Committee. I felt I had a claim on Republican sentiment or at least had the approach that would prove my good faith in saying that it was not political.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, the one area we haven't yet talked about in any detail is the legislation creating the Disarmament Administration. What do you recall about what happened during the debate in the Congress on that proposal?

B.H.: Well, I remember we gave a good deal of time to that one because this was pioneering and nothing that was advanced interested me any more from the stand point of personal sentiment and personal interest. I believed very much in the goals that President Kennedy had pictured in advancing this idea, because,

of course, it was based on displacing war, the war system with a system of law. The rule of law was our phrase and our desire was to be relieved of the scourge of heavy armaments and the nuclear contest which was resulting in such heavy expenditures and adding so much to the tensions on the international front. So I was happy to see Congress reacting favorably to it. We did a good deal of work. I worked with Mr. Fisher and Mr. Foster, who became the first head of the Agency, and who had been one of the top staff members in this field. So this is one of the bright points in the record of Mr. Kennedy in his first year as President.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, you will recall that the Russians resumed atomic testing right in the middle of this debate and there was some doubt whether we could ever get legislation through because of this breach of faith on the part of the Russians.

B.H.: Oh, yes, I am glad that you recall that because it had momentarily slipped my mind. That did exacerbate our problem terribly but the logic of this proposal was eventually embraced by the Congress nonetheless and we were successful.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, what other recollections do you have of your nine months in the Department of State?

B.H.: Well, I think perhaps the most vivid recollection I have of activities around the Department has to do with the daily staff meetings, and I presume this is worth recording as a matter of vivid personal recollection. We sat around the big table in the Staff Room with Mr. Rusk always at the end of the table. I guess there was some order of rank in our seating although I doubt that it had perfect logic underlying this arrangement. Mr. Ball, as the other Under Secretary, sat up right next to Mr. Rusk and Mr. Bowles on the other side -- the two were co-equal -- and then the other Secretaries arranged around the table. And I know that generally when they would get to me -- going clockwise around the circle I was not over two or three seats from Mr. Rusk -- and by that time the discussions would have taken a turn giving me an opportunity to work in a bit of what you might call "homespun philosophy" and I think that's the way the State Department officials termed it. Well, I would use sometimes a bit of Arkansas folklore; sometimes just a little bit of humor; some attempt of witticisms that seemed to fit the situation. At any rate, they were kind enough to say that that was a moment of necessary relaxation. I didn't let it interfere with my report when there was a formal report to make or some legislative development that the staff needed to hear. They certainly didn't hear any humor in place of that, but often there was nothing to report and I could take the time that might be

reserved for us to give them a lift. And they began to look forward to it. I enjoyed it because they said that even when there had been a bit of tension, some controversy, some matter that gave us -- well -- clouded minds and confused thinking because of the complexities, the differences of opinion. Sometimes there would be some anecdote that I could tell that would help. That seemed to be my function in addition to just formal reports on the legislative situation. This was a new experience for me because I had been, of course, so long in the Congress, and while my TVA experience had put me on the administrative side of Government, it was in Knoxville, and quite removed from Washington bureaucratic service, and I might say that the State Department service was highly enjoyable.

W.C.: Now, Mr. Hays, while you were at the Department of State you also made a trip abroad and I believe had an audience with Pope John. How did that all come about? What was the relationship you had with President Kennedy on that matter?

B.H.: Yes. Well, I'm glad I had this experience, if for no other reason because it did tend to bring my situation in the religious life of the Nation to President Kennedy's attention. And while, as indicated in my story of the conversation in the Fall of 1960, he knew something of my church interests, this served to intensify and perpetuate that. He did know about my projected trip to Rome. I had other business, but really the important thing on that trip was the private audience with Pope John XXIII.

W.C.: About when was that?

B.H.: That was in October of 1961. The day my wife and I met Pope John is an easy date for me to remember because it was our daughter's birthday, October 23rd. Now, I don't recall who informed the President or what method I adopted for letting him know that this audience had been set up. The President had not met Pope John and I think that perhaps he never did meet him. I don't believe they ever met, but naturally he was interested and I had some intimations that he wanted to see me before I went to Rome. Of course, they had the usual difficulties of finding time to work me in to his very busy schedule. And I was in Chicago for a speaking engagement when I got a long distance call: Ralph Dungan said, "Brooks, the President will see you tomorrow afternoon at five o'clock. He wants to give you a message for the Pope." Well, I would have been on my way to Rome five o'clock the next day. This Chicago engagement was sandwiched in between some appointments so I told him the difficulty. He said, "Well, don't worry then. Don't change your itinerary, but just regard this as your authority to convey to the Pope the President's warm personal

greetings." I don't recall what else was said but it was on the basis that I said to Pope John almost immediately after the greeting that, "I am happy to bear the personal greetings, the very warm and reverent greetings, from our President" and his face brightened up and he said something in acknowledgment. And then I said too, "I would like, Your Holiness, to mention another outstanding member of your Church, my dear friend, Mr. McCormack" (at that time he was Majority Leader, Mr. Rayburn was still living) and the Pope was very warm in his acknowledgment of that. I remember he said, "Oh, John, John" and I said, "Yes, John McCormack." He said, "Yes, I remember him." Well, of course, I enjoyed telling Mr. McCormack about that. I think since this was a very historic event in my own life, I should say I made full use of its significance in my talks with Baptists. The Pope made a tremendous impression on my wife and me. He greeted us warmly and he had a remarkable personality. I recall that among the first things that he said was a reference -- it was a play on the word John. He said, Mr. Hays, I know you're a Baptist, and that relations between Baptists and Catholics have not always been pleasant, but after all, you see, I'm a Baptist -- I'm John." And this was something to speak of in religious assemblies. People have been very much interested in that quaint use of the name, and the very lively sense of humor. He said at one stage that, "We are all brothers in Christ." This is something that has significance, because many people, not understanding really the change in both Protestant and Catholic attitudes, have regarded the barriers between the two as insuperable, and the thought of congeniality on the basis of a common faith -- well, it's a strange thought for some. And I know that many of my Baptist people were happy, and a little surprised, that the Pope used that expression. Because the old doctrine, that is, if rigidly interpreted, would have meant that a Catholic, being a member of the one true church, and holding theoretically to the idea that outside the church there is no salvation, would hardly conceive of brotherhood on that basis. Well, those are significant things though in terms of the ecumenical spirit and the religious cooperation between the two groups.

W.C.: You would consider this quite an historic occasion not only because you represented President Kennedy in meeting with the Pope on this matter but also because you were the first prominent Southern Baptist official or representative to have met with the Pope, is that not correct?

B.H.: Yes, that's correct, and I think that this visit sort of belongs in that context of better Catholic-Protestant relations. I think that this is a good symbol of something significant in that period.

W.C.: Not long after that interview, when you came back to the United States, I believe it would have been in December of '61, you moved over from the State Department to the White House to become a Special Assistant to President Kennedy. What took place then, as you recall, in the nature of the events of that time?

B.H.: Well, you know, I had been doing a lot of public relations work. I believe that Congress was not in session at that time and I was being used for speech-making and there was a lot of grass roots work to do. There were many demands or many requests for me and they were largely nonpolitical. Only occasionally would there be a fund-raising meeting or perhaps some meeting of interest to a congressman that had political overtones. But I was speaking to Chambers of Commerce in support of the world trade program; I was speaking for various legislative proposals of the President and for other interests of the Administration, and I had my hands full in what I called grass roots work. At that time, I had even talked to Phil Graham about being relieved of some of the rather onerous duties of routine Departmental service so my contribution could be more substantial. And he was very understanding. He thought that would be a good thing to do and made some suggestions about it and we talked about it, and I am not sure but that at one stage Phil Graham did talk either to President Kennedy or to McGeorge Bundy or to some other members at the top level on the White House staff about using me in this public relations work and relieving me of so much routine work. I think you would have to serve in the office I held to understand really how your energies are diverted. I was on the phone so much of the time when I was in Washington with matters that didn't require a Sub-Cabinet officer's attention. I was available; congressmen knew me; but it was a diversion and it kept me from making my best contribution. Now I think perhaps this led to my feeling that I had to either make a change in position or cut down on speaking in order to concentrate on work in Washington and do a little readjusting of my routine service so I could reach maximum efficiency. I may have even discussed it with Mr. Rusk -- my memory is not too clear on that point. But if I did not discuss it with Mr. Rusk it was only because I thought I could accomplish the same purpose if

I discussed it with Mr. Graham and get his ideas of what the White House attitude might be. I knew that my personal relations with the President were entirely pleasant and happy. I assumed they were and I had never had any evidence that that wasn't a very safe assumption. At any rate, one day again I happened to be in Chicago -- I was speaking at a National convention and the phone rang and it was Dean Rusk himself. He said, "Brooks, I have just talked with the President," and he said, "How would you like to go over to the White House as Special Assistant to the President?" I said, "Well, that would be just fine, I'd enjoy that." "Well," he said "he would like to have you over there." And that's about all there was to the conversation. So he said, "You'll probably be hearing something about this; the announcement will probably be made soon." Well, I think it was made before I left Chicago. It was in the papers, and at that very time the shifts were made with Mr. Bowles and with Richard Goodwin and --

W.C.: Fred Dutton, of course, coming over to the State Department.

B.H.: Fred Dutton coming to my place. I believe also Mr. Rostow was changed at that time.

W.C.: That's correct.

B.H.: At any rate, there were a number of shifts.

W.C.: Averell Harriman --

B.H.: Averell Harriman was moved. George McGhee was moved into Bowles' place from Counselor, and it was a sort of musical chairs story for the papers.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, the swearing-in ceremony at the White House, which was participated in by both President Kennedy and then Vice President Johnson, was a very warm and moving experience. Would you care to tell about it?

