

NEWS CONFERENCE
GOVERNOR FARRIS BRYANT
TALLAHASSEE
NOVEMBER 26, 1963

NEWSMEN PARTICIPATING: Vernon Bradford, TAMPA TRIBUNE; Barbara Frye, UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL; David Gretsck, FREELANCE; John Hayes, WFGA, WTVJ; Jerry Mock, JOHN H. PERRY PAPERS; Allen Morris, CRACKER POLITICS; Doug Starr, ASSOCIATED PRESS; Fay Starr, ABC RADIO; George Thurston, WFXT,WFLA; Ann Waldron, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES-MIAMI HERALD SERVICE.

GOVERNOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is always difficult for me to say lady and gentlemen, but with two not it is easier.

FRYE: We like to hear it.

WALDRON: Governor, how do you think the 30 days of mourning should be observed in Florida?

GOVERNOR: Well, it will be observed, I hope, by the flying of the Flag at half-mast. We propose to keep here in the office a small memorial center with the President's picture and a wreath.

FRYE: Where will that be?

BRADFORD: It is out there in the front.

WALDRON: Real flowers?

GOVERNOR: We have palms today, but they will undoubtedly change from time to time.

R.STARR: Governor, while you were in Washington did you attend a meeting of Governors with the President of the United States, and if you did so, sir, can you tell us something about it?

GOVERNOR: No, I didn't.

R.STARR: Did you have any meetings while you were in Washington?

GOVERNOR: Immediately after the ceremony at Arlington Cemetery, I broke out of the procession line and went to the airport and caught an airplane back to Florida so that I was not there at the time of the meeting.

D.STARR: Governor, did you see the President's speech?

GOVERNOR: Which one?

D.STARR: Which he made to the 35 Governors?

GOVERNOR: No, I have not. Is it available?

D.STARR: I haven't seen it either. I just saw the story on it that is all.

THURSTON: As I understand it, President Johnson has asked the support of all Governors for President Kennedy's legislative program, and I

wonder how you feel about that and can you respond affirmatively to that request?

GOVERNOR: Last Saturday I issued a statement commending support of our new President to the people of Florida. I don't feel that our great loss, which is common to all Americans, has anything to do with the merits or demerits of programs that he was sponsoring. If they were good before, they are good now. If I agreed with them before, I agree with them now and conversely. I don't think that things of this kind ought to be decided on an emotional basis, although obviously all of us are subject to the emotional pull of which this man's character, in this particular instance, has upon us.

THURSTON: Do you feel that it is too early to begin assessing the impact of his assassination on the political alignments in the race for presidential nomination?

GOVERNOR: It's too early for me. I am not an expert on National political matters anyway. You can broaden that probably, but I am addressing myself to your particular question.

FRYE: I believe that you said in a press conference or something in Washington that you didn't feel that the change in the presidency would interfere in any way or have any effect on the Florida projects, like the Cross State Barge Canal, Canaveral, et cetera?

GOVERNOR: No, I think it will not. I think that those things that are going forward now of that nature - for instance, Canaveral certainly has the new President's commitment, he being in charge of the space program, MacDill and Strike Command are strategic decisions that obviously are above personalities, the Cross Florida Canal is now a decision of the Congress; and President Johnson, while I never saw his opinion on it, I am confident will continue to press support of it. I have not had a chance to address him or to know his feelings about Interams, but we were just building in that area anyway and I would not think it would be more difficult with him.

R. STARR: Governor you spoke about national politics. If there were a change as far as state politics were concerned -- if a United States Senator did get elevated into the Johnson Cabinet, what would be the mechanics from this end of replacing him?

GOVERNOR: I believe that the Governor appoints his successor until the

next election, at which time of course he is elected by the people.

R.STARR: Do you have any leanings toward that office should it open up?

GOVERNOR: That's a hypothetical question. There is no vacancy and I don't anticipate that there will be. Are there other questions?

HAYES: Governor, do you have any comment concerning the closed door meeting held Thursday concerning Islandis?

GOVERNOR: I don't know of such a meeting.

R.STARR: You did not attend one, Governor?

GOVERNOR: No. If you are referring to conversations that I had with some people relative to it, why this does not fit under the definition of closed door meeting unless I sit in - Well, as a matter of fact, my doors are never closed. (laughter) I hold all my conferences with open doors. Is this the meeting you referred to?

HAYES: I don't know. I understood it to be a closed door meeting.

GOVERNOR: You understood wrong. Now, do you wish to ask about the open door meeting?

HAYES: O.K., what about the open door meeting? (laughter)

FRYE: You are too literal about the doors. We consider it closed if we are not invited in.

GOVERNOR: Well, I have those all day long, but I don't consider them closed door meetings in any sense. People come in to talk to me about everything under the sun, some of which I want to hear about and some of which I don't. But I have been talking with government officials and interested citizens at several levels trying to ascertain all that I can about the proposed Seaside and Islandia developments. I have talked with James Bush representing Seaside and Mr. Brooks representing Islandia, Mr. Kidd and representatives of the Board of Conservation, local officials in the Dade County area, and I have received and read for five hours in the airplane - the door was closed (laughter) - the material in our file on this project. I read them all the way to Miami and back. I have not yet completed my information gathering effort, but all of the so-called meetings that I have had have been efforts by me to secure maximum information about these projects. No decisions have been arrived at. As a matter of fact, I don't have the power to make decisions in these matters.

WALDRON: What about the Taylor County school situation, have you made

up your mind what to do about the School Board and the Superintendent?

GOVERNOR: We are advised, I don't know whether the letter has come through on it yet, but we are advised that action by us will not affect the action by the Committee on Secondary Schools or the Commission on Secondary Schools.

WALDRON: Well, does that mean you will take no action?

GOVERNOR: No, it does not. It does mean that the urgency of action or the need to do it before they are, if they are, dis-accredited does not exist.

GRETSCH: Do you have any figures on the Turnpike extension?

GOVERNOR: Yes. On Sunday the revenue on the extension alone was some \$5,400. Of course, this took advantage, as we hoped it would, of a great deal return traffic from the activities in Miami over the weekend. But we are very, very much encouraged about it.

D.STARR: Was this last Sunday, day before yesterday?

GOVERNOR: Yes, sir.

D.STARR: Weren't a lot of people at home looking at television?

GOVERNOR: Undoubtedly. But we have been grossing about \$1,000 a day on the Orlando to Yeehaw Junction section. Now that we have opened the entire section south of Orlando to Fort Pierce the gross on that section alone was \$5,400. Of course, while I don't have the figures, undoubtedly revenue on the bobtail will likewise increase. That is one of the advantages of the extension is that the yield on the bobtail is so substantially increased with no real increase in costs.

PRYE: Where does the extension run from that you said made \$5,400?

GOVERNOR: The intersection of U.S. 17 south of Orlando to Fort Pierce, which is the northern terminal of the bobtail.

THURSTON: Governor, would you believe me if I told you no survey engineer inquired of me whether I planned to use the extension or any part of the Turnpike in going to Miami this weekend?

GOVERNOR: I would believe you.

BRADFORD: Governor, are you still receiving those printed post card requests for reinstatement of Red Franks of Alachua County?

GOVERNOR: No, sir.

BRADFORD: Do you know what the count was when they stopped?

KYMES: I think we got about one or two last week, Governor.

GOVERNOR: What is the count, do you know?

KYNES: I think close to eight or nine hundred.

GOVERNOR: Pro or con?

KYNES: Both.

GOVERNOR: Total.

WALDRON: Did Mrs. Bryant go with you to Washington?

GOVERNOR: No, ma'am.

WALDRON: You went alone?

GOVERNOR: I left from Miami and went alone, yes, ma'am.

BRADFORD: Had you indicated to Mr. Franka that you would consider reinstating him if you were convinced that the public sentiment was for that action?

GOVERNOR: The only thing I said to him that could be construed in that light is this: I told him that my mind is never closed on a subject of that kind. I think I have a duty to review from time to time any relevant facts, but I have given him no assurance that if such and such happened I would do such and so. My maximum commitment is to keep an open mind on the subject, and that commitment of course I will keep.

BRADFORD: Governor, have you heard anything from the Beverage Department relative to the investigation in Polk County on liquor licenses?

GOVERNOR: I don't believe I've heard anything about that since last Thursday when I talked with you. I left for Miami Friday morning and just returned this morning.

GRETSCH: Governor, in your address on the 18th or 19th to the Chamber of Commerce you mentioned that you were going to devote your last year in office bringing industry into the state.

GOVERNOR: Yes, sir.

GRETSCH: Do you have any specific plans you care to divulge?

GOVERNOR: I think I mentioned two of the key programs. One of them is that now underway in which we will bring into the state series of groups of industrialists who are interested or prospects for establishing industries in Florida on the one hand. And on the other, a campaign to cover on a door-knocking basis -- I don't mean myself, but I mean members of the Council of 100 and staff of the Development Commission and everyone that we can enlist in this fashion -- all areas of the country to determine the possibility of their coming to Florida.

GRETSCH: Do you anticipate leading any tours into other parts of the nation?

GOVERNOR: I would think that that would happen, yes. I have been receiving all these three years many invitations to do this kind of thing and I have declined them all largely because I have been too busy doing other things and because we were spending our energies on other things. But, assuming we don't have another special session of the Legislature, I expect to have time to do this and I would like to do it.

GRETSCH: Do you have any thoughts on specific types of industry?

GOVERNOR: We want to stick to that kind of industry which does not depend upon freight or the heavy natural resources -- crafts, technical type industries, the electronics industry, industries built on physics and sophisticated chemistry -- things of this kind.

FRYE: Governor, do you have any plans or given any thought to seeking a court ruling or advisory opinion on whether or not you can run for re-election?

GOVERNOR: No, ma'am, I have no such plans.

MORRIS: Governor, is the problem of Seaside one of resolving details or is there a possibility that the whole project may be in jeopardy?

GOVERNOR: Of course there is that possibility. The problem is to achieve a solution which will balance the multiple equities involved. Now, there is first of all the equity of the general public in the bay bottoms, in the prospects for development along Islandia of a recreational nature. Whatever comes out of a developmental nature will involve yielding up the bay bottoms and navigational ability which is now the exclusive possession of the people of Florida. In order to justify giving this up there must be other benefits flowing from this contribution which will offset it. For instance, if we get an ocean highway on the Atlantic Coast of Islandia from one end of it to another with a free public beach all the way this will be the most beautiful highway in America. For recreation, for development of outdoor living qualities it would be incomparable. The question is how can we do this -- if we have a channel out there we have got to get over it with a bridge or go around it -- is this feasible? In the use of a fill, how much shall the state charge -- to whom shall it contribute the fill if it does? If the fill goes to Islandia to build a causeway

how much shall Islandia pay? So far as Seadade is concerned, how ironclad are the assurances of the protection of natural resources - of the beauty of the area? Can the physical aspects of the Seadade operation be adequately secured and proper precautions be taken against accidental spilling of oil? What will be the danger from air pollution where steps can be taken to prevent it? If something goes wrong beyond our calculation, how severe will be the damage? Are we willing to pay the price? All of these things. Somewhere between the state in which Ponce de Leon found Florida and a completely developed or concrete and asphalt state there must be a balance which is best for the people of Florida, yielding to no special interests all that they desire. And it is our function to find that balance. It will be a changing balance, as population shifts, as industrial needs change, as recreational needs grow. All of these things effect the decision. And I am trying to accumulate for myself as much of this information as I can to try to make the most intelligent answer.

MORRIS: You sound more pessimistic about Seadade actually becoming a reality than you did several weeks ago?

GOVERNOR: I am extremely conscious of the problems. I believe that they can be solved. As of today I say that we can solve them. And as I explore with these various people that I talk with the innumerable possibilities and ask them would you be willing to accept this and then modify it and take^{it} up with another one I hope to come out with something that I can recommend to all parties and with the backing of Trustees and the Board of Conservation, Board of Health perhaps, secure their concurrence. I know this, that whatever answer we come out with nobody will like, because it won't give anybody all they want. As I have expressed to those who are advocating Seadade and Islandia this is going to be great for everybody but me, and I don't see how I can win on it.

MORRIS: Now does Aerojet figure into this?

GOVERNOR: It does. The canal to Aerojet is access to the inland waterway. It is the access to the sea. The increased size of the solid fuel missiles. All of these things are a part of the problem.

MORRIS: Did the state make any commitment to Aerojet?

GOVERNOR: We do have a commitment that we will see they get out to the inland waterway and we are going to do that regardless. If we can

get Seadade to do it for us, this is one of the plus factors that will be of great benefit to us. At the present time they are just not pushing us because they don't have the need for it under their present contract, which all of us contemplated when we originally entered into this agreement.

MOCK: Governor, you mentioned a special session. Do you have some reason to believe that there might be one this year?

GOVERNOR: Well, we don't know what is going to happen to reapportionment. I have no idea what the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States will be, what the lower courts will do with that decision, and what alternatives will be open to us or actions required by us under those unknown decisions.

BRADFORD: Governor, you said you had no plans to ask for an advisory opinion?

GOVERNOR: And I have not asked for one.

BRADFORD: And you have not asked for one.

GOVERNOR: That's correct.

BRADFORD: Would you in the eventuality that you decided to seek re-election?

GOVERNOR: If the office should go by default (laughter) --

MOCK: You have the same February 1st deadline on that?

GOVERNOR: Yes, sir. (laughter)

D.STARR: You have the same fertile imagination. (laughter)

BRADFORD: Would you in that event?

GOVERNOR: Would I what?

BRADFORD: Ask for an advisory opinion?

GOVERNOR: If I decided to run, I would.

FRYE: Would ask for an opinion or file and go through --

GOVERNOR: Oh, I don't know, I haven't talked to my lawyers. (laughter)

FRYE: Aren't you your lawyer? Do you think this is seriously a question that could be interpreted under the advisory --

GOVERNOR: Oh, yes. I really haven't given it any thought, but it seems to me that whether or not I have the power to run again is certainly within the limitations of that provision of the constitution.

FRYE: We just can't dispose of you either to the Senate or to the Governor. It is frustrating. (laughter)

GOVERNOR: Are there other questions?

SEVERAL: Thank you, Governor.

GOVERNOR: Thank you.