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Interview with  
REPRESENTATIVE "GIB" LEWIS  
February 12, 1982

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Tx.

Interviewer: Ron Marcello

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Approved: *Richard D. Lewis*  
(signature)

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Oral History Collection  
Representative "Gib" Lewis

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Date: February 12, 1982

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Representative "Gib" Lewis for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 12, 1982, in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm interviewing Representative Lewis in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of the 67th Texas Legislature.

Mr. Lewis, let's start, first of all, by going back to the elections of 1980. There was a turnover in the House of Representatives, a decrease in the number of liberals, also an increase in the number of Republican representatives. How did this affect the 67th Session of Legislature?

Mr. Lewis: Well, you told me something I didn't realize, that we had a decrease in the number of liberals and an increase in the number of Republicans, but at the same time, I don't think we had that much of a decrease in the number of liberal members of the House. I think most of the replacements that were made by Republicans were Republicans who beat conservative Democrats. They certainly did not beat liberal Democrats. In the House that was not a factor. Now in the Senate, there may have been one or two instances where they may have been a

factor, but not in the House. All the replacements of Democrats in the House by Republicans was conservative Democrats,

Marcello: So in that sense, then, you didn't see the House being any more conservative than it had been in the 66th Session?

Lewis: No, the only thing that happened in this past session, as far as the increase in Republicans, as far as their numbers are concerned, was that some of the Democrat members became a little more aware of partisan lines, where they had not been that partisan before. When you saw people like Jimmy Mankins, a good conservative Democrat from Longview, being defeated by a Republican unknown, when you see long-time members of twenty-five and twenty-eight years' service like Dick Slack from Pecos, who was a conservative Democrat, being defeated, again, by a Republican unknown with absolutely no credentials to speak of, at that point many conservative Democrats were concerned about their future. So I think, for the first time, members of the House started looking at more of a partisan-type of approach than they had in the past, where they had always been lined up as liberal versus conservative. All of a sudden they realized that maybe some of their conservative Republican colleagues were now their enemies when it comes down to election time at the polls,

Marcello: What will this mean to you personally? Of course, I'm

referring to your quest to the House speakership, and the way things look now, you've pretty much got it sewed up. So what is this increase Republican strength going to mean so far as you're concerned?

Lewis: Well, fortunately, I'll have the support of the Republican majority of the Republican members in the House because I am a conservative Democrat. I think they've conceded the fact that my district is conservative Democrat, and a Republican would stand little or no chance of winning. At the same time, if I had any opposition, well, it would be someone who would be of liberal persuasion, and, therefore, they find that their political philosophy is more attuned and aligned with me than it possibly would be with anyone else. Therefore, that's why I have been very fortunate to have the Republicans support me pretty much on the whole.

The same thing is true with conservative Democrats. I align myself with that group. Of course, when you have those two groups working together, well, of course, you have a vast majority of the membership of the House.

Marcello: Let me ask a very blunt question. Why do you want to be speaker of the House?

Lewis: Why not (chuckle)? No, I think everyone who serves in the House, if you really got down and started analyzing and really having each and everyone of those members confess,

you know, his deepest thoughts, what he'd like to do, he'd like to be speaker of the House because it's a very prestigious position. It's a position to which you're elected by your peers in the House. You have to have the confidence and... I guess we all have a certain degree of ego, but it's probably what we consider in the House to be the most important position in state government. I know some of the media addresses it probably as the third most important, but I think, if you really get down to it, it would be one of the top two. The way the constitution has our government structured, the governor can only, of course, sign and veto bills and make appointments. He has absolutely nothing to do with the legislative process, as far as putting laws in the book and making things happen. The only two people that can have any influence there is the speaker and the lieutenant governor, and, of course, the lieutenant governor has thirty-one members, where the speaker of the House is working with 149 additional members to himself. So it's a very important position; it's a very high position of influence; it's a position where you can get things done. And I think all of us who have spent any time in government have our own ideas and our own concepts as how government should be ran. And, of course, I have my own pet projects that I'd like to see implemented. I'd like to see some projects have more emphasis put on them, that we could possibly advance a little faster or a little beyond what's

been done to some of these other programs. So I think that's the reason that I'd like to be speaker,

At the same time, you know, what's surprising is that up until about three or four years ago, I'd have people over the years encourage me to look at it, but I never had that desire. I've always been pretty much involved in my own business and realized that you make a great personal sacrifice when you do hold one of those top three offices, and I was never really convinced that I was willing to give that sacrifice. Of course, as time progressed and my business here became more stable, and as I started spending more and more time away from it, it has become somewhat solidified as far as my income or what I could expect as far as personal income. So in terms of the sacrifices I'd have to be making financially toward myself and my family, well, I became more confident at that stage that I would have the time to do it. So I think all those factors combined had a great deal to do with my decision to run.

Marcello: Do you think you had reached a stage of your legislative career where it was either time to go up or get out, so to speak?

