

WASH 12

Interviewee: Leroy Collins

Interviewer: Ray Washington

Date:

W: These tapes represent portions of an interview that took place over several days in March, 1979, with former governor Leroy Collins. The interviews were generally located in his Tallahassee law firm where he, at that time, still maintained regular office hours, if not a regular practice. Much of the material that has been captured on these tapes was of a sort of general nature. Owing to the fact that most Florida historians would agree that Mr. Collins' term as governor marked the beginning of the emergence of Florida as a major national state. Many of the changes that were made in Florida began in Mr. Collins' administration and the roots were laid for many of the changes by a shift in governmental attitude. So these tapes, more than the tapes of the other former governors tend to deal in generalities. We begin:

W: I would think that, again, that you three out of the former governors, you, Mr. Collins, Mr. Johns, really would have more of a grasp of ____ some of old Florida; you lived right on the edge of it.

C: Well, yes. A lot of us had _____. I think that _____. I was involved in building considerable bridges with the old. I feel that way at least.

W: Would you call yourself . . .

C: That may sound vain but I feel it. When I came on the political scene they had the old stereotyped, malapportioned legislature and a great deal of politics was saturated with the concept of future back-scratching and doing things for the benefit of those that do things for your benefit and this kind of thing. I think that ____ in politics at that time and I was very anxious to bring sort of a new moral tone to government with a higher level of responsibility to the public interest.

W: When you made your inaugural address along those lines, did you feel like that you were making a break with that address.

C: Yes, I think I wanted to say that and I said it, I think, pretty well, and I think from the very beginning people realized there was going to be a different leadership and it was going to be a leadership based on merit and based upon the public interest being the primary goals of everybody in our government. There is nothing to justify in government that did not serve the public. You know, expenditures _____. It was used in a legitimate and effective way. We did it in an effective way. _____. This, we not only talked about, but I think we got to feeling pretty well permeated through the whole fabric of state government. I have always felt that the governor of the state is a far more influential man especially in the way in which he directs those immediately responsible to him

because I think people at the county on the municipal level also are influenced in many important indirect ways by the standards that were set by the man and the top _____. So, I was aware of that.

W: Well, did that come to you when you had won the gubernatorial election, or had . . .

C: I think I had it in my vision, but it became more important to me as we went along. A lot of things change their focus when a man becomes governor. You are fresh from a campaign and, of course, you are aware of the fact that you are dependent upon a lot of people who helped you get elected. You feel responsible to the people, but it is only in the service in the office itself that your real impact of your obligations to every citizen of the state comes into sharp focus. I think you feel very significant. I know I did. I think to one degree or another of the governance I felt there is government that everybody, whatever the color, whatever the age or the circumstances, whether they were influential or whether they were; they still had a right to count me as their governor and I had the obligation of being responsible to them as their governor. This I do not think you get to feel until you get that job and then you run into these problems and these needs and these things. So once you get that feel, it just saturates you--your feelings and your hopes--and you are anxious to find ways which you can better a lot of people and improve the opportunities of a lot of people. Otherwise, you know, society and the political system just passes by.

W: As . . . oh, excuse me.

C: I do not mean to be sort of preaching a sermon on the subject, but it is something. I felt youthful, and it was very influential, of course, in my being able to cope with just beginning the issue of prejudice and desegregation _____.

W: My question was that, say, when you became governor, it became more apparent to you, being a state senator and as a representative before, had you had any things of this sort of philosophy or did that . . .

C: Yes, to a degree. When you are elected to the legislature, you are elected from a county or from a district and you feel a primary responsibility to that area. That is one reason malapportionment of our legislature is so terribly damaging to the welfare of the total population of the state. But, we had the worst apportioned legislature of any state in the United States.

W: Well, as a senator, were you against this porkchop sort of thing or did that come to you more as you became governor?

C: Well, I was in their work . . . I felt it all along, of course, and my legislative record, I think, reflects that.

W: Now, in the thirties . . .

C: My number one interest in legislation, when I was in the legislature, was in public education and in public health. And both of those fields, of course, are very meaningful to and very closely related to concerns of welfare of the population in general. So, I got my roots of understanding there, but I still did not feel that . . . I did not have the total impact that you get when you are governor of the direct responsibility that you have to every person.

W: How did that sit with your colleagues in Leon County?

C: That, in a way, would influence me on many issues. For instance, if the judiciary, the court system, was such that it was geared in a way and operated in a way that it benefited the affluent and the strong and it passed by and was a means of discrimination against the meek and the poor. This you understand better, I think, when you are governor because you know those people. You know them, you run into them and you see them and you should, and I tried to, please as many people as I could in that sense. You feel that responsibility more and with me it grew and grew. I think it does with responsibilities.

W: Would you put yourself on the pivotal point from the changing feelings toward a porkchop legislature and any kind of affective apportionment or would you say that came later when the actual change came? Do you think the seeds were sewn during the time when you were governor?

C: Well, I guess the seeds really are, in a fashion, moral consciousness. _____ sense of right and wrong. But, when you translate that in to when I was confronted with problems in the legislature, I was generally in the minority, in a sense, and against the power control that was exercised through the legislature. I was working for, and my primary interest were those programs that would strengthen people generally and not _____ business interests. I do not mean by that that I was not aware of the legitimate and proper needs of the business community and the business people and the needs to strengthen the economy of the state. I _____ this was very much in my program as governor. We had a great need for balancing the economy of the state which was very badly out of balance. We had a big influx of new people coming to Florida. The population was increasing very rapidly. The tourist business was good, agriculture was good, but still there were a lot more people than we had jobs for and then we did not have the job opportunities for _____ keeping up with the utilization demands of the people. This was the time, I do not know if you remember it or not, but some of the states out west were putting up signs at the borders, come and visit us, but don't stay. They were suffering from this imbalance of liking to have the people to come visit and spend their money, but to get out because they did not have the schools and they did not have the health standards and the health...

W: Facilities?

C: They did not have the other basic needs for assimilating that population growth and we were getting close to that same problem. So I developed a program for bringing to the state business and industry that would provide jobs. They talk about it now as if it is sort of a new thing, but we had quite a program going at that time. We did not spend the money we spend now in that program. It was run quite differently.