B.H.: Well, that was one of the most gratifying experiences of my public life. Of course, I had my family with me, that is, the family that's in Washington. My son did not come up from Little Rock as he had for the swearing-in at the State Department, but my wife's mother, who was 95 years of age, came to the ceremony, and as you indicated, Mr. Johnson was there, and

my Congressional staff members were all there. It was just a very happy occasion, also attended by a few friends from the State Department, and President Kennedy made a short talk -- welcomed me to the White House family -- said something about my public service -- and handed me my commission. Then I said, in acknowledging it, something that I think perhaps is a bit unconventional. I think those ceremonies are a bit formal, but I've never been adept at formality. I just said, "Well, Mr. President, thank you very much" -- and right off I told him about my wife's mother, Mrs. Prather, and mentioned her age. I said, "Her presence here is a compliment to you, Sir, as well as to me. You see, I am sure you are familiar with the old saying that back of every achievement is a proud wife and a surprised mother-in-law", and he smiled at that. And then I added -- and got the rebound on the second one -- I said, "Well, Mr. President, she is surprised. She thought I'd be the President." So he looked toward her and he got a good laugh out of that and the photographers took our pictures about that moment -- that's one of my prized possessions. He went over and shook hands with her when the ceremony was over. I didn't know that the Vice President was there, and neither did President Kennedy, because I remember after the little ceremony and the talks were over he said, "Why, Lyndon, I didn't know you were here." I am sure he would have called on him to speak if he had known that the Vice President had come in. I was embarrassed about it too, because I had not referred to the Vice President, not knowing that he was in the audience. I think he must have come in just after the ceremonies began.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, one of the first duties you received at the White House was to handle intergovernmental relations -- the federal-state-local relations -- just what did that involve?

B.H.: Well, the principal service in that assignment was to be the White House bridge to what is called the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. This is a group of 26 members composed of the different levels of the Federal Government -- Federal, State and local levels -- members of State legislatures, county officers, mayors, four governors, three members of the House, three members of the Senate, three Cabinet officers appointed by the President, three members of the public-at-large appointed by the President -- altogether 26, and Mr. Frank Bane, Chairman of that Commission. The continuing studies and professional studies made by this group were a great help in promoting good relations between Federal, State and local officials on the one hand and among Federal officials on the other. So all matters pertaining to the works of that

agency reached my desk. Now it was decided pretty early in my work at the White House that Mr. Ted Reardon's work as Secretary of the Cabinet -- I believe he held that title -- at least his work in day-to-day contacts with mayors and governors would not be affected at all by my coming into this spot to work with Mr. Bane and Mr. Colman, the Executive Director of the Advisory Commission. I would work on policy matters and legislative matters, and he would continue to deal with such things as appropriations for airports and matters pertaining to, well, the interests of the various states and mayors where projects were involved -- what Ted called the day-to-day matters. But the President also asked me to attend the Governors' Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He sent me to represent him when it appeared he could not go to Miami to the Mayors' Conference to make a talk. I appeared on the luncheon program there and --

W.C.: He spoke by phone.

B.H.: Yes, he did. He asked to do that when it appeared that that would not be too hard to arrange. He spoke just before I spoke, and his voice came in very clear and it was a rather happy arrangement because he referred to the fact that I would be speaking as his representative.

W.C.: I believe you did help on remarks that the President made, not only on that occasion, but on a number of other occasions, dealing with Federal-State relations or speeches to local organizations like the U. S. Conference of Mayors.

B.H.: Yes, I helped in the preparation. Of course, your help in those matters, too, were very valuable to me because of your special knowledge. Your work with Senator Muskie and your work with the Advisory Commission had given you professional standing in that field. So I leaned on you considerably, you will remember, in the preparation of these documents, these messages, letters, things of that kind. I remember one time I was influential, took the lead -- the initiative -- in getting the President to issue a memorandum to the agencies calling for improved procedures.

W.C.: That was back in October of '62.

B.H.: October of '62, yes. Well, a formal executive statement was issued. It was in the form of a memorandum to various Department heads.

W.C.: You might want to go back on the history of that memorandum. Well, actually, it traces back to not long after you took over this assignment -- February of '62, long before the memorandum was actually issued. But before going into that memorandum, you remember that one of the first things that President Kennedy did do after you arrived at the White House was to write a letter to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, taking cognizance of its important role, particularly in two areas that President Kennedy made reference to: problems of metropolitan growth relating to urban affairs, and also the problem of taxation, and the equitable distribution of funds between the various levels of Government. This letter was written by President Kennedy to Frank Bane of the Advisory Commission, about those two major areas. To return to the Presidential memorandum, what do you recall of the February '62 meeting?

B.H.: Yes, well perhaps you mentioned the date - February 24, 1962. And I think that meeting did a lot of good. It tended to dramatize interest in cooperative Federal-State planning and certainly was all the evidence that was needed - that the President was back of this program and eager to improve relationships. It did spur interest in it, quite a bit.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, that was the same time that Governor Sawyer of Nevada was the Chairman of a Governors' Committee dealing with Federal-State planning.

B.H.: Oh, yes.

W.C.: He asked that this meeting be held so that State governors who served on his Committee, and Government officials, Cabinet officers, and related officials like Mr. Weaver of the HHFA could get together and discuss improved communications between the Governors and Federal officials on the planning for capital improvements in the United States, and you chaired, I believe jointly with Mr. Bane, this meeting in February of '62, where several Cabinet officers also participated.

B.H.: Yes, well I think that was helpful. It seemed to emphasize the rather ragged way we had been dealing with these problems where it was hard for local and state officials, especially governors, to have access to information on the Federal programs, the Federal activities, that impinged on their responsibilities. Well, this stirred up a lot of interest. It was rather the culmination of a lot of expressions of concern and there had been conversations, and an exchange of letters between Mr. Bane and various responsible officials at the State

level. I recall the meeting in which - well, there were at least four Cabinet members: Mr. Hodges, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Udall, Mr. Weaver was not a Cabinet member, but he was at that level -- I believe those were all that were present and in addition, representatives of other departments. It was a good cross-section of the departments having substantial activities in this field. Then, too, you had several governors: Governor Nelson of Wisconsin, Governor Sawyer of Nevada, Governor Powell, who was then Chairman of the Governors' Conference, and then you had representatives, but not governors, from some of the big states -- New York -- I think Governor Rockefeller had a representative here for that meeting. It was the forerunner of several meetings that culminated finally in October '62 memorandum which our office helped to prepare for the President's signature, in which he directed the affected departments here in Washington to supply the Governors with information of projected plans for capital improvement, the expenditures of Federal funds for projects within these respective states. I think that the Governors were cheered by that and I think these discussions did a lot of good. As I previously said, I hope that cooperative relations can still be improved. But this only points up the difficulties that are inherent in the Federal system. We think it's the best system, but it has its difficulties, and that's one of them.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, one of the areas you had a long-time interest in has been the depressed areas problem. Your interest in this, I am sure, even preceded your getting elected to Congress, but you took an important part in the legislation that was pending in the Congress in this area and then found that it was within your jurisdiction at the White House on Federal-State relations. Would you care to tell us how your interest grew up in this area, and what your role in the legislation and the implementation of legislation was?

B.H.: Well, it's hard for me to recall, in fact, it's impossible for me to recall, any time in my forty years of political activity when I was not interested in the problem generally, because I came from Western Arkansas and there in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains are found conditions that resemble at least some of the areas of West Virginia and other parts of Appalachia, where there is real destitution. You had depletion of timber resources; you had the exhaustion of mineral resources; the mines suspended and many of the lumber mills in Western Arkansas shut down because the timber was gone. Of course, later we had an expansion of the national forests, and intensified tree-growing program under private and State auspices that helped a good deal. But still I came from an area that knew farm poverty and I responded enthusiastically to the proposed solutions that some of the students of the

problem advanced. Some of the technical men at the University of Arkansas and in the Government were advancing some of those ideas, so when I was a young lawyer and then later a young employee of the Department of Agriculture I was studying this problem and was quite sure that the Federal Government had some responsibility to alleviate these conditions. Now in line with this, I introduced what I called the Rural Industries Bill to provide aid -- a loan program for aid to small industries, processing plants, agriculture processing, timber processing -- things of that kind -- the small plant that would use the products of the area and give employment, perhaps on a part-time basis in some cases, to the people who could do part-time farming and supplement their farm income. This was, I thought, sound economics and sound social policy for the people of the area. I was very enthusiastic about it. At one time I had the support of some senators. The first senator to help me was Senator Bailey of North Carolina. It went way back before Senator Bailey's death. I remember though it stirred up the opposition of New England because they interpreted it as "move industry south". We were not thinking in terms of taking anything away from anybody. We didn't want to gain at the expense of anyone. We didn't want to solve one problem and at the same time create a problem for someone else.

W.C.: Do you think your presentation of that argument might have convinced the then Congressman Kennedy at the time when you were beginning to speak about these problems, back in the late '40s?

B.H.: I think so. I would like to think so. I remember that when Senator Bailey died the one who took it up was Senator Flanders of Vermont, and Senator Flanders was able to interpret my point of view. It was the creation of more wealth, the development of the resources of an area -- not calling for any kind of change in the industrial pattern generally except for the creation of additional employment, and it was thoroughly sound. I remember, however, for some strange reason, it did not have the support of my friend, Bill Fulbright from Arkansas.

W.C.: He has since --

B.H.: I believe he actually voted for Mr. Kennedy's Area Redevelopment Bill.

W.C.: He voted against it, I believe, under the Eisenhower Administration, but then when President Kennedy took office he did, I think, finally support it.

B.H.: I think he did. At any rate, his views changed. It took a good while for them to change but I think he finally got the point. Well, Senator Paul Douglas became a very vocal advocate on the same thing. Now he and such men as Congressman Flood of Pennsylvania and many others from the coal mine regions thought in terms of industrial activity to pump new life into the depressed areas. On the other hand, we were not thinking of the rural sections of Arkansas and Southern Appalachia as depressed areas, that is, as having problems dealing with unemployment and the deterioration of industry so much as we were thinking of latent resources unutilized.

W.C.: Underemployment.

B.H.: Underemployment, exactly! That's the word that I should be using. You had unemployment and underemployment. You had the need for part-time employment and part-time agricultural pursuits. Then you had the problem of pumping new life into an area that had once had industrial prosperity. So when we sold Paul Douglas and others on the need of recognizing the rural aspects of the problem, then we were on our way to success. I know that Congressman Albert Rains and Congressman Brown of Georgia served notice after the Senate passed the bill one year during the Eisenhower Administration that they would never bring the bill out of the House Banking Committee unless it were generally agreed that the rural aspects of it would be recognized along the very lines that I advocated. I appeared before the Committee in support of my theory and my bill and they were all for it and the Committee went along with it. Well, Mr. Eisenhower vetoed the bill after it was finally passed by the House; and it was not until Mr. Kennedy came in that we had revived hopes of its becoming a law. It did become the law. Senator Douglas told the Senate that the rural features of the bill were authored by me; that he embraced in toto the idea that I had worked out. I had, of course, the technical help. I had help from the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and from other agencies in working out the technical features of the bill which required collaboration by the states and participation by the localities that would benefit from it.

W.C.: Now, you had developed a close relationship with Senator Kennedy's appointee to head up this Area Redevelopment Administration, Bill Batt, and then, as I recall, after you joined the White House staff, you urged Mr. Batt to come over to the White House for a meeting to do some thinking about the area known as Appalachia, to lead some discussion about what might be done to focus specifically on the problems of Appalachia.

B.H.: Exactly. And I think here the point should be made about President Kennedy's avid interest in Appalachia, particularly in West Virginia. I think that his visit during the campaign to West Virginia did something to him. I think it was the confrontation of stark poverty in the midst of an area that had scenic beauty and vast human resources that stirred his imagination, but also drew upon his compassionate nature. He felt that it was ironic that in such surroundings there should be the suffering that there was. I feel that this is not a feigned and artificial picturing of his personal reactions and that that feeling is shared by many people who knew of his very profound desire to do something about it. I think if he had not been overwhelmed by so many duties, and if he had not had such crises at the Cuban situation, things of that kind to deal with, if he had been entirely free to concentrate upon domestic problems, this would have had great priority, and he would have moved in more rapidly than he did. However, it was while he was still alive and interested in the problem that I assembled the men -- Mr. Batt, Head of the ARA, Ted Sorensen and Mike Feldman; you and I were there -- who else was in this meeting?

W.C.: Lee White and --

B.H.: Lee White was one of the key men, and Mr. Harold Williams, who was Mr. Batt's Assistant. That was a luncheon meeting, as I recall it. We had lunch one day, just to bring out the fact that the situation had become urgent; that the law had a great deal of unutilized power in it. We hadn't got down to using it. I was making the point which they accepted that we needed a crash program. We needed a long-term pilot project, that we needed to get into a geographical area and make a demonstration of what could be done by drawing upon all of the available resources of the Federal Government in a coordinated program with full support of the state that was affected by this particular program. And this was when it got under way, I think. Now, of course, with Mr. Johnson's highly dramatic handling of it, we are pulling this out on the surface and we are finding it intensified but it is exactly the program that we were talking about after Mr. Kennedy drove through the Area Redevelopment Bill. And it took some driving too. I think that was a display of his ability to get something done. He was tremendously interested and as I say, if he had had the opportunity to follow through on this; I am sure it was getting under way at the time of his death --

W.C.: The Appalachia Commission had been created.

B.H.: Yes.

W.C.: You recall, there was a meeting at the White House on this matter; I think it may have been April or May of '63.

B.H.: '63, that's correct.

W.C.: That was the culmination of what had started at the luncheon meeting we were talking about.

B.H.: Yes, that's right. And it had his blessing and his strong support.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, in your White House intergovernmental relations duties, what sort of relationships did you have with various mayors' groups?

B.H.: Well, you could almost treat our relationships with mayors as independent of State-Federal relations because while cities, all of them, big and small, are creatures of State governments, the tremendous growth of the cities in the United States has given us a new relationship and, of course, in many areas such as housing, airport construction, and water pollution -- well, we could enumerate many items -- the cities have a direct relation, you might say, with the Federal Government. I remember the mayor of one big city in the United States, it happened to be a big State capital city also, said that he could get more sympathetic attention in Washington for his city's problems than he could at the State Capitol, a few blocks from his office in the City Hall. I thought this was a pertinent comment. I'm not suggesting that it's typical at all, but he was coming to Washington constantly, and he felt that the failure of his State to provide reapportionment of representation in the State legislature, thus giving the rural counties greater weight in the voting than their population would have called for, had worked against his City. Now this is another problem. But you asked about the relationship of cities to the Federal Government and my function here -- well, all of these matters including the philosophical thing that I have just suggested, came to my attention and were the subjects of conversations, sometimes even formal conversations. It reached discussion level of the Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Commission and at any rate the mayors were using the facilities of my office occasionally and I developed some wider acquaintanceships as a result of this. But, of course, as I indicated previously, Mr. Ted Reardon handled the day-to-day contacts with the mayors, but as an indication of the governmental importance of the cities you have, of course, headquarters

in Washington for the American Municipal Association and for the U. S. Conference of Mayors, two highly respected and very powerful groups in terms of influence. You have them with offices in Washington, and they both operate with complete independence of the states.

W.C.: How well were you able to bridge the gap -- not necessarily the gap -- but to bring their point of view to the President and others in the White House so that their interests would be taken into account?

B.H.: Well, there were occasional conferences now and then. I would be indirectly or sometimes directly involved in setting up conferences. The President did ask me to be his representative at a very important national conference -- the annual conference of the mayors -- and I went to Miami for that purpose and was helpful in arranging for him the telephone communications to make his address since he was not scheduled to make a personal appearance there. And his ten-minute talk was beautifully received and was well-delivered, of course. He sat in his study in Washington, and his voice was clear, and the mechanical arrangements were ideal, so I think the audience felt when I got up to speak, just following his address, and he had referred to me as his representative, I had a very friendly and receptive audience to talk to about the relations of the cities to the Federal Government. I am glad that you asked that question, Warren. I don't think it's possible for us to consider this matter of any governmental relations with the cities just as a sort of, well, treated as a subhead in the matter of State-Federal relations as if there were no new relationships of the cities.

W.C.: That's probably why the Commission on this subject is known as the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations rather than Commission on Federal-State Relations.

B.H.: That's right - exactly.

W.C.: To get back to the states for a moment, there was a piece of legislation that was of deep interest to the Kennedy Administration, particularly championed by the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, having to do with the return of legislative jurisdiction over certain Federal enclaves to the states. What was your role in that and how did you come about?

B.H.: Well, now, when you say enclaves, that's a very good term to use, too -- I think very descriptive, you do have in mind some of the large military installations -- perhaps some of the parks -- the national parks -- national forests -- government-owned land.

W.C.: There are many people who live in these areas who are not really full-fledged citizens of the states in which they reside under the present legal arrangements.

B.H.: Yes. You would not have this problem of providing a transfer of legislative jurisdiction to the states in such -- well in a structure like a postoffice or something of that kind -- I mean --

W.C.: Not only postoffices, but also there are certain Federal buildings in areas that are relevant too.

B.H.: Yes, but they're functional and --

W.C.: People don't live there.

B.H.: Yes. And I assume that there is no need for legislation authorizing a sheriff, for example, or a police chief to arrest someone in the postoffice --

W.C.: There are some problems. I don't think you want to go into all this detail, but that generally is relevant to this legislation.

B.H.: Yes. Yes, it is. I can see what you mean. And in any event, I do recall very definitely the problem that the Inter-governmental Advisory Commission --

W.C.: More important in the bigger issues were questions of taxation of these people and schools being built for these people and other various services --

B.H.: In short, making them full-fledged citizens of the state.

W.C.: Right.

B.H.: And avoiding this impasse that deprives the state of revenues that are comparable to the contribution of others, but also denying the people some of the functions. And this legislation was designed to straighten this out; to set up procedures that would make it clear that the Federal Government did not intend to be an overlord or guardian legislatively over the people who happen to be employed in some Federal function. Now I think that's --

W.C.: As I recall, you had conversations with the Assistant Attorney General, Clark, who had jurisdiction over this area and who was helping promote the legislation in the House, over the difficulties with Senator Javits in the Senate and with Congressman Dawson, Chairman of the House Committee that was relevant here. What was that all about?

B.H.: Well, that grew out of the opposition of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This organization feared that in some of the states where the racial minority had not had a fair break, there would be -- well -- a deterioration; that the groups that they were primarily concerned with would suffer some loss of protection in public services, or some loss of the services, because in some of the deep south states, to be specific, they feared that the Federal employees of the Negro race might slip back into segregated patterns without this Federal canopy, you might say --

W.C.: There might be some police brutality and other abuses.

B.H.: Yes. Well Chairman Dawson even used very blunt language in coming to that point. He said that while he had exhibited great respect for his southern friends, he said he would just have to be entirely frank. There were some southern localities where he feared for his people -- that the police treatment of Negroes had not been on the standard that the Federal Government enforcement offices had to maintain. So this presented a real difficulty. I don't recall that I talked with the Attorney General about this except I did have an intimation from him either in a phone call or a letter that he was tremendously interested, and, of course, the Kennedy Administration was very eager to get something done along this line, providing all necessary safeguards to minorities. But while the Senate passed it -- that's my recollection --

W.C.: Not recently, but it has passed the bill once or twice before. I don't know when the last time was -- I believe about 1960 or '61.

B.H.: Well, on the day you and I are having this talk -- let's see -- this is May 20, 1964 -- it's on the

W.C.: It's being reported I know by the Senate Committee but I don't believe it's being passed by the House --

B.H.: It hasn't been passed by the Eighty-Eighth Congress. No. And so, we have not yet been successful in resolving the difficulties.

W.C.: To move to another area of your activities in this field of intergovernmental relations, I believe you had a hand in the arrangements for meetings held with Japanese governors who came to the United States on a return visit after American governors visited Japan.

B.H.: Yes, I did, and I'm glad you recall that because it was necessary to make special arrangements for the President to see the visitors from Japan. The governors were here on the invitation of the United States governors and this had been done in a formal way through the Conference of Governors. But of course, the number of people visiting the United States, the tourists from foreign shores that see the President, is very, very small and infinitesimal. Nonetheless, these were governors or provinces and were due this honor. They felt quite pleased. It was evident from the reception given them by the American governors and it was a great opportunity for the President himself to talk to them and to symbolize by his receiving them that we had a strong interest in government in Japan at that level. And we have a special concern, of course, in seeing that Japan's government, it's public service, achieves dignity and efficiency and effectiveness because we built it from the base -- from the very ground --

W.C.: General MacArthur is probably partly responsible for the creation of these prefectures or provinces, at least the arrangement of them having governors, in an effort to promote democracy in local grass roots government in Japan. I don't believe they had such a tradition before our occupation.

B.H.: Exactly. Consequently it was a good thing for our governors to take this sort of -- well pride -- in this development.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, after the Japanese governors did meet with President Kennedy here in Washington, the following year, 1963, a group of American governors returned the visit to Japan. I believe they were headed by Governor Lawrence, and I believe that President Kennedy wrote letters to each of the American governors who went, and also to Prime Minister Ikeda extending the greetings of the United States.

B.H.: That's right. And our office was in charge of the arrangements and we cooperated with the officials of the Governors' Conference in completing the arrangements for it. This again was a very fine thing for our government to do or for our State governors to do because it tended to link the Japanese officialdom at the province level to the interests of the United States.

W.C.: There were two Presidential Commissions created under President Kennedy that called on you for advice and counsel -- two that I'm familiar with. One was the President's Commission on Campaign Costs that was chaired by Professor Alex Heard, and the Staff Director on that Commission was Herbert Alexander; and the other was the Commission on Registration and Voter Participation, which was chaired by Mr. Scammon, the head of the Census, and the Director of that was Don Herzberg. What role did you play, what type of advice and counsel did you give the people who were responsible for these commissions, Mr. Hays?

B.H.: Yes. Well, now I did not participate in President Kennedy's deliberations, his consideration of the appointment of these commissions. But I did become involved. Well, let's take first the case of the campaign expenditures -- the costs of the elections and the campaigning. My involvement was due perhaps to my long-time personal acquaintanceship with the Chairman, Chancellor Alexander Heard. He is now the Chancellor of Vanderbilt University. He was at that time on the faculty of the University of North Carolina. And Dr. Heard and I had been interested in a lot of things affecting politics and government, so he knew of my interest in campaign costs. He knew that I had felt that one should be giving to his party -- contributing to the party of his choice -- as he gives to the Community Chest or to his church, and that every encouragement should be given to this, not only because the financing of campaigns is a real problem, but because of the value that this contribution would have in terms of voter interest itself. And I gave Dr. Heard and his assistant all the help I could in this matter. When he visited my office in the White House.

W.C.: Do you recall, Mr. Hays, what subject matter was covered in your discussions with Heard and Alexander? Their Commission dealt with the Presidential campaigns. I recall you had been a champion for sometimes of the idea of getting a lot of contributions, of small amounts, from many Americans.

B.H.: Oh yes. Well I --

W.C.: This became a regular Commission recommendation.

B.H.: Yes it did and I'm glad to be reminded of that, because I recall that Dr. Heard in his talk with me at the White House indicated approval of the tax credit and tax deduction ideas to promote small contributions. While it is not so important perhaps for the big giver, it tends to encourage the small

income voter and makes him feel that the Government approves and the Government will share. That's what it amounts to when you give the tax deduction. The Government is sharing in the cost, but doing it as a lure if you think in terms of increasing the amount of the coffers of the party organization. Then you have a lure that is entirely legitimate and it accomplishes this other purpose of involvement too. Well, Chairman Heard was very responsive to my ideas along that line.

W.C.: Now to move to this other Commission, you were going to discuss your association with it.

B.H.: Well, I wanted to mention my friend, Don Herzberg, partly because of the conversations held in my office and over the phone, because I know he called me on occasion. After the conversations and contacts here in this matter of voter registration or voter participation, I became associated with Dr. Herzberg at the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University, and I am now the Arthur Vanderbilt professor serving almost on a full-time basis, but still, as you know, giving part of my time to the work of a Presidential consultant here in the White House. But Dr. Herzberg and I have become close friends. And I remember specifically he had picked up an old idea of mine -- it was not a very serious suggestion, but I had taken some casual interest in the proposal to hold our elections on Sunday. Some of the European countries that have heavy Catholic populations do this, and as far as I know the Church has never frowned on the holding of elections on Sunday --

W.C.: Many European countries hold them on Sunday.

B.H.: Yes, and to me it would symbolize the sacred character of the franchise. I'd be glad to see it regarded as sort of religious duty. I can see why it might be shocking on first blush to some to feel that on the Sabbath, which is traditionally a day of rest, the clerks and judges of elections would have to be busy, but we've had to abandon the old rigid reservation of the Sabbath Day for complete rest anyway. That has not been preserved, even by the religious groups that firmly adhere to it theoretically. So there was not anything shocking in my judgment in the idea of a Sunday election, and I wish it had been well received. But it was not well received, and Mr. Herzberg told me later, after he drew me out on this matter, that it had been abandoned, the idea of getting it accepted because it was too big a task to sell the American people on the point that I have made. Well, these two Presidential Commissions did visit me and sought my advice and I was very happy to give it and I think that two of the best things the President did were in this field of making available the resources

of the universities and drawing into the problem the energies of men who were interested in the problems.

W.C.: To move from this area to another related area, in a sense, talking about the religious duty of voting on Sunday possibly, would you care to reflect some, Mr. Hays, on your relationship with President Kennedy on such issues as Church and State -- separation of Church and State?

B.H.: Yes. Well, I have told you something of the interest he had in my relationship to the churches, growing out of my activity in the Baptist Conventions and in my own congregational life. I think he was aware of the fact that I had been interested too in the relationship of the religious community -- the total religious community -- the synagogues, as well as the churches; to inter-Faith work and on occasion he enjoyed talking with me about it. Some of my cherished memories of conversations with the President had to do with this subject, and it is a delicate subject. I have the basis for saying to church meetings that no President ever tried harder to be President of all the people, people of all faiths, than President Kennedy, and no one tried more faithfully, and he did succeed in the effort, to interpret the Constitution with complete fidelity on this matter of separation of Church and State. And this leadership had to have a sort of extra-governmental or extra-political quality, and here we get into an area of life that presents problems not of interest particularly to the political scientist but of interest to the citizen who is sensitive to structural relationships, Church and State, and interested too in this tremendous power of moral leadership. Every President, perhaps, has given some indication of his awareness of these expectations of the people.

The treatises that you read on Presidential powers understandably leave this out of consideration because the Constitution makes no provision for this, does not anticipate any kind of leadership of this type. Incidentally one of the contrasts between the Soviet system and our own that is of interest to me as a student of Church-State relations is that while the Government of Russia disavows religion, and you might say has no place for religion, it has a Bureau on Religious Affairs. The United States, having given considerable consideration to the place that moral and spiritual forces have in political life, has no such bureau, and both the people and the politicians would be shocked, I presume, if it were proposed. But I remember saying to Mr. Kennedy one day, in a rather serious discussion of things, that I felt that I should tell him that many letters I was receiving made reference to the fact that our people of the Baptist churches were praying for him constantly. I know that that was sincere on their part. I know that Baptists are somewhat distinguished by their belief in prayer, in the

efficacy of prayer, not unique in that regard, but they're noted for belief in prayer. And they had a good deal to say in these letters, and I quoted from one of them and it moved him -- you could tell he was deeply moved. I make reference to that here because undoubtedly he was very sensitive to this matter of religion. He abhorred any parading of piety. He gave every indication that he felt this was a private matter. It did impinge, of course, upon his leadership in the field of politics and government, but such matters as church attendance and public prayer, any kind of overt evidence of religious faith, was something that he shied away from. He turned down invitations to meetings that I'm confident would have been of interest to him, perhaps, he would have liked to go, but there was more involved than the historic and traditional views and policies of his own Church with reference to non-Catholic services. And I have had sufficient evidence of his feelings about this -- a very sensitive feeling -- a desire never to exploit religion, but his utterances all sustain the assurances that we have that he was in the finest sense of the term a devout man. I like to think that this passage in his Inaugural Address reveals something that sounds Lincolnesque. He had the same attitude toward faith that Lincoln had. I think it will be well at this point to insert that because I quoted it in so many talks: "With a good conscience our only sure reward and with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His help and His blessing and believing that God's work on earth is truly our own." That closes the quotation from an exalted passage in his Inaugural Address. So I enjoyed the rare occasions when we talked about such matters.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, what part did you play in any remarks or speeches that President Kennedy might have made in this general subject area?

B.H.: On more than occasion, but certainly not very often -- it was a very rare occasion -- I was asked by Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln or by one of the other staff members for ideas, never in a formal way. I remember the most prominent case had to do with the Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast, and one evening about seven o'clock, the day before the Prayer Breakfast, in fact, Mrs. Lincoln called and said, "Mr. Hays, are you preparing some suggestions -- well I mean, are you preparing the President's talk?" Well, of course, when you use that language we all know that that doesn't mean that that's the talk the President will be giving in final form. I've never seen a better example, and I've been on the fringes of some of these matters of the President's method of handling talks,

than the one he gave in this instance because I did hurry down to the office when it finally developed that they were expecting me to write out the content -- to write enough material that he would have what I call the "lumber" for his speech.

At eleven o'clock that night, having checked several Bible passages, I put my suggestions on Theodore Sorensen's desk. And the speech obviously was used by the President as an outline for his own remarks. Some of the sentences were almost bodily lifted out of my outline and one naturally gets a thrill out of participating in a Presidential speech. But here was proof to me that his own fine hand and personality got into his speeches; because there were phrases that represented his own style and own thinking -- and then most important of all was the content, the statements, the changes -- that meant he had given thought to what he wanted to say about prayer and about faith. I don't think the President much wanted to go to that breakfast. I think that his reluctance was due to the very thing I said a few moments ago about prayer being a personal matter, but it was expected of him and he found it possible to do it with dignity and with restraint, and what he said was appropriate, and he listened with reverence and with interest and attention to the things that were said, and to the extent that the prayer breakfast became a symbol of dedication to religious forces, it was good and it was a becoming thing and an appropriate thing for him to do.

W.C.: To go on from here Mr. Hays, I recall that you went on a Presidential Mission to Africa. I don't recall when the date of that was, do you?

B.H.: Yes. I left, I think, about March 29 and was gone --

W.C.: Nineteen Sixty -- ?

B.H.: 1963. At any rate, it was right after I had finished an hour's program with Jack Parr and we had to hurry from the studio to Idlewild Airport in order to catch our plane, and we returned about three weeks later. We spent a week in each of the three Western African countries: Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and we had some stops on the way. We spent an hour at Dakar in Senegal and then the American Ambassador to Dahomey came over to Lagos to meet us there -- for the dinner that Ambassador Palmer gave for us. So I had a chance to spend a week in each of the three countries, and in addition,

had these visits with our Ambassadors to Senegal and Dahomey. This originated with a conversation between Colgate Darden, former Governor of Virginia, and myself, since he was eager for me to receive the impressions that a Virginia friend of his, Bishop Harris, had conveyed to him. Bishop Harris is a Negro minister and serves the Episcopal Church in Liberia, or did serve the Church at that time. I think he has since retired. He's a distinguished Virginian, a good friend of Governor Darden's, and he had been in Liberia a long time. The Episcopal Diocese in Liberia is, I believe, the only Diocese maintained by the American Church; the other Episcopalians are under the Anglican Church of England. But Bishop Harris is a very enlightened, religious leader and well thought of in Liberia. He came in to the office to see me before I went to Africa, and urged me to do this, primarily for the purpose of getting first-hand information regarding the educational needs of Liberia, that is, the needs particularly in the field of higher education. There were some things to be done by the private institutions. The college that was under his administration is the Episcopal College north of Monrovia maintained by the Church and -- Coddington College is its name -- and also he wanted to make sure that the President had some information regarding the relationship of private instruction to State education as it unfolds in Liberia, with, of course, substantial help from the United States. The resources of Liberia are very limited and while they are putting a great deal of emphasis upon education, Bishop Harris was quite right in thinking that the guidance, as well as the substantial monetary assistance, that America could provide would be essential to any success of the educational program in Liberia. So with that in mind, I talked with the President about it, and he quickly got the point. He said, "Oh, I think that would be good for you to spend a little time over there." He said, "I'd like for you to talk to President Tubman. There would be some things maybe that would come out in a personal exchange between you that don't get into the documents, and anyway I'd just like for you to symbolize our concern for the country's progress." So we talked about the three countries, the English-speaking countries, Sierra Leone and Nigeria and Liberia. It would be easy, you see, to cover those three countries on the one trip, and I was interested in the language situation because speaking only the English language, I didn't want to get into the other countries without some further preparation. Well, the Department of State was very helpful. A young attache helped -- a young assistant to Lucius Battle, then Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs -- this young man's name was William Jones. I think he is from Los Angeles. He came in with the Kennedy Administration -- a young Negro -- very cooperative and he helped lay the plans for this trip. The President told me before I left, also in particular to convey his warmest regards to Prime Minister Belewa of Nigeria.