Lewis: Very definitely. You're correct. In fact, that was the determining factor. I had had a private conference with my staff members about two-and-a-half years ago, as a matter of fact. I wanted to let them know, to put them on notice,

that I was going to do one of two or three things. I said, "One is that I'm either going to retire completely,, I've been a member of the House for ten years, and I feel that after awhile you become stagnant or you really don't contribute that much," I said, "The worst thing I want to happen is to become known as a political hack that's been here for years and years," I find that over a period of time, you know, you lose ideas and your influence, and I always want to consider myself part of the solution, not part of the problem. Unfortunately, sometimes that happens when you stay too long. I said, "I'm either going to do that or run for the Senate because if there's a possibility that I can run for a Senate seat without running against someone who is my friend in the Senate, I'll do it." Bill Meier was my senator at that time, and he had indicated to me that he was going to be retiring after his term expired, and he told me in confidence, "I'd like for you to seriously consider running for my seat once I retire." I said, "I'm thinking seriously about that, or I've been encouraged by many of my colleagues in the House to run for speaker." So I told my staff, "I will take one of those three offers at the end of this next term," So they were aware of it. And you're right, I had finally came to that period in life which I consider the eight-or-ten-year burn-out, which we all experience.

Marcello: What role did Billy Clayton play in your decision? I am



assuming, without putting words in your mouth, that you conferred with him relative to the possibility that you were thinking about running for the speakership.

Lewis: Yes, that's true, and I did. In fact, right after this meeting with my staff, I approached Speaker Clayton at that point and told what my plans was at that point, and he said, "Well, I would encourage you to think about running for speaker." He said, "I think that with your backround, with your knowledge of the proceedings of the House, and with your experience with leadership in the House--you've been chairman of a committee for the last eight or ten years--you're probably more qualified than anyone else in the House to take over the role of speaker." He said, "I think you have the respect from the members, that you've always been fair, and you've got the longevity of service is needed to know what the proceedings are." He said, "I'd like to encourage you very seriously about running for speaker." And that's about where we left it at that point.

Marcello: What help did he promise you?

Lewis: He didn't promise any help--none at all. Of course, at that time, there was four or five other members who were considering the same thing I was. In fact, I think there were more than four or five. Of course, at that point he promised me absolutely no help. He just encouraged me. He said, "I encourage you to think about it for those reasons."

And, of course, I did at that point.

Marcello: How does one go about organizing a campaign, if we may call it that, to become speaker of the House?

Lewis: Well, of course, the first thing you do is find out who your real, true friends are (chuckle) and those that you think you've got a close relationship with and have worked with over a period of time, and that's exactly what I did. After that meeting, well, then I approached several of what I considered my close colleagues in the House and whose advice I value. Of course, you know, sometimes you never know whether you're on a wild goose chase or not, because I said, "Well, maybe I feel that way, and maybe the speaker's just being kind to me and telling me all those things, but I'd kind of like to kind of get the lay of the land to some extent." And so what I did at that time, I started contacting some of my close friends, and I said, "Here's the scenario. I'm thinking about doing this. Now if I did this, what do you think would be my chances?" Right down to the last person, I've got very positive feedback from them. They said, "Yes, I think that's a great idea. We never knew you were interested," because I had mentioned several times before, "No, I don't think I'd be interested in running for speaker. I've got too many other things I'd like to think about." They were very encouraging.

And then after contacting thirty or forty of those people,

which I felt very secure with, as far as getting their full support, I talked to some of the people around Austin and Fort Worth--seeing people outside of the Legislature and seeing what they thought about it, seeing what type of support I felt I could receive from the outside sector, And everyone of those people were very positive and very encouraging. In fact, I think it was frightening to the point that I never got anyone to discourage me. Everyone was very excited and very encouraging of my effort.

And then from there, we started mounting a campaign as far as going back, and I said, "Okay, we're going to do it, and are you going to sign on and be with me?" And those people started signing on. And, of course, at that time what was ironic about it is that that's when the federal attorney had indicated that there was some investigation on Speaker Clayton as far as his involvement with Brillab. I was visiting in Austin and talking to some colleagues and also talking to some consultants and some P.R. people and some business people in the Austin area who keep their ears to the ground as far as political related matters. In fact, I was in Austin when that happened that day, and, of course, I guess maybe I was in the right place at the right time because we were there on the scene. Of course, I talked to Speaker Clayton and said, "Listen, if this thing is as bad as they're trying to make it, we need to do something and

have somebody that's going to be able to step in quickly," So we moved quickly as far as, you know, making those contacts with those people and saying, "Okay, we're in the race. Here's something we haven't publicly announced, but we are going to be a candidate in case something happens to Speaker Clayton. We're going to be a stand-by candidate. We're not running against Speaker Clayton, but in the event that he is not able to become a candidate for the next session, we are that candidate,"

We were able at that point to solidify one and start working, and we started flying all over the state talking to respected members, and within a period of two or three weeks we had, what we considered, the race won. We had quite a bit of opposition, and it was just a process of eliminating that opposition. We had some very fine candidates involved in the race that had the same philosophical feelings that I did. What we did was sort of, you know, eliminate those candidates as far as going to them and contacting them and saying, "Here's where we are, and here's where you are. You're sitting here with this group, and we're sitting here with a greater group. Let's combine our efforts and see what we can do." And then, of course, we sort of eliminated those and brought those candidates in on our program. Once they became part of our team, of course, it just snowballed on out. We had one opponent over in Dallas, and the best

we could ever find, he never had over thirty committed pledges. And those were some very strong liberal members of the House that were, you know, committed to him due to philosophical feelings.