W: Was it more in the lines of public relations or . . .

C: It was more in the lines of working through our Florida business people with their counterparts and their people and their associations: rallying our Florida businesses to help develop the kind of climate and to help motivate people to expand plants and to move plants and to bring new business opportunities to the state. I made trip after trip, speaking trips, over to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, _____, all these _____ and others. They had luncheons of business people, the industrial leaders and bankers. Our Florida business people, on their own and with their own resources, had put together, done the work and done the financing, of these luncheons and these meetings.

W: So it was all taken care of . . .

C: [It was] at little cost to the state as a state. But we had a tremendous response from that. We had a great many new plants: Honeywell, Martin-Marietta in Orlando and many of these plants came in response to the impetus that we developed at that time. So I was deeply interested in this. We had other matters like highway needs. We had the new interstate system came along in our time. We had decisions as to how we would develop that. There were pressures to develop it with a lot of mileage through rural areas. _____ in the cities. We actually concentrated at that time in building expressway systems like the one in Miami and the one in Tampa and part in Orlando. We started our interstate with that kind of concentration rather than the long mileage. We developed mileage, too. There was some objection to that, but that is where the need was the greatest in the state. I do not mean to give you the impression that I was just concerned with welfare matters and racial adjustments, although, the racial adjustments that we made _____ probably the most difficult thing that I tried to come to grips with. Maybe, in later years, we can look back on the whole thing and, in a historical perspective, that may be the best thing I ever did. _____.

W: Or the thing that you are remembered most for.

C: . . . because we had a population here and a society that was very much wedded to the two-race system and separation of the races. I grew up in that system

and I knew that it was not going to be changed overnight. The Brown decision came out a day or two before I was elected. We did not start with the immediate plans of desegregation because we had the _____ thinking at that time, not only in Florida but throughout the south, that this was something that was going to pass away: the supreme court would reconsider this _____ hearings and if they did not, congress would pass a law . . .

W: So you put your head in the sand like an ostrich and . . .

C: All of us did that to a degree. We sure did. We did not have any of these Federal acts that later came along in the sixties, you know, like the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Fair Housing Act and these other acts. These were the things that really impacted most in reading about the degree of We now live _____ where we have now become adjusted to it. But in those days, in the context of those times, it was a completely different situation. We had our neighboring states sponsoring massive resistance and resorting to every conceivable kind of means that they felt would hold back the inevitable, really, and would hold on to what was really doomed to pass away. All of these efforts were being made and they were being made right here in Florida So I had to cope in my job as governor. I had a big program of reform in education. I had my ambitions set toward all of these community colleges. We built twenty-one of them and we did tremendous things with our education programs. We had the battles over reapportionment of the legislature. We had a great many other things. But, still, all of this required a certain degree of cooperation and leadership on my part. I could not get so far ahead of the people on this racial matter that they could not see me.

W: Did you feel like you were ahead of them, though?

C: I felt that I should get out front, but that I should not get so far out front that I could not be seen because then they would not know where I was. They would think I was in Moscow or somewhere.

W: Could I ask you a question...if there is a way that you can define it in your own mind At what point did you decide that segregation of schools might be a good thing? Certainly, because of your background growing up, it must have been . . .

C: Well, I grew up with that concept.

W: No, desegregation . . .

C: Oh, desegregation!

W: When did you actually decide that that was something, not necessarily that it was

inevitable, but was something that was a good thing?

C: Yes, I grew to that. I did not feel that way, I mean, I felt that when I became governor that we would continue to have a segregated society. I just did not think in terms, really of that being a radical change. I was among those who always felt very hospitable and, hopefully, kind and charitable to black people. I had a lot of friends among them and _____ a lot of effort and support _____. It was largely a . . . (what is the word)?

W: Paternalism?

C: Paternalism. [I felt] paternally close to them. That is what I grew up feeling, a very paternalistic kind of a feeling toward black people. My father, when I was boy, he was one who did not take advantage of black people. He _____. He always taught us to be fair and he never _____. I felt this deeply, but, _____ did not matter. I had accepted the idea that black people were being severely wronged by segregation and that it was an evil thing for society, in general, to penalize black people in that sense. This grew on me and it grew also on me from a standpoint of law and respect for law. I said from the very beginning that this was going to be the land law and that we were going to [have it from] the supreme court of the United States. What it said was the supreme law of the land.

W: So you felt like you had something behind you.

C: I always had that legal standing of lawyers and I felt that that gave me a lot of strength to do the things I did. I must have vetoed a dozen bills that the legislature passed. They passed the same bills here that they passed in some of the other southern states. Some of them were just _____. I remember one of them passed a bill providing a certain amount of money to be used in a common pool of five southern states to advertise in the northern press (in magazines and this and that) the good things about segregation and the good things about the south as it was at that time.

W: To sort of change opinion over to their way.

C: Yes, trying to induce goodwill toward the south and a recognition about the country generally at that time; that we were being nice to black people [by] keeping them segregated. I vetoed all these things.

W: Now, the one bill did get through Was there not one that allowed people to take their children out of school if they did not agree with segregation?

C: No, the only bill that got through, as I recall, was one that gave the governor authority to quell _____ and to close facilities if they were in a state of disorder.

W: So executive action.

C: Yes. Not the schools, now, this did not have anything to do with the schools. I told the legislature never, never, never provide any means for closing the schools. If they close schools, they close peoples' minds. ____ you can possibly do. But I did feel that I might need, as governor, the power to close a facility that was the center of a great deal of turmoil and public disorder. I used it just once to close down the Tallahassee bus system when we were having bricks and things thrown through the windows; dangerous things, _____. So, I issued an order for stopping it. It stopped for a week or so and then started back. _____. I do not remember closing anything else. But I may have talked to one of the senators ____ and they started the sit-in and they were having serious disorders here ____ springing up over the state. I explained to the people something about how I was looking at this. A fellow, not too long ago, found a copy of a recording of that broadcast. I did not know, oh, that is another story. I did not have any script. I just sat down in front of the television cameras (there were not many television stations in the state at that time) ____ broadcast at that time and we had a transcript of that. I was asked, not so long ago, if I would read that same message again; and I did on a tape recorder (from that transcript. But it seems vague to me, now in retrospect, but at that time, it created enormous . . . I just said as far as the law was concerned that a department store owner had a legal right to invite the public to trade but to single out one particular section, like a lunch counter, and say that he would not allow black people to trade there. The law, at that time, allowed that.

W: But, morally it was . . .

C: _____. And a lot of people liked my point and a lot of people I know ____ this is the perfect example of that sort of thing. But my main thinking is that this is morally wrong. If he is going to invite the public in, he ought to allow the public, all of the public, to trade at all of the store's counters, all places. This created a furor. But, I became convinced that the segregated way of life was the only way out.

[End of side A1]

C: They have been wonderful to me and with all that and because a lot of them I know _____. ____ very hard _____. I saw considerable change in ____ system. But, you know, to me it came right down to the basic thing like why are we in this job?. And you are in this job to do what you think is right ____ and to all the people of this state. And if I did not feel like that I could true to that, then to me, the job no longer holds joy and happiness and satisfaction and service. I knew that a lot of people would not agree ____ at that time, but that did not ever create any doubt in my mind that I would not do what I did. I did a lot of things since I

was governor that really created more antagonism toward me by the people of Florida than when I was governor. Since I left the governorship, and particularly when I ____ and I organized what President Johnson had me involved ____ a number of different things ____; this is what really set people on fire about me.

W: These are the comments from that time that I think . . .

C: Yes, but they pretty well understand and they are pretty good to me and I can go anywhere in the state now and find a lot of friends and ____ and I lost that senate race. That was the worst year I could possibly have. That was the only time.

W: Was that the biggest disappointment you have had?

C: Disappointment? Yes, it was a huge disappointment. It did not cause me to ____ or to ____ . . .

W: . . . that maybe you should have done something else?

C: . . . that I should have done something else because it was in the time I could have run and I felt that four more years or six more years I would be beyond age _____. But, I never have regretted . . . I was well aware when I was in Selma and I was marching down that road with Martin Luther King ____ a sort of liaison with the local officials and state officials. I was well aware that ____ off ____, I thought I would hear from Mr. King, that was just a passing thing. It never deterred me _____. I have never wished that I had not done something _____.

W: I often wondered . . .

C: You know one of the things . . . when I was governor . . . I have always had an aversion to capital punishment _____. The public is still three-fourths or seventy-five percent in favor of capital punishment, but I recommended the _____ during my first term in office. A portion of the states that do not have it, but crime rates are not _____ worse than ours _____. I tried to find ways in which I could justify using the death sentences and I could not. One of these cases was down in Lake County, which is a very _____. The woman was a rape case down there and a poor black man was being _____. Two of them were shot by a posse and the sheriff was very much involved. One was a fifteen year old boy and the other one, I got the Cabinet Pardon Board to commute his sentence to life imprisonment. This was right in the middle of my campaign against Charlie Johns [state senator and acting governor, 1953-1955] and he just tried to make a big deal of it. It was some embarrassing things that occurred _____. But, when I ran for governor in that race and I went back, and I especially wanted to check, and I checked that precinct and that precinct voted for me notwithstanding the fact of all the furor that had developed there. You would think, just driving

through there and talking to somebody that they would just hate my soul but they gave me a majority vote.

W: You won that primary the first time out?

C: Yes. Right. And I did not talk much about that in that campaign, but then when the issue came up, I said, well, I honestly felt that there was some doubt about this man's guilt and I think, as your governor, that you should respect me if I had doubts about a person's guilt whether it was your's or somebody else's. And I would try to see to it that that person was protected. That is about all I would say. But people are really fundamentally very basically good, I think, and they want good things and they want good leadership and they want a just and sound governor. I always felt I had a good rapport with them.

W: Well, you would consider yourself . . .

C: ____ five minutes ____.

W: Well, you also consider yourself a cracker, I am sure, because coming from Florida.

C: Well, I was born and raised right here in Tallahassee and I was in a family of six children and we had modest means. I grew up believing that you ought to go to church every Sunday and believing in God and do the right thing and my parents were very strong on discipline. They also believed in hard work. I do not know how you think I became a cracker. You use the term cracker, some people were called maybe originally crackers, other people think of that as being...I do not know how to express that, but anyhow, we were just good middle-class people, my family was. None of my family had ever been in politics. I did not go to college right out of high school. I went to work. I worked for several years and saved some money and went to college. I finally got in law school after that and I just had a year for law school. But, I got out, I graduated in 1931. ____ by myself. _____. I wanted to get married and I ran for county prosecuting attorney because I thought I needed that to be able to support my wife, or a wife, and I lost that campaign.

W: How much did you lose by?

C: 135 votes. [It was] very close.

W: So the next year you ran for

C: I did not want to stop as a loser and the people were good to me, too. I mean, I could tell ____ the campaign. _____. I ran against ____ good prosecutor so I ran for the legislature and ran against the incumbent. I won that in the first

primary over ____ the incumbent. Then I was in the legislature for twenty years, not counting the time I was _____. But the legislature was the breeding ground for minds. There was real political thinking ____ there. I enjoyed that work. It was a different thing than the legislature is now. _____ different. _____ is involved _____. _____. Sessions met sixty days every two years. The total pay was six dollars a day during the session. It was more of a citizens _____.

W: Do you think there was as much prestige then?

C: Well, legislators It was just a different kind of a ballgame they played. Now everybody has a lot more staff and when you have staff _____ and all this sort of thing. But, the legislator in that time had to do most of his own work. I was chairman of the appropriations committee and we had two people working for the committee. We had a secretary and an accountant. The accountant we borrowed from one of the state departments.

W: So he just worked for you all during the session and then went back to his job.

C: Right. And the secretary, I do not know where we got her, but I think she worked somewhere for the state, too. We had subcommittees and all that, but none of them had . . . Now, subcommittees even have staffs investigating _____. It is just a completely different sort of thing coming from _____.

W: It is unavoidable, though, I imagine.

C: Oh, yes, I guess it is. I think it has gotten . . . I think it could be trimmed some to advantage, really, but I am not one that says we ought to go back to the way it used to be because the state is not where it used to be. But, I think, maybe we had more real joy in serving in the legislature back in those days than they have now.

W: Did you have more directness?

C: We had a more directness, yes. We had a directness with the government and a lot of things. There were wrongs done by legislators in those days and there were special interests that exercised known control in certain areas of the legislature in those days. But at times it is always _____. Some of them are called white knights or _____.

W: [They] did what they felt no matter what the consequences.

C: Right. _____, but I enjoyed working with them.

[Break in interview.]

- C: So that made me feel I had ____ too.
- W: So that was the strength for your philosophy against Dan McCarty [governor of Florida, 1953].
- C: That is right and the other ones, too. _____. _____.
- W: Did you get much good response from them or do they sort of ignore what you had to say?
- C: There was not but one crowd that said, you could try. You can try it. The others said, well, we do not think we can do it unless the court makes us do it. If the court makes us, then we will do it, but to voluntarily try to do something at this time All this opposition, you know, _____. One did: Joe **Hall**, down there at **Dade** county. I talked to the Board of Control about the admission projects at our universities and asked them to talk to the _____ to find ways to relax the _____. _____. They told me the same thing: we can't do this until the court makes a decision. If I had that to go back over, I think I would definitely _____. _____.
- W: During your first term, I am sure, that after the Brown Decision, you knew what was coming, but it seems like you sort of soft-petaled that and kept on economic issues in your campaign and, I guess, waited until the second term to really start going into it.
- C: Right.
- W: I guess the need to get elected is one thing . . .
- C: Oh, course, in that, I do not know. I did not know all of what was coming because we were still having that interposition of ideas Virginia ____ massive resistance to having congress pass a manifesto of the overall that period of time. That massive resistance program in Virginia was a very strong one and nobody knew how all that was coming out at that time. I was not aware, in the first place, that I was going to even run for four years because I did not think I was going to be able to run, technically speaking.
- W: They had not made a decision yet in court?
- C: No, they had not made a decision on my ability to succeed myself. See, the constitution forbids a governor succeeding himself and I just assumed that for me to run for a four year term would be succeeding myself. _____. But, the court . . . just a short time before the qualifying time expired ____ a governor had not served a full term and that a governor could succeed himself if he had not served a full term. It was then _____. I really was not optimistic about that decision _____. _____ changes were more against me than for me.

W: Did you get along well with the Justices at that time? Were you getting along very well with the people who were in office?

C: Oh, well, I had known all of them very well. In fact, _____ much better, I think, than _____. _____. But, when I ran for the full term, I had an all out segregation _____ one of those candidates who opposed me and he was just running to fight with George Wallace [governr of Alabama] or _____ somebody in South Carolina. George was just all out, you know, extoling the greatness of segregation and I sort of funning with him as a candidate him as a candidate and I always met my _____: that campaign any other time _____. You make _____ understand, but we are going to live by the law and we are going to live in _____ good order. And I pointed out to him if we are _____, we can't possibly succeed with this campaign _____ doing nothing other _____. We have got _____ all over the United States. But, this is the way I would try to handle the matter. Segregation, Scott **Lowry** ran second in that race. He was a pretty strong candidate. He ran second, of course, as were all of them [good candidates].

W: Where did he get most of his support from?

C: Well, he swept this whole northern area; I did not cary it.

W: You carried Leon County, did you not?

C: I carried Leon County. That is it in this panhandle, I guess. I carried Gainesville, I know down here _____. But if I had not won in that first primary, the sentiment was becoming so strong, I do not know whether I would have won or not. I have never said that in public because I _____. And I do not mean to say that I was out there telling people to get ready, they were going to have to mix all these people up in schools and everything like that. If we did not do it now, we would have to later. And that is _____. At the same time, I did not want to paint myself into any corner, and I always got working _____. That is indicated in my inaugural speech for that full term. _____.

W: Yes.

C: When I talked about _____ move together . . .

W: How did you feel when you took over your second term, how much time did you have? _____.

C: I had _____. I am talking so much it seems like it would seem like _____ cover all this ground.

W: I am writing a few ideas to refer to it. Did you consider yourself an outsider in government when, in other words, were you different enough that you felt that

you were outside of the mainstream when you were governor?

C: I felt that I was outside the mainstream in the legislature. But, I did not feel like I was outside of the mainstream folk. _____. And I got a lot of cooperation in that _____.

W: What about junior time in the legislature? Did you feel like you were sort of outside the structure or did you feel like you were . . . ?

C: Yes, I thought I was _____, but I felt _____ and I did and I felt _____ harsh and ugly in my relationships. In other words, I was friendly and I could enjoy talking to the people. Even though there were philosophical differences, I did not let my philosophy _____. And they would be out at my house and they would be coming and going (we had parties _____) and I do not think I ever felt any personal animosity. I did not allow personal animosities to cause me to become uncomfortable in the presence of these people. We could be friends in lots of ways. They knew how I felt and I knew how they felt. But there still is room in the legislative relationships for companionship and friendship _____. We had so many times _____. We were going to build a new institution in Sumpter county where people said it ought to be. But, _____ and I could talk to that man down in Sumpter county about _____ and have them friendly with me. There was room for some friendship and companionship even with philosophical differences.

W: Did you have any aspirations to be speaker of the House of Representatives?

C: Yes, I did. I tried. One time we ran and we made quite a battle of it and lost because _____ but we did not get _____ for it. In those days, the speaker was elected in quite different ways than now, although they got _____ and things like that. But an actual election, like at the beginning of the session was never settled in advance. After Pierce Wood [state representative, Liberty County] who was a good friend and a good man _____, but we were just _____.

W: Did you ever have any aspirations to head up to Senate?

C: When this was over, the second it was over, I felt I could almost certainly win the next time the speaker of the House. I think I could have, but then when we had the chance for our local senator, _____ and Robertson wondered whether I would try to stay in the house and run for speaker or whether I would run for senate. I decided that I would run for the senate and we all agreed that Dan McCarty would be the candidate for speaker--our group so to speak. He did become and was elected _____.

[End of tape A]

W: _____ crowded, more crowded than it is right now. I presume it _____.

C: ____.

W: I guess ____.

C: ____.

W: We were talking about the ways that government was before they ____? You told me that, I guess, not so much as a legislator, but as a governor, that you had to go against some of the opinions of people to do what you thought was right. Do you think it is any more difficult to do that now than it was back then?

C: I do not know why it should be; or that it is. I think the governor has as much direct involvement in the ongoing activities in government and ____ because of the layer of bureaucracy being developed and ____ in the mind ____ in charge of getting a program accomplished _____. They have little access to the government because they have to report to somebody that is their superior in that agency. That agency then has to report to somebody who is his superior in the department and then maybe the department will have one that is responsible to the governor.

W: And there are penalties for going over that bureaucracy . . .

C: Well, it is the way the government is structured. You just have to follow that kind of chain of command, so to speak, and it is unfortunate. To some degree, I guess it is necessary, but it is unfortunate, I think, as far as the government is concerned because you have less opportunity to have a personal association with that effort. The person who is in charge of the work force, so to speak, does not have the challenge that the governor knows what he is doing and is expecting him to do that and have a level of achievement that the governor sets himself. He is conditioned to thinking only of satisfying that man up above him.

W: Who has his own different motives, I guess, which are . . .

C: Yes, he may have and to use it to make an example, in our day, the public health doctor--the man in charge of the public health of the state who was responsible for the public health program--was a man well-known to government. He lived in Jacksonville, but he was on loan to the state or made available to the state by the federal government. Everytime his ____ would expire, the governors, for years, would go up to Washington to get that ____ extended because he was a very superior person. Well, he was in my office at least once a month and he knew that I wanted to know what he was doing.

W: So you had a direct knowledge of it?

C: What he was grappling with, yes. We were, at that time, you know, grappling with

such matters as tuberculosis elimination and had the sanitorium developed over the state and there was a commission in there but this public health doctor had the responsibility of finding tuberculosis cases in the population with testing programs that were mobile. He had a big program going, of pre-testing for tuberculosis at the state's expense and then he would see that the people got into the channel of getting into the sanitorium or getting treatment. We were moving very rapidly in that field. We were then leading state in the nation in what we were doing in that one field, tuberculosis. I was very excited about it. Diphtheria, the children's disease, that had killed just countless--thousands and thousands of children at that time--had to be a total population responsibility. We had to have activity going on to find the cases, to get them treated, and to get that eliminated. Dr. **Sowder**, the one I was referring to, had close liaison with the Public Health Service of the United States. There were a number . . . we even had the remnants of malaria at that time. As a boy, I used to have malaria fever almost every summer. I used to take quinine _____. But this was pretty well good in check by the time I became governor. There was not a great field of malaria left. When I was governor, we had many doctors practicing medicine in Florida that had never seen _____. This was an exciting thing for me to be involved with and that the state was doing.

W: And you were able to get direct reports from your man?

C: He was in my office, wanting my help, explaining what he was doing. He has written a book using public health under twelve governments or something like that. He was _____ a long time. Now, this was the way it could work in those days. Now, the public health official, State Health Officer--that was what he was called and is still called that--is out in this huge agency _____. What is it?

W: Health and Rehabilitative Services.

C: HRS . . . he is out there. He has above him a person who has absolutely no knowledge of health, no specific interest in health, just a bureaucrat, an administrator, that he has to respond to and report to. That person, then, has the deputy head of that department and that deputy then has the head of the department. Then, the head of the department has the governor to go to _____. Well, I talk to people in the state government and they said that the idea of the public health officer having a conversation with the government is just unheard of now. Well, this is because of this heavy increase in levels of bureaucratic administration. Now, what has happened is that when this hierarchy has one cog and all this in between, there are certain services, which the state is rendering, that require health systems. Geriatrics, for example, _____ and various other special needs. As a consequence of that, the public health service of Florida now is a proliferation of a number of special services and in no way is that department responsive to the general need of health of all the people of

Florida--of the nine million people. If an issue comes up in respect to whether or not there is an **aggreivation** that is, _____ or a mistake that may be damaging health, that may cause disease or cancer twenty years from now and this kind of thing; we have no people capable or involved with responsibility to be able to find that and do anything about it, as I understand. Now, this issue came up before the constitutional revision committee from down there. The doctors of the state are very concerned because they say that back in earlier years we had a health department that was a leader in the nation, as far as services were concerned, and now we have none.

W: During your administration, the health department was one of the leaders in the country?

C: I think it was.

W: And now it has sort of become

C: I do not mean that when I left it went down; I mean, it was not that personal. And I know a lot was done before I got there. We did a lot in the legislature. We set up that program for tuberculosis in the legislature _____.

W: _____ Orlando _____.

C: And the truth is that it has been assumed that we have eliminated tuberculosis now. I saw a story in the press, not thirty days ago, that Florida has the largest incidence of tuberculosis than any state in the nation. And I do not know of any program that we have now that is geared to come to grips with that.

W: _____ we have is in the schools and outside the schools.

C: The syphilis rate, there is another thing, that the general population is concerned about _____. And I do not know what we are doing about that. I talked to a fellow from HRS and the _____. He practically admitted to me that that was a _____. He said we are delivering services in these other areas and trying to do a good job of that. I said, well, how about the nine million people and the general health problems? He admitted that they would have _____ leaning largely on the federal government for protection. I asked him, I said, I have heard some complaints about radiation _____. And he said to me _____. The testers know that. They have been trying to get the federal government to do something more than they have been doing.

W: So, do you see an increased reliance on the federal government then on the different programs around Florida that maybe the state could have taken care of if they would have tried?

C: Well, of course the federal government helps and is very deeply involved in _____ programs _____. They are funding a number of projects of one kind or another: some good I am sure, some not so good I am sure. But, it is not too difficult then for anybody to _____ idea _____ help with the desire to get jobs for themselves and some others on the payroll, to get up an application for a grant and assistance and all and just get a start. That is the a great deal of the bureaucratic got started with the reason it keeps running. Because they say, well, if you do not do this, you lose so much federal funds. And, of course, the federal programs _____ more and more emphasises, more and more responsibilities that are taken over by the states. Of course that loads up the state budget _____. When you have a cycle economy and in the inflation cycle then you can take in a lot more money. They talk now about the fact that they have _____. This is silly because you go out and buy more services. We pay now eight or ten cents tax on it whereas two _____ before _____ two cents tax. Tax revenues go up so you only pay the cost of the products that is subject to excise taxes without anybody levying any more taxes. They still make you and the consumer pay more taxes whether its a _____ or whatever it is.

W: It is just not so obvious in the process.

C: Yes, that is right. People kind of lose sight of that, but the federal government and the state become flushed with money to spend in an inflationary economy like we have now. It is the poor Now, I heard today someone talking _____ had in mind about retaxing gasoline. Now if our gasoline tax is recently being imposed, we _____ on a basis of a percentage of the cost of the sale, not the _____.

W: Are the outsiders

C: _____ incredibly high because it is on a gallon. And, of course, in that same inflationary cycle costs to the state--goods get by, services get by--these sort of things go up, too. But, they do not go up in percentages that come _____.

W: Do you look forward to the way Florida is growing? Do you look forward to this growth that they have projected into the next century? The tremendous growth that Florida is supposed to experience?

C: Yes, I think it is going to happen and I think it can be a wholesome and healthy thing. When you look at the living conditions in Florida, and other things, too, in comparison to what circumstances are in other states, I can not see _____ important control and not be allowed to destroy what originally gives us our charm and attractiveness. I believe we are doing that. We are destroying a lot of things and I wish there was a stronger will of the people and it reflected through the government to protect the state from _____ and to do some things

that sort of talk ____ that will avoid ugliness of the future. You take right over here ____ Panama City ____ natural piece of work _____. You go over there and you look at what has been allowed to happen. ____ and so much of the real charm is gone because of the people unrestrained and driven wholly by making money cause to happen. This, I think, we need to be more careful about. I think the state has done some important things ____ scandal and ____ I think there actually ____ about the state. ____ people _____. I do not know what is improved at this point.

W: It is too bad that can not remain separate because the program itself is a good one.

C: Yes. We have got to do more things like that. ____ fine persuasion. _____.

W: Do you think this ought to be a statewide thing rather than left up to the individual communities.

C: Well, I hate to say that because the individual communities ought to be aroused and given the leadership to take the steps themselves. But where there ought to be more boulevards that are pretty with natural things and not cluttered up with all these signs. You need some signs identifying things. All these lights flashing and these lights would not be flashing if they did not attract people to look. And when they attract people to look, they create a safety hazard, right there necessarily, you can not argue about that. If the person would not be detracted from total care about how he is driving than caring about those lights then they would not have those lights up there. It just makes so much sense ____ seem so _____. When that road over yonder was built way back in 1920 something, along when Fort ____ and Fort Walton Beach down to Panama City. When they got the right of way for that road, the owners would have been glad to have given the state all of the land between the highway and the water in the war.

W: But they did not think about that in those days.

C: No, did not even think about it. [We] were not even concerned and so they left this flat, relatively narrow strip, big enough to put things on so they would block out the opportunity for the person doing the driving to see that beautiful beach because a big part of it is blocked out. That could have been a magnificent quality. It would have been just as famous, really, as the seventeen mile drive out in California. Have you been on that?

W: Yes.

C: It would have a kind of attractiveness and charm. Just some ____ participation at that time. The people that owned the land were so anxious to get the road

because the value it would add to their remaining land. They would have been perfectly willing to give all of that between the highway and the water.

W: Hindsight, I guess.

C: Yes, sure it is.

W: Have you been to that little St. George's island where **Sike's** pass cuts off St. George? The state just bought that and that was one of the best things that they have done.

C: That is beautiful.

W: That whole philosophy is keeping that open to the public . . .

C: I own a little land at Dog Island. I have got a house over there . . .

W: Did you own that before all of this development started; before they sold it in the last year and started?

C: Oh, yes. I have had a house down there seven or eight years and I had the land before then.

W: That whole area, again, is on it's way.

C: We have got the advantage of Dog Island. It is such a little island and they could never justify a bridge across there to it. If we had a bridge over there, people would be pouring in over there. Of course, it would destroy a lot of the attractiveness for those of us who have land over there with something on it. I think most people feel that way, but the time is going to come just as sure as we are sitting here. See, you have got an unusual situation with Mr. **Lewis** over there, he owns the ____ he sold lots. He has not wanted to make as much money as he could on it. He would have been perfectly satisfied to sell people lots and let them pay for it rather than a tremendous income coming in and having it cost a lot more than you pay for it.

W: He is not interested in the construction aspect, he just sells the property.

C: Yes. Of course, if that man, someday, I suppose There are a lot of Dog Island flats. Do you know where they are?

W: Yes.

C: They are between Alligator Point. Now, if this conditionn was just outside of St. Petersburg or outside of Miami or outside of a big heavily populated area, in

years gone by, they would have pumped all that up there and then just had a span or two for a bridgeway and link that right on up . . . all of those islands.

[Break in the tape.]

W: There is a slight gap here in the tape. Some material has been removed. The gap will last for a couple of minutes and then the tape will resume.

C: I think the ____ was lost and I hope ____ I am not so resourceless. We are doing something important and _____. ____ free enterprise ____ strong will of the people. The will of _____. _____. The government _____. _____.

W: Do you buy that there is a _____.

C: Yes, I stay busy. I do not think _____. I think people should make money, _____. _____ developments . . . We did a lot when I was governor that would not be done now.

W: But, yet, a great deal of it has made some substantial contributions . . .

C: _____ very liberal about the different cities _____ plan for a yacht basin _____ and they had water _____. _____ lose the respect _____ of the citizen _____ been here as a baby and been here for so many years. I think a lot of our newer citizens are justified _____. Sometimes I find that they have more to give than the older residents because they do not take as much for granted and they realize that this is something precious that has to be protected, should be protected by overt acts. Whereas, the longtime citizen is more inclined to feel like, well, this is something that is nice, but God gave it to us and he will keep on giving it to us, so we will keep on having it, without having to be concerned to the point of active programs to preserve it. I think we get a rich addition to our citizenry through visitors who are coming in. I think it is much more for the good than for the bad.

W: In general, the trend is for . . .

C: Yes, I think it is just still a very exciting state. I think a lot of people that recently moved here are contributing a great deal to make it _____.

W: One of your projects as governor, I know you were interested in public education and had the community college system as the priority and the health and education and you also were interested in Florida setting up the commission on nuclear power.

C: Yes.

W: How have your opinions changed on nuclear power? Or do you still think that is one way for Florida to go?

C: I think we are getting some reaction now that is unwarranted and extreme. I think the whole nuclear concept is great for us and we are going to need nuclear power generation plants. I think if you take the whole record of what has been done, it has been a very good record from a safety standpoint. The biggest failure, I think, in that whole program is the inability up to this time to find a way to dispose of that waste. It seems almost imperceptible that they can not find a decent place to get rid of that waste without setting up some danger for the future. But I am not one of those at all that feels like the concept of nuclear power is a bad thing. I think that the technology is advanced extremely far and _____ and I think will be compatible for the future. I think the hazards are going to have to be taken into account _____ counterbalancing the good _____. I do not fear the nuclear power _____. I certainly would be cautious though.

W: With all the opposition to it, it is a shame because maybe it is going to restrict some of the further research, and that is what is needed, I guess, more research to decide how to dispose of the waste and how to make it more safety conscious.

C: I hope not. And I believe the congress is probably going to take a good balanced view of that.

W: Florida has a bigger system so far. It seems like they are ahead of some of the states. I guess it probably results partly of the commission that was appointed.

C: Well, we were not even thinking of terms of producing electric energy in those days. We were thinking in terms of other aspects of development and we were thinking in terms of nuclear power development, I mean, nuclear development as a tool for technological progress in many ways and as a teaching tool for our universities. But now _____ are trying to get these reactors. Now, the University of Florida, which has been concentrating in applying research here in these aspects, and applying research. Maybe we can get a accelerator here at Florida State University, which we have and had got it while I was there. This would be a place of basic research. As a result of this accelerator here, and our interest in here, we built the physics department at Florida State University that is really extraordinary with very fine people, very fine teachers. It was just going along tremendously well with that physics department out there and on it's way to becoming really, I think, the best in the country. But it has not kept up, I do not think, with what our hopes were at that time, not that we do not have some very fine people _____.

W: The Nuclear Engineering Department at the University of Florida is well known and well accepted around.

C: They are doing basic work here that was proven effective in overall cancer research and other things _____. Power production came along, I think, later on. That Turkey Creek Point that Florida Power and Light put in town ___ nuclear power generator in the state. Evidently a big ruckus developed about that and they were getting it started largely without anybody was thinking in terms of the hazards of human beings but to fish. It was going to heat that water right there.

W: Yes, thermal pollution.

C: It was going to kill all those fish and I was concerned about those fish, too.

W: It is funny how people's opinions change when things shift over the years. I would like to talk with you a little while not about your term as governor, but about the time in the legislature which was a large part of your career. Growing up, did you think that you were going to go into politics or did that decisions sort of come to you as you studied law?

C: I had no idea I would go into politics when I was in high school. Beginning about that time, I started taking an active part in things in the school; activities in the school, taking part in dramatic productions in school. I became active in _____ Methodist church and that program. We met Sunday afternoons and Sunday nights then we had the _____ reports. I was doing quite a few things that would call on me to speak to groups and public speaking, so to speak. Then when I went to law school, I got more active there. I used to teach a Sunday school class here in Tallahassee _____.

W: This was after you returned from law school?

C: Yes, but while I was in law school, I was elected to the top position of popularity among the students in that little college; a little Liberal Arts College. This took a little, you know, _____ it encourages people _____ and it _____ leadership. I came back and I started teaching a Sunday school class. There were three teachers, Justice Harold of the Supreme Court, Justice Bufford of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Brooks, _____, _____ my prayer. We would alternate teaching; I was teaching _____ on Sunday mornings--a non-denomination kind of class. But this helped me, you know, in kind of doing things, and speaking to groups. Then when I started practicing law, well then here again, any lawyer, particularly at that time, I handled matters in the Justice of the Peace Court and divorce court and nominal, minimal fees. Nobody was making any money at this time. Twenty-five dollar fees were _____. But I was trying to _____ and this really _____ involvement held true and I felt I was expected to _____ and people told me I did. And when I made this for county Prosecuting Attorney and spoke all over everywhere and people would be real nice to me about that.

W: Made you feel good about it . . .

C: Made me feel good about it and so this kind of encourages ambition, so naturally . . .

W: What did some of the people in Leon County...

C: It motivates you and you feel like, if I am doing this well, I can do something harder well, and then something still harder. When I got to the legislature then, of course, I had a number of matters that I was sponsored to ____ and opposed. The first session of legislature I was in, we had a ____, the 1935 session, we had program for licensing slot machines--one-armed bandits. Well, I led the opposition ____ and House of Representatives we got beat when we had to vote and so Florida had legalized slot machines everywhere for two years. I tried to point out the evils I thought would come from this and _____. And so then once the session was over, I started encouraging the organization of community groups all over the state to seek a repeal of this law and it just lasted two years. By the time the next session of the legislature came in, I submitted _____. I think it was the number one bill and it was just passed notwithstanding the fact that these people had made a lot of money. It was not easy to do, but we had ____ really rallied and ready to go. Well, this was the feeling and I had when I had clashes with congress ____ fighting for strong and good causes; there were a lot of people out there that would support you that might not be saying anything and might not be doing much to support you, but still, they were aware that you deserved the support and they were anxious to help. They did help when I asked for it. We had the school program. We had the minimum foundation program in 1947 some many years later. But Florida was operating on the system that its schools were financed largely through district ____ and taxation and each county was carved up into a number of districts. The districts could be gerrymandered around like people wanted them to. As a result, they would gerrymander them in such a way that in the districts where the affluent lived, why, they had affluent schools. They had good schools, but the districts where that were "across the tracks," so to speak, were poor districts. They were isolated to the districts they owned and there was no money for their schools. A poor county like Liberty County and where the average income was very, very low ____ remember making moonshine ____ and it smells funny. They would have very minimal support. The state was coming into the picture, but it just were aid, there still was a basic local pattern of schools. We got together this minimum foundation program which started the premise that every child in Florida was entitled to a minimum standard institution wherever he was and no matter how poor he was or how poor his district was. ____ the county's district. They made every county the same district under this program. Then the state allocated its tax revenues across the board to underwrite, with the ability of that county, a minimal level of education so that we would keep up a standard that guaranteed every child a minimum standard education. That was called the Minimum Foundation Group and it started out with no support at all. I knew that

the people in the education department had been toying with this idea to see if they could sell this concept. I agreed to do what I could for this thing. I was chairman of education committee in the House _____. By this time there was _____. So we got this bill up and then it took us two years work. It was a massive, revolutionary sort of concept for Florida and elsewhere, called the Minimum Foundation Group and it started with this thing. The first vote I think that was taken, why, I was the only vote for it. But one by one we added. The second vote I think we got for it was Ernest Graham, the father of Bob Graham, the state senator from Dade county--a very fine man. And he agreed to support it and we got the newspapers to rally to our help. They put up there and they _____ and he got sold on the concept. We had other newspapers sold on it until finally that was adopted, that was passed in that session of the legislature. I think that is about all I did in that session was work on that.

I thought that was the most important thing to do. I do not claim all the credit for it. In a sense, the education department, the PTA, people from all over the state all came _____. We had some really strong showing _____ to _____. _____ of what we were giving to the children of the state, _____, how wealthy their district was where they lived and _____ and we let them build on. The wealthy could build more in the program if they wanted to, but everybody was to have a minimum standard.

W: You would call that one of your biggest successes in your legislative career.

C: Yes. That was probably my biggest success as a legislator. That was done in 1947.

W: What do you figure was your biggest disappointment in your years in the Senate and in the House?

C: Well, I guess it was early _____. I do not know, we had a number of disappointments back in those days. We tried a new school code _____ abolishing all those local school districts that refused This program, since then, has _____ all over the country and just as the community college program. We _____ community college program, but I encouraged Dan McCarty to try to get into a community college program when he was the governor. He did and made a major step forward. But we did not really get the job done until I became governor.

W: Were your views and Dan McCarty's views close?

C: Well, we were close friends and _____ and he had his heart attack before we had the spring session of the legislature. _____ inaugurated _____ and I had _____ and I think there is something _____. Dan and I differed in philosophy in one very important way (and people can argue with this). He believed in developing

objectives based upon what was attainable. He pressed attainable objectives. He said you just waste your energy if just have a shotgun load. You needed a rifle type of approach and you needed to get a goal out there that you thought was attainable then concentrate your efforts and get it accomplished and not spend your energies working on unattainable goals. Now, that was his philosophy and his approach. He and I argued a million times and his mind was that there are goals that are not attainable at the present time, but they have got to be attainable sometime in the future and that a leader in his time has got the responsibility to fill his step toward that goal because the person then that is going to come behind him has got to need to stand on his step to build his step ultimately to get there. That is reason Dan would not touch reapportionment at all or constitutional revisions.

W: Do you think he had a basic belief in it but he just . . . ?

C: I think so, but I think he just felt like that he could achieve more if he did not create the animosities and controversies that would come [while] fighting for some objective that he did not see that was attainable in his time through his efforts. I do not feel that way. I still do not. I still think I was right. The apportionment, for example: we were there alone, I mean as a state. There were the ____ from the United States Supreme Court ____, but this was purely a matter of the state and not a matter of federal jurisdiction. So no matter how bad the state was apportioned in the legislature, we had our own Supreme Court decisions, one after one, that said that this was a legislative responsibility and that, judicially, there was nothing they could do about it. And even if the legislature had just made the motions of passing every ten years (which it did) a reapportionment bill that reapportioned it just like it was and a _____. Our Supreme Court had held that as constitutional because they said that separation of powers keeps the court from getting into this and so the legislature can do that. So we went year after year, generation after generation ____ living with this intolerable situation. A little county like Jefferson over here with twelve thousand people had its State Senator, but Dade County, with a quarter of a million people at least a senator. But, Fernandina, Nassau County over there, had a state senator of its own. Liberty County down here even had a state senator of its own. It might have carried one with one of the other counties there. The apportionment ____ yet the constitution said it had to be portions according to population. Well, I say when you have got a problem like that that is so clear and the justice is so flaunted with selfish purpose that a leader has got to do what he can and get as far as he can. He should point in the direction that the state should go. So I was backing reapportionment and it was just like, you know, blowing into the wind. Those people were sitting there in the legislature. They were enjoying their benefits. In those days, a state senator had a lot to do with seeing that the roads were built and whose aunts and cousins were put on the big payroll. Jobs _____. The system was there and they were not beginning

to turn lose what they had. But we kept battling. I kept calling special sessions ____.

W: Did you ever approach that at all while you were in the legislature? Did you ever approach that and have an interest in reapportionment?

C: No, not really.

W: I guess it would have been sort of hard with your colleagues there from Jefferson County.

C: It definitely ____ responsibility and I had more responsibility. But I want to tell you a little bit about _____. We made this _____ and the federal court out in Hawaii, during our time, came out with the decision saying that notwithstanding the fact that it was a legislative function, when it was disregarded to such an extent as to deny a people the equal protection of the laws, that was a federal question under the federal constitution and that the legislature could be mandated by the court to do something about that. Well, this was just _____ in the face of all these United States Supreme Court decisions. But it made so much sense that I told the legislature, I said, this is going to be the law. There is a question of whether we do it now through state processes or whether we wait until some time in the future when we are forced to do it by the U. S. Supreme Court. We talk about state rights shout about how strong we feel about state rights and here is a states right. [Why should we] disregard this clear responsibility? They would give in a little bit _____ finally got some _____ . . .

W: Yes.

C: . . . _____.

[End of the interview.]