I don't remember that he mentioned anyone but those two.

He may not have known the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone. I don't recall that Prime Minister Margai had been in this country but the President's chief interest was obviously Liberia because of our special responsibilities in that country. Well, this gives you some idea of the background of my trip.

My wife went with me and we had a marvelous time. The people were apparently glad to see us everywhere we went. The Ambassador to Sierra Leone was my former colleague in the House, and former colleague on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Carnahan, former Congressman from Missouri; he and Mrs. Carnahan were our hosts. We stayed in the Embassy Residence in Freetown and got over the country a great deal. He had established himself to a remarkable degree in the affections of the people of Sierra Leone. He attended the church presided over by a native Sierra Leonean, and it was one of the United Brethren Churches although Mr. Carnahan himself is a Baptist. But the missionaries of the Evangelical United Brethren Church of the United States have been very active for many years in Sierra Leone and it has a large constituency. I believe the Prime Minister was a product of one of the United Brethren Mission Schools. We were guests also of the Governor General, with the very intriguing name of Henry Lightfoot Boston, and had luncheon at the Government House. So we had all the courtesies shown us that --

W.C.: What about such visits as Peace Corps installations, things like that?

B.H.: Well that deserves special mention because, in all three countries, we found a great deal of support among the African people of this idea. I remember the first time that -- well the first pause we had in our journey -- we stopped first at Freetown, but before we reached the capital of Sierra Leone we took a little side trip from the airport to the Chiefdom of -- well I'm afraid to pronounce it -- it's near Freetown, and there the Chief took a good deal of interest in showing us a water project, a very inexpensive, but important little sanitation project in one of the villages in his Chiefdom, and it had been installed by Peace Corpsmen. So I would say that the 200 or more Peace Corps representatives in Sierra Leone are presenting a very wonderful image of American life, and they convey to the people in that part of Africa a marvelous impression of our country's interest in them. They're working in the field

of health and education and sanitation. We found, for example, in Mattru, some 100-or-more miles from the Capital, in the interior of Sierra Leone, retired school teachers, teaching the children in that section of the country. We found at Kennelma workers from the Peace Corps, again retirees. Not all of the members of the Peace Corps that we found in Africa were young people, though the work would generally require the ruggedness of youth -- but many retired teachers were among this fine set of people.

W.C.: Do you have any particularly special reflections on Nigeria or any of the installations you visited there that you would care to comment on?

B.H.: Yes, we found always and everywhere an appreciation of President Kennedy. I remember, for example, the first appearance we made -- before I dismiss Sierra Leone I think I should interject this observation because it touches the matter of sentiment, and of ties to the United States. The interpreter for the Chief, who was speaking in the language of his Tribe, whenever he would say "Kennedy" instead of just saying "Kennedy", I could tell there was a lot of power and force. He wouldn't say "Kennedy" (quietly); he'd say "Kennedy" (like a roar) just as if he were reading a yell in a cheering section in a Democratic Convention. But it was heartwarming to find that the President's name was revered. This was, of course, months before his death, and this was true, I think, in all three of the countries. Now in Nigeria we found there members of the Peace Corps teaching in such schools as the University at Ife and, I believe, in Idaban; also we found, if I might make an observation regarding church instruction -- because mission schools have a vital significance for Nigeria -- we found over 500 schools, elementary and primary schools, operated by my own denomination, Southern Baptist. The Nigerian Baptists, who have their own convention and operate many of their own activities and finance their own publications, were eager to have Peace Corpsmen teach in their schools and were ready to take advantage of this service, although Baptists traditionally have been opposed to that sort of service by State employees. In other words, our traditional views of separation of State and Church did present some, what you might call doctrinal barriers, but these were being overcome, I think. The point is that the Nigerians, even Baptist Nigerians, were eager to take full advantage of what the Peace Corps is doing. Universally, it is respected. And in Nigeria, as in Liberia, and in Sierra Leone,

we found this avid interest in education. I would say that the clearest impression I had of the three weeks' travel in Africa is this passion for education, and education at all levels, from the elementary grades right on through the graduate studies, because of course an educational system has to be maintained with appreciation of its pyramidal character. You can't have the apex with good graduate instruction without a solid base. That isn't the best figure of speech, I guess, because the educational idea involves a flow, a stream, it's a moving and not a static thing, but they're trying to build this structure with appreciation of its comprehensive character. And they're pressing out into the hinterland with this appeal for support of rural education, and of course our Point Four people and our Peace Corpsmen and our diplomatic staffs generally are giving them every encouragement and substantial financial assistance.

W.C.: Would you have any generalizations, Mr. Hays, to offer about what the relationship was you found between the countries you were in and the Kennedy Administration?

B.H.: You mean in addition to what I have said about the appreciation --

W.C.: Politically. I mean in terms of the struggle in Africa against Communism and --

B.H.: Yes. Well, I am not sure how far I should go in appraising the Communist drive in Africa. I felt optimistic at the end of my trip because it seemed to me from the talks I had with men of perception and understanding that the Communist thrust is failing miserably. I don't see how they can find any basis for entertaining the hope that they can lure the African people into their form of colonialism because there were the usual references to the danger of replacement of one form of colonialism by another, and I think that the Africans understand that fully. Now the African, of course, had heard the interpretation of the American policy of helping the nations of the continent maintain their independence and they know that we are not seeking to have satellite nations. We don't want satellites and we're not making demands on them in terms of allegiance to us in our national interest in return for the things we do for them. This, I think, has been pretty well interpreted; pretty well conveyed, convincingly so, and while we have encountered political obstructions in some of these areas where very unfavorable political situations have

developed, I would say in the three countries that I visited they understand and appreciate our motives. These were key countries too, particularly Nigeria because of its great resources and its history, and it was gratifying to learn that we have good solid support for the idea of independence and we also have friendship in the broad sense of the word for our Nation and its goals in the world. Now, speaking of Nigeria, I recall that President Kennedy said, the first thing almost when I went into his office to give him a brief oral report -- he said, "Did you see Belewa?" And he nodded toward his picture and said, "He's a great man and I'm very impressed." And I was able to tell him that I had seen Prime Minister Belewa. I think I would like to record my impressions of the Prime Minister.

He asked some questions about the descendants of African slaves in our country, the kind of progress they're making. The conversation was so informal that I -- well, for example, I told him that one thing that I took pride in for the Americans of African descent was the retention of their sense of humor. I think they have been distinguished somewhat by that. I told him of the conversation between one of the Negro leaders in a little town in the South with the school board composed of white members, who found they had money enough to build one building but only one school building. So they called in this Negro leader and told him the situation. They said, "We'd like to build this school now for the white community and would the Negroes object?" And they got this answer, "Why, no indeed. I can think of nothing that would help our people more than having educated white people." The Prime Minister got the significance of that and we talked a little about the delicate problem of race relations. He was quite interested in some of the things I told him about the Kennedy Administration's hope for progress in this field.

I also told him, using an image that you've heard me use, of the Negro marching through a tunnel. It's been a long tunnel, sometimes rather dark, but always there has been the light ahead. At least there's the light ahead now, and he isn't going to panic if we keep that light unobstructed because he has every reason to feel that progress is being -- well, perhaps that's stating it too strongly -- he does have evidence that we want more rapid progress for him, and the main thing is to keep any barriers, any obstructions, from getting in the way of this march toward the light, and toward full equality. I did a little better job of using that image in my talk with Prime Minister Belewa than I am doing now with you. But you can see the value of the image of that tunnel and the light ahead.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, do you have any other comments about your African visit, about the personalities involved, or the installations before we move on to some other subject?

B.H.: Yes, I think I ought to say something about President Tubman, and Vice President Talbot --

W.C.: That's of Nigeria?

B.H.: Liberia. Yes, well let's move back to Liberia because of course these two top men in the Liberian Government, in a very friendly way, talked about the loss of time -- the fact that the United States had let a lot of time go by -- before we got interested in the Republic that in a way was our child, our creature. The freed slaves who established the colony -- it wasn't a colony, it was established as an independent community, of course -- but these free men had looked for more substantial aid than they received, but of course it came in a period of difficulty in the United States -- the Civil War and the long period of Reconstruction, coupled with the fact that in the Nineteenth Century means of communication were very primitive. All of this caused a long delay in developing the nation. It has rich resources; it has iron and rubber; it has a growing fishing industry; it has a lot of new industries and a great potential; and an inspiring people. They are wanting a place in world society now. They want to share in the good things of life and I anticipated that there will be great progress, that it will be heightened. Of course, in 1927, we completed the improvements in the harbor of Monrovia which makes it possible now for the big vessels to move right into the city port, and I think this has been a boon that has vast consequences for them. Altogether, this was a very profitable three weeks from my standpoint, that is, I think that I was able just by my presence among the people who belong to these three struggling young countries to symbolize the concern that President Kennedy had and the sympathy that he entertained for the people of Africa. I believe, as I reflect upon the trip, that he asked me to undertake -- that it's greatest value was in the lift in morale that I probably gave some of the leaders. At any rate there was a great interest in my presence there; there was wonderful publicity, and I managed by a proper exploiting of the Little Rock experience to let them know that great progress was being made in the field of civil rights and that we recognize the interest that the people of Africa have in smoothing out the difficulties between white and Negro populations in the United States. All of

was tied to the basic proposition that America is committed to equality and democracy and that we are not going to rest; those of us who are sensitive to these aspirations will not rest until this ideal is achieved.

And when I came back to Washington I had a few minutes with the President -- not long, but long enough to give him a fleeting picture of the educational situation. This followed incidentally a conference with Luke Battle's people and Mennen Williams. I talked to Assistant Secretary Williams about it, and the two Bureaus in the State Department -- the Cultural Affairs Bureau under Mr. Battle and the African Affairs Bureau under Mr. Williams -- took a good deal of interest in some of the specific things I had to say about plans being laid in Liberia, for example, to perfect their system of higher education and penetrate the hinterland with elementary and secondary schools.

In Nigeria, of course, there's a different situation, and some of the things I was able to bring back had significance for the educational leaders in the Baptist Denomination. Our Foreign Mission Board has headquarters down at Richmond, Virginia, and they were interested in some of the things I had to say, recommending, for example, that more effective use be made of the Peace Corps in the Baptist schools. Over half of all our mission schools in the world -- our foreign mission schools -- are in Nigeria, and we've had an impressive history there. So I did feel that in my capacity as a former President of the Southern Baptist Convention I should pass on some comments to them. Nigeria has a great stake in mission schools, not only ours as Baptists, but in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and other schools that are maintained in that country. Well, the President appreciated it, I think, and I am quite sure from his comments about Belewa, in particular, and about Tubman also, that he had a personal acquaintanceship with them which stimulated his interest in what I had to say.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, you, of course, have a Nation-wide reputation for being humorous. In what way was your interest in humor manifested with President Kennedy?

B.H.: Well, until I became a member of his official family, through the appointment to the Office of Assistant Secretary of State, I was not particularly informed, not well-informed as to the kind of penetrating humor that President Kennedy exhibited. But in the time that we were together, more so of course after I went to the White House, I found that his humor, like humor of all truly great men, had depth -- it had gentleness. I don't know that I ever heard of President Kennedy using humor that

carried a barb. I think you might say that it was Lincolnian. He had not lived as close to the soil as Lincoln. He was not a frontiersman, of course, except in the sense of the New Frontier bringing the challenge to our imagination. But even in this area of earthiness there was evidence that he knew life well. Perhaps his Naval career, his service in the War, and some of the very challenging experiences of leadership in the Navy and in the Naval engagements of the Pacific, were such that he could later build illustrations on them and work those gentle aspects of humor into them. I had some evidence of that. But as I have indicated, our congressional experience didn't bring us into an intimate friendship at all, and really it was not until my defeat in 1958 that, I think, Mr. Kennedy was drawn to me, or had more than a pleasant interest in my life, in my affairs.

I remember one day, shortly after I was given this assignment in the White House and had my East Wing Office, I was walking from the White House Mess back to my office with Billy Graham. He had been my guest at lunch, and Pierre Salinger suddenly opened the door -- they had seen us walking by -- and he said, "Brooks, the President wants to say hello to Dr. Graham." So we went into his office and I remember, among other things, the President turned to me and said, "You know, Brooks, I'm going down to South America a month ahead of Dr. Graham -- I'll be his John the Baptist" -- this was picked up later, but only as I recall it, after Dr. Graham referred to it in a radio talk or perhaps in a meeting. At any rate, that little comment was circulated.

In this connection I recall, too, that one of my close friends, C. E. Bryant, who edits the publication of the Baptist World Alliance, submitted a little statement to the President asking him -- perhaps his conversations were with Mr. Salinger -- asking him if my stories had been of interest to the President and to give him comment on them, and to designate his favorites -- and he submitted a list of stories he knew the President, or assumed the President had heard me tell -- or had read -- at any rate he had a way of determining whether or not the President would mind being quoted in his preference of my stories. I think it might be well to record that two stories that President Kennedy indicated in his message back to Mr. Bryant were his favorites. And as I recall he gave one his first preference and the other the second preference.

Now there may be some significance to the fact that he indicated he got his best chuckle of the one about the old man down in Arkansas who was asked who he was going to vote for for governor. And this was his reply, "Well, I ain't decided yet,

but I'll tell you this -- whichever side I come up on I'm gonna be mighty bitter." And I say that that indicates he was aware of the fact that bitterness can be engendered in a campaign.

The other story was one that I got from Earl Hodges, many, many years ago. Earl Hodges was Secretary of State in Arkansas when I was a very young man, and I traveled with him later in Lions' Club work. He used to enjoy telling the story of a friend of his who came up to him and said, "Earl, I've been thinking about running for treasurer against Uncle Joe Hawkins. What do you think about it? Which one of do you think has the best chance?" And Earl said, "Well, Ernest, that depends on which one of you gets out and sees the most people." And Ernest said, "Yes, that's what I figured too." Then Earl added, "If you see the most, Uncle Joe will win; if Uncle Joe sees the most you'll win."

W.C.: Mr. Hays, what about this record of Washington Humor that both you and President Kennedy appeared on?

B.H.: Well, that was a great honor to be on the record with President Kennedy. I thought he was at his best in that record, which was put out by the Cameo people, and Tate Trussell of Nations Business promoted it. I thought it was a very interesting little hobby that he pursued, even though it might not have had great returns for him. It became something more than a hobby. It was a commercial venture at last when he got permission to use the humor of Mr. Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, Barry Goldwater, Sargent Shriver, Mortimer Caplan, Congressman Matthews, Congressman Halleck, Senator Keating, and well perhaps I have overlooked some. But at any rate, well -- Thruston Morton had a good story -- at any rate, it was quite an array of public men who permitted recordings to be used. I don't think any of these, well, that might be subject to one or two exceptions, were studio performances; they were actual recordings. I know, in my case it was from a tape recording, and I had almost 12 minutes reproduced from a speech I made to the Pennsylvania State Political Science Association to about 100-or so teachers in the colleges of Pennsylvania -- teachers of government and political science -- were in Harrisburg for their annual meeting. So Mr. Trussell was given permission by me to lift any part of that out, and he had, I think close to 12 minutes. Mr. Goldwater and I, strange enough, had the greatest portions -- I mean the time allotted the two of us was more than to the

others, but the 5 minutes approximately that Mr. Kennedy had, I thought, was a terrific piece of humor. It was a reproduction of a speech he made to one of the newspaper men's meetings; I don't remember which one. But at any rate he was in excellent form. The laughter was robust and spontaneous and it bore out what I said a moment ago about his quality of humor -- it was good.

W.C.: He kidded them, you remember, about the price of steel. I think it was right after the crack-down on the price of steel and he connected that with the price of the tickets for that affair.

B.H.: Oh yes, he distilled all the humor there was in that situation. That record didn't sell in what you call best-seller volume, but there are perhaps twenty to thirty thousand of them floating around, and I have an idea that they'll be prized in future years as a period piece -- as a good record of the humor of the first years of the Kennedy-Johnson Administration.

Well, I think that Mr. Kennedy's attitude toward humor, his philosophy, and my own -- it's perhaps not immodest for me to say that we were congenial in this respect -- that our humor was pretty much the same type. We exploited situations. I never did feel that his humor had anything but spontaneity, that came out of his careful and quick and penetrating observation of events. His ability to seize on something that had a sparkle in it and then perhaps following Louis Brownlow's injunction -- you remember -- you knew and admired him as I did, and as all civil servants in our profession of public administration did -- a wonderful old man -- he used to put it like this: "Never dilute the oil of anecdote by the vinegar of fact." And while Mr. Kennedy apparently was not a story-teller, that is, he probably would never have aspired to do what I have done all of my life, use the folklore of my area and not limit my story-telling to that type of story, because of course I do try to tell stories -- jokes -- and I am not sure to what extent he would have excelled in the field of story-telling. I know if he had undertaken to tell a story he would have told it well.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, one of the primary responsibilities that President Kennedy gave you when you served as his Special Assistant was as a sort of spokesman for his Administration to the Nation. In accepting many public engagements and traveling the length and breadth of America, and speaking on all the major issues confronting the country, you were providing the people with the philosophy and point of view of the Kennedy Administration. Would you care to tell something about the subject matters and the reactions you received from your speeches?

B.H.: Yes. Well undoubtedly the President knew of the grassroots work that I was doing with the speeches that I enjoyed making, and of course I had an opportunity to make a lot of speeches. I had to curtail the speech-making side of my activities when I was Assistant Secretary of State. But it was rather painful to me at times to be turning down invitations to important meetings that were at some distance. It wasn't just the time required in making the speech but in going halfway across the country or even to the West Coast. I think that might have entered into the considerations, when they wanted to move me to the White House so I could do some grassroots work. I recall that I had an intimation that the President thought I had been rather effective in this field. It was apparent from some things that were told to me. Well, I think he later told me after I had transferred that the reports he had from my talks were such that he simply wanted me to devote as much time as I could logically without neglecting the work at the White House. But that really became one of my major assignments. Of course the President was happy for me to make church talks. Those talks were never weighted down with political considerations or content. They were the kind of talks that I had made for many, many years, as a layman and as one interested particularly in young people and their relationship to the church, but the President felt that this was a logical thing for me to do and a public service that I could well attempt.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, did you not talk at some length about Church-State relations -- the whole issue?

B.H.: Now this, of course, had an immediate bearing on his problem because considering the fact that he was the first Catholic to be elected President and that he had been under fire -- desperate attacks at times in the campaign -- he was eager for me to convey my philosophy. He knew what that philosophy was and he knew that I had a constituency since I had been active in the Baptist Conventions, and I think that while this was not discussed in an overt way, I am sure that he was very happy to have me pursue this matter -- the presenting of a valid and authentic image of John F. Kennedy, the Statesman. And as I said from many a platform, particularly since his assassination, no President ever tried harder to be President of all the people, and I'm sure that no President ever more faithfully interpreted our Constitutional provisions with reference to Church-State relations. These were things that I was happy to speak of in the various appearances that I made. Then there were the personal intimate things.

I remember the President's reaction when I spoke of the prayers the Baptist people were offering for him, and I had so many letters on that that indicated -- Baptists are noted for their belief in intercessory prayers as we phrase it and they are a praying people -- they believe in prayer and I am sure that while all of the churches include a place in their prayers -- their liturgical prayers -- for the Head of the Nation and the Leaders in the Congress, there was a warmth in some of these letters I received that I wanted to share with him, and did. So I had a good deal to say about State-Church relations. I also spoke on world trade to some of the business groups. This became a matter of tremendous concern, as you know, to the President.

W.C.: Your first year on the White House staff -- that was the major issue.

B.H.: That was the major issue. Now I can't recall at the moment just how many talks I made or before what associations. But --

W.C.: Dozens?

B.H.: Oh, yes! There were. And I was working it in peripherally to a lot of talks -- well even in political speeches I would give major attention to this as one of the interests of the Democratic Administration but always doing it on, I think, a bipartisan basis. I left room for the sharing of credit to the extent that the Republican leadership were entering into the support of it. But one appearance I remember was -- and this was somewhat typical for a short period in my appearance -- the Durham, North Carolina Annual Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and I did make a good many trade association and Chamber of Commerce talks. And in these talks, world trade and tax reduction particularly entered largely into my presentation. I had some things to say about foreign aid. This has to be vigorously defended, of course, and in some parts of the South particularly. We were losing ground; we had to fight to hold the international sentiment, the feeling of interest in world relations, international relations, for which the South had been somewhat distinguished, largely, I presume, by reason of its cotton, the need for outlets for its production of cotton in world markets. This had given the South a traditional world-mindedness, but we tended to lose it, and I was able to speak with some familiarity with that problem. And then there was the Food for Peace Program. Here you got into the realm of moral and religious values because church people were being sensitized to the plight of so many millions, hundreds of millions of people in the world, undernourished -- the church people were always interested in

the Food for Peace Program. In this connection I also discussed the Peace Corps.

I remember perhaps one of the first speeches I made for the Peace Corps when it was first advanced. I just happened to be speaking at Wake Forest in North Carolina at the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and I recall using this expression somewhat spontaneously that the Peace Corps is the Governmental equivalent of our Foreign Mission enterprise. And I was quite thrilled to find at Ibadan in Nigeria on this trip to Africa a young Peace Corpsman, a teacher at the University of Ife, near Ibadan, and I was quite pleased when he told me just this, "Mr. Hays, I am in the Peace Corps because of a speech you made in North Carolina when you spoke of the challenge to one who wants to make a contribution to world progress and to people in other parts of the world -- and I have been entirely satisfied with my Peace Corps experience." Well, I went to Canada maybe a couple of times. Congressman Frank Coffin of Maine, who was appointed pretty early in the Kennedy Administration, as Assistant -- let me see, I've forgotten.

W.C.: First, of course, he was head of the Development Loan Fund and then he was Deputy Administrator of AID.

B.H.: Under Fowler Hamilton. And Frank Coffin and I had undertaken to study the relations of the Canadian people -- the Canadian Government -- to our own. And we made several trips to Canada -- got acquainted with Mr. Diefenbaker and Paul Martin. Well I had known Paul Martin when he was in the loyal opposition, and we got acquainted with many of the Parliamentary leaders and many of the business leaders. We had conferences with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and others in an effort to study specifically the sources of tension that had reached large proportions at that time. And, of course, Mr. Diefenbaker made it something of an issue in his political course, but Mr. Coffin and I produced what came to be known as the Hays-Coffin Report. Mr. Diefenbaker was impressed by it. We had a good deal of technical help from Peck Hill, one of the staff members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, and this was during my last term in the House. But I took time out to develop it and the Hays-Coffin Report was very well received in Canada and did some good. We made some suggestions that resulted finally in the establishment of some new mechanisms for settling controversies, or at least discussions were encouraged between State Department representatives and the Canadian Government representatives.

W.C.: Through Dr. Ray Miller of the Harvard Business School and also through a friend of Miller's, I guess, who became a friend of yours in Canada, whose name --

B.H.: Mr. McClellan.

W.C.: During the Kennedy years, as I recall, you were invited up several times for large forums.

B.H.: Oh, yes!

W.C.: To make addresses -- it became sort of an annual report to the Canadians on the status of American-Canadian relations.

B.H.: Yes, and we got good publicity. The newspaper people there were quite interested in my point of view because of this history that I've just described.

W.C.: I recall the State Department would give you some background papers and these served as a basis for this sort of status report on the relationships between the two countries.

B.H.: Yes. That's correct. Now, I don't know how much time Mr. Kennedy had to study my particular relationship. He doubtless knew of these speeches I made. Well I am sure he saw copies of letters, some of which probably hit his desk, but I don't recall that he had anything to say to me personally. I saw a copy of a letter that Senator Fulbright wrote to him at one time, proposing that I be appointed Ambassador to Canada, but I certainly didn't pursue that. It was just interesting to me that that letter went from Mr. Fulbright with his personal suggestion.

Now to turn to the field of Federal-State relations; of course, I had some expertise, at least I had access to the work of a very wonderful staff at Frank Bane's organization -- The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations -- and here I would like to mention you, Mr. Warren Cikins, because you had a special history in that field. Of course, I think your interests ranged as wide as those of any person I have ever known, or been identified with in Government. Everything I'm listing here in this little summary of subjects for speeches, you had at one time an interest in -- a personal interest -- sometimes an avid interest, but I think you would not object to my mentioning Federal-State relations as one of your principal interests. And I did make many talks on that subject because -- of course we've had so much resistance to the expansion of the Federal Government. I am not defending every projection of Federal activity. Undoubtedly it's hard to tell as the country develops just where an extension of Federal

authority would be justified but I think on the whole I can defend what has been called "big government" so often with a contemptuous tone because government had to become big as the Nation became big and there had to be an acknowledgment in terms of Federal policy of this interdependence of the state that at one time could have self-sufficiency and could pursue their own independent ways without too much concern over the life of their sister states. But those days are gone forever. As a matter of fact, the experience under the Articles of Confederation demonstrated pretty early that the Nation was developing an interdependence that gave enough people a sense of national community to produce the Constitution of the United States and the commerce clause and other clauses which gave us enough flexibility in government. This logical growth in Federal authority has brought the Nation so many benefits that I have been deeply concerned about any effort to restrict the powers of Federal Government of the emotional type that at one time we have seen evidence of -- the effort to curtail the powers of the Supreme Court of the United States through the establishment of the --

W.C.: Court of the Union.

B.H.: Court of the Union, yes. Something that had no basis, of course, in terms of sound jurisprudence, having a court composed of the chief Justices of the fifty states. Their allegiance is to the states, not to the Nation, and to permit loose arrangements of that kind to result in the veto or abrogation of a judicial judgment, this simply symbolizes what I refer to as a sort of pathological attitude toward the Federal Government. Fortunately, we came -- we are coming through this period of resentment in pretty good form.

I think that these amendments that were advanced at one time in a meeting of the Council of State Governments and which were resisted by some of the wiser leaders in that organization, I think the fact that these amendments died aborning indicates that the people of the United States, while they are listening, of course, to the so-called States Righters the more extreme advocates of reducing Federal authority, the people of the United States are not going to permit anything to happen to the states. This is, as Chief Justice Chase phrased it: "This is an indestructible union of indestructible states", and while I seem to be speaking emotionally here about Federal authority, I have just as strong a feeling that what we need is strong and efficient State Government along with the strong and efficient central Government. Well, enough on Federal-State relations, and I've spoken too --

W.C.: To make one more point on that, you, of course, were able to present President Kennedy's views on the issues before many of the conventions of organizations such as the Council of State Governments, the U. S. Conference of Mayors, the American Municipal Association and the National Association of Counties, and various organizations you had dealings with.

B.H.: I'm awfully glad you brought that up because the best forums I had were with officials of the other levels of government -- State and local groups, the mayors and state legislators, and the governors -- different groups that had a deep concern about happy relations. Along with any criticisms that they might offer of mistakes by the Federal Government, they had, of course, a feeling that the two must get along together, local authority on the one hand and Federal authority on the other. So I'm glad you brought that out and I'm sure that the mayors and governors and county officers were all aware of the fact that as I interpret Federal policy and Federal points of view, it was in line with this deep concern that we would help these officials rather than trying to promote the Federal Government at the expense of State and local authority.

Well, let's turn to congressional relations, while we're talking about my speeches. Often, a congressman or a senator would call and ask me to make a speech in his district or in his state. And this was sometimes through Mr. Larry O'Brien's office, sometimes just a direct call, but I always advised the Congressional Relations Office, either Mike Manatos on the Senate side or Henry Wilson on the House side, of these invitations that came directly to me. I was able in many instances to comply with these requests. That's a part of good congressional relations.

I made some speeches for MEDICARE. I remember making a trip to Knoxville, Tennessee. I was --

W.C.: That was during that big rally when speeches were being made all over the Nation.

B.H.: All over the Nation.

W.C.: There was one by President Kennedy, himself, I know.

B.H.: Yes, at Madison Square Garden. And Knoxville, I think, had requested me. I think that since I was a resident (during my TVA Directorship days) of the City of Knoxville for about two years, I think it was felt that because of my acquaintanceship there I could do a good job. So they wanted me there and I went. And MEDICARE was one of my --

W.C.: Mr. Hays, as I recall, next to President Kennedy, you were reported to have the best turnout of any of the meetings around the country.

B.H.: Well, I'm not surprised, because I think that they felt very good about it here, from what I heard. Well, I think I've listed most of the subjects of my talks except Federal aid for education, and that's been one of my interests for a good while. Also pursuing the old Department of Agriculture interests that I had, since I was for seven years prior to my election to Congress an official in the Farm Security Administration. I think maybe we've touched on all of the interests that I had except for these two items, Agriculture and Federal aid.

Now this has been something that I have felt very strongly about, Federal aid for education, and I made a good many talks. Of course sometimes in appearances I'd be talking about these two major interests. I remember a trip to Stillwater, Oklahoma, one time to speak at a conference on rural life and here I was speaking to people who were concerned about rural poverty and the lag in the facilities for rural education. So there was an overlapping of these interests. I don't recall any other major topics at the moment.

I did some television work and, of course, in most of the places where I spoke there would be representatives of the TV stations and radio stations along with the press, and often they'd have a formal press conference. I enjoyed the grassroots work that I did. I call it grassroots work because this was a part of the public relations work that any Administration has to set up. No government can operate today without an acknowledgment of this need in some effective form. It will take a variety of forms perhaps, but what we call public relations looms large today in modern government.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, in the two years that you were in the White House under President Kennedy could you estimate about how many speeches you actually made around the country on behalf of the Administration? Does it run two or maybe three hundred?

B.H.: Oh, I would say that, yes. Probably somewhere between two hundred and fifty and three hundred speeches a year. I think maybe I made that estimate --

W.C.: A year? Then that would run double for the two years.

B.H.: Yes. I would say not less than four hundred speeches during the two years.

W.C.: Maybe as many as five hundred?

B.H.: Oh, yes.

W.C.: This probably puts you up near the top if not at the top of the Kennedy Administration spokesmen around the country.

B.H.: Yes. I used lots of words.

W.C.: And lots of newspaper coverage, and radio and TV. One of President Kennedy's major interests, if not the most dominating interest domestically of his Administration was Civil Rights, and of course you had a long career of concern and involvement in this field. In what way did the interest of both the President and yourself manifest itself during these years of your service under President Kennedy?

B.H.: Well, I am confident that President Kennedy would have thought of me in connection with Civil Rights, or to put it perhaps more accurately, in thinking of me he would think of my interest in race relations and progress in the field of Civil Rights, largely because of the drama in the Little Rock situation, which I know came to his notice. I believe I referred previously to the telegram he sent me then -- so the telegram was heartwarming. It indicated his pained reaction to my defeat, and Mr. Kennedy probably had taken some interest in my proposals in following Mr. Truman's Civil Rights suggestions. Now you see I was not content merely to meet the conventional political requirements of opposition to the Truman proposals. I felt that there was a basis for the minority's protest and their grievance -- they had a genuine grievance -- and I knew it. I had hoped that the states could act and I pressed for state action in many areas. In 1948 I had advocated the repeal of the poll tax. I had a feeling on this point that was transcending my political considerations. I just knew that America needed to do something to bring its performance in line with its avowals of democracy and equality. I am confident that President Kennedy knew something of my philosophy and personal attitude and while I don't know that he ever read my specific proposals, I know that he had a copy of my book which later was published by the University of North Carolina Press, because I remember seeing it around the White House.

I picked it up to see if it was the one that I had given him and sure enough there it was and it had my autograph in it. And I am confident he didn't carry to the White House all the books that were given him prior to his election as President. So I like to think that he knew something specifically about my early alternative proposals on the repeal of the poll tax and the Constitutional amendments. That was early in my congressional career. And --

W.C.: And voluntary FEPC.

B.H.: Yes. Voluntary FEPC, which I was later willing to expand into other areas than economic aspects of the Negro's Federal appeals, and so on. I also believed that we should firm up Federal policy demanding or requiring nonsegregation in all forms of interstate travel. And I think the practical ideas that I advanced at that time, had they been accepted by the Congress, would have produced much more rapid progress than we've made because the difference between intrastate travel and interstate travel is so vague, and the impact of one on the other is so pronounced that had we been able to do that we would not have had to rely upon individual Constitutional rights under the Fourteenth and other amendments to firm up the Negro's right in moving from one place to another. We would have had the Commerce clause that exercised Federal authority unchallenged and that would have ultimately produced what we are hoping to acquire in time, and rapidly acquiring now in the elimination of segregation. Well that was one phase of it. Now I had my own anti-lynching bill which had vast support among the Negro people of the country who had studied this problem.

There's one other phase of Civil Rights which got into my speeches later as a White House Assistant that I know I had the warm support and enthusiastic support of Andrew Hatcher, who was Pierre Salinger's assistant. I know when he read a paragraph of a minor speech that I made to the Convention of Mayors, I believe it was called the South Carolina Municipal League, this Convention of Municipal Officials at Charleston, South Carolina -- Andy Hatcher read that and he said, "Now this must be reproduced; this is it; this is a good signal for us to do this, stay with this." And that was the idea of conciliation, of extragovernmental exertions. These exertions could be by mayors and still be outside their political responsibility but nevertheless I was urging the attitude of conciliation so that at the local level regardless of what national policy might require that there be this acknowledgment by responsible people at the local level

of the need for more rapid progress in protecting the Negro and in making secure his civil rights. And I had a warm response in meetings such as the one at Charleston. I did make other speeches on this point, and reproduced this reference to conciliation in discussions, and perhaps you will recall, since you were deep in some of these conversations, you will recall conversations with Jerry Heilbron of the Attorney General's staff.

W.C.: Jerry Heilbron, as you know, is an Arkansas boy -- Fort Smith -- who came to Washington to be under Burke Marshall in the Civil Rights Division, and in his experiences in the South he became quite convinced of the very vital role that conciliation, some kind of Federal conciliation service, could perform. He and you talked it over at some length, as I recall, and later there were consultations with Lee White, Burke Marshall, Harold Fleming of the Potomac Institute --

B.H.: Who had quite a history in this field because prior to that, you know, he was head of the Southern Regional Council.

W.C.: That's right. Also Berl Bernhard, who was then Director of the Civil Rights Commission, was interested in this whole area, and I guess it might be fair to say that the whole origin of this provision that is now in the Civil Rights Bill, presumably shortly to become law, the origin traces back to all these conversations and discussions.

B.H.: Yes, and undoubtedly this came into the President's scope of interest through conversations, I am sure, with his brother, the Attorney General. And I think that when the history of this period is finally written, when the long struggle for Civil Rights is concluded, that there should be a large place in the story for the undramatic and largely unpublicized activity of such men as you have mentioned in accomplishing these goals at the county-local level, the bringing into the orbit of discussion men of influence and men of some responsibility in their local governments. I remember hearing Jerry Heilbron talk about his conversations with the officials in Baker County, Georgia, and here he acted with the approbation of the Department of Justice officials at the top level. But Jerry in his discreet and effective way, pursuing this matter of conciliation and developing the techniques of conciliation, pointed out that in time local authorities had to bend, that the supreme law of the land through the Constitution's clear language and the interpretations of the court, now largely unchallenged except by a few extremists would dominate.

He indicated to them that the sensible and reasonable thing to do was to move in this direction and that it could be done so much better under their direction and under the aegis of local authorities than under the impact of a Federal court decision. I think that he gave a fine interpretation of the spirit and attitude of Federal officials in those conversations. And I am glad that you raised this question because I would like for my relationship as one of the group that did take seriously the responsibility of conciliation, I am glad to have it mentioned because I just know the spirit of John F. Kennedy and I know that this is the way he wanted it done. I think that there is every evidence that he looked in the final analysis to those of us who had lived in the South and yet had this spirit of his own which was to make equality a reality. I studied his declarations, his official pronouncements, the change in his own program. I studied these with some sympathy for him -- considerable sympathy for him as a person because he was a New Englander and had not been thrust as deeply, and you might say poignantly, as I had been into race struggles but he and I were so congenial on this point because we shared these views that action was essential.

I have an idea that except for the decision with reference to Russian missiles in Cuba there was no decision that confronted him that brought more painful examination of thoughts and ideas than this one with reference to the restlessness of the Negro, the meeting the Negro's obvious grievance, with bold action, because when he advanced his program which was a bold program, when he advanced it he knew that it created some new hazards for other programs that he was interested in. But I think you had the President's wonderful spirit of humanity coming out in this action on Civil Rights, as well as an evidence of his sound statesmanship. He knew that something had to be done and he had the courage to do it.

W.C.: Mr. Hays, shortly before President Kennedy was assassinated, he granted you a leave of absence from the White House staff for a few weeks to make a series of talks to about a dozen Methodist universities around the country, and I think you indicated you would like to close your presentation with some discussion of what you did during these talks, and also your final words with President Kennedy.

B.H.: Yes, I think that would be a very appropriate conclusion for this contribution of mine to the Kennedy story. I remember the day I went in to talk to him about it. You see I had made

some talks at the Campus of Hendricks College in response to an invitation from a long-time dear friend of mine, President Marshall Steele, and the general theme of those talks with the college students was the application of the Christian Doctrine or we might say the Judaes-Christian ideal -- our biblical faith -- the application of those standards and principles and ideals to contemporary political and social conflicts. And one of them had to do with politics, one had to do with race relations. At any rate they were successful, according to Dr. Steele, and pursuant to that the Head of the Methodist Board of Higher Education, Dr. John Gross, asked me if I would do the same thing on fourteen other campuses. That was later supplemented with a request from the fifteenth college, so when you include Hendricks, there were sixteen in all. They extended from Randolph Macon at Ashland, Virginia, to the University of the Pacific at Stockton, California. Most of them, however, were in the southeast. There were three so-called all-Negro colleges, although I think perhaps two of the three were integrated with some white students, but this was a marvelous experience and the President was eager for me to do it. Apparently he was rather enthused.

The President did say to me, in that whimsical way of his as we walked to the door: "Brooks, you've already got the Baptists, now you want to try to take over the Methodists?" And the substance of my response was, "Well, of course, Mr. President, nobody's got the Baptists, never would have, and I think I'm going to find the Methodists about as stubborn."

And experience bore that out because I don't find a great deal of difference between student body and faculty of Methodist auspices and Baptists. Not enough difference to even discuss. Now this was an enjoyable experience and, incidentally, the President did ask about the financial arrangements. He didn't want me to lose any money, and I assured him they were going to replace my salary and take care of the expenses. And he smiled and said, "Well, I didn't want you to lose any money." So I was not on the Government payroll during that period. And my last conversation with him was during that leave. I think it was about a two months' leave of absence and it was due to end on December 15. About, well, the last week of October, around October 26, I was invited to become the National Chairman of Brotherhood Week. This, of course, is an outgrowth of the work of the National Conference of Christians and Jews

and is sponsored by that splendid organization. During the month of February, built generally around the birthdays of Lincoln and Washington, there are brotherhood dinners stressing primarily interfaith cooperation, reducing tensions between those of different religious faiths, but in recent times having clear implications and definite goals in the interracial field. And I was very happy to have this invitation. I did raise the question as to whether or not in an election year they should have one who is prominently identified with the Democratic Administration, but they pointed out that last year was a Republican year. One of President Eisenhower's Cabinet Members, Mr. James Mitchell, was the chief, so it was our year.

I called Mr. Kennedy from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to ask if this could be done. First I called Mrs. Lincoln, and said, "Miss Evelyn (told her what I wanted), would you ask the President if this has his approval?" She said, "Mr. Hays, I think you should talk to him. He's in a Cabinet meeting, but when I hand him a card saying you're on long distance, I think he'll interrupt that Cabinet session." Of course that fed my vanity, and I had a bulge of egotism because sure enough he talked to me with the Cabinet sitting there. He picked up the receiver, and I heard his voice very clearly: "Brooks, where are you?" That was understandable -- I was on the go almost continuously. I told him "Here at the University of Arkansas for student engagements." Then I told him about the Brotherhood Week Appointment. Without hesitation he said, "I think that's wonderful. Of course it has my approval." I can't recall much of the conversation that followed. It was a brief word of commendation but as my efforts in this field have continued I have had the satisfaction of knowing it is a sort of mandate. When he said goodbye, I never heard his voice again but the memory of that conversation will always be an inspiration.