Marcello: You are, of course, referring to Representative John Bryant.

Lewis: Right.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship do you have with Representative Bryant in the Legislature?

Lewis: Oh, I think I have a fair relationship with him. It's certainly not as cordial as I'd like for it to be, but we have a fairly good relationship.

Marcello: What can you bring to the speakership that he can't?

Lewis: I think I truly express the true feelings and philosophy of the state. I've had the opportunity to travel the state numerous times. My business is statewide, and I've traveled it and have had contact with the small, large, and whatever spectrum of business you can think of. And at the same time, I've had the opportunity to travel it as far as a state official and meet those people who are involved in the political process in those different areas of state. This state is still a conservative Democratic state. And I think that my philosophy exemplifies, and at the same time represents, that philosophy.

Mr. Bryant from Dallas has an extremely labor-oriented, liberal philosophy which I don't think is a true representative of the state.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that when you initially were thinking about running for the House speakership, you had conferred with several trusted colleagues in the House. For the record, who were some of those people with whom you conferred and whose judgement you valued highly?

Lewis: Oh, I think fellows like Joe Hanna from over in Breckenridge, Stan Schlueter from Killeen, Bill Messer from Killeen, Ray Keller from Dallas, George Pierce from San Antonio. Some of those people like that were some of the first ones that I was contacting, and also members that had served on my committee and that I was very close to...Hugo Berlanga from down in Corpus Christi. We had a fairly wide, broad base of support, as a matter of fact.

Marcello: Did you consult with any of the Republican members?

Lewis: Oh, yes. Bob McFarland from Arlington and Bob Davis from Irving was two of the first fellows I consulted with. You're absolutely right. I overlooked those two, but they were right up with the other fellows.

Marcello: How much does it cost to become speaker? That's a very personal question. How much does it cost to become speaker of the House?

Lewis: It's very expensive, and, really, I served in the House

and never realized the expense, The reason it is expensive, number one, you do a great deal of traveling to go and sit down personally in their own environment and talk to members as far as soliciting their support. And this is what we did to start with two years ago after Billy Clayton ran into his problem, Really, in reality, that's when we won the speaker's race, was at that stage. And, of course, what we did since then is just solidify and reaffirm those commitments we had back during 1980.

But it's very expensive as far as flying all over the state, and the only way you can get in and out of these small communities is by private plane, and, of course, that's expensive. Very fortunately, I had a good friend that had a plane, and he, at a very low cost, helped me, you know, as far as flying around, All I did was just pay his gas, is all. And, of course, his own time was just a contribution in kind, which was no cost there. Then it finally got to the point where I had to go in with some other people and lease a plane, and, of course, that's very expensive. And you had to have one to make the schedule that's required of you. After you finally have everything solidified as far as members are concerned, everyone wants you to come to their town to meet their constituents and be part of their fund raiser or their program or come and speak to their Kiwanis Club or their

Rotary Club, and so right now I spend six days a week out of town. Of course, in doing that, you're talking about going to Houston, where you can't rent a hotel room unless it's a hundred dollars a night or more. Then, of course, by the time you fly down and you have to make all those connections, it becomes very expensive. I didn't realize it as we were going through.

Of course, we had been very lucky here in Tarrant County, where we had a couple of fund raisers here in Fort Worth where many of my friends helped contribute to that campaign, and over that period there we spent around \$100,000, ,, \$90,000 to be more exact, I think. You don't realize it adds up that quickly, but it does add up that quickly by the time you start thinking about it. You cannot use any of the House personnel or people who are on the state payroll. So what you do, you have to almost just open up another office, which we had to do. We had to open up another office and staff it with telephones and personnel, typewriters and equipment, and the support equipment that goes with it. What you're doing, you're just operating another office separate and away from everything else. And when you start paying those salaries, that rent, that overhead, and flying all over the state, airplane fuel, airplane costs, pilot costs, meals, ,, when you go into a community, well, of course, you feel like you're required



to at least take a fellow to lunch and buy him lunch at least (chuckle), or you hope to, So it's a very expensive process, very expensive, I never realized it would ever be that expensive.

Marcello: I was just thinking, when you were going over this information, that, you know, a speaker candidate can't really afford to, let's say, take a room at the Motel 6. That's not good for your image. You've got to stay in a place that's more or less appropriate to the office for which you're running, really,

Lewis: (Chuckle) Well, that's not necessarily true, but normally you do. Of course, what's funny is that I find that hotel rates vary. You go to Houston and stay in a mediocre hotel, and it's going to cost you \$90 to \$125 a night. Now I can go to Lubbock, Texas, and stay in the same hotel for \$30 a night. It's just a vast differential between areas of the state, but it's still expensive. Of course, no, you do not stay in a Motel 6. You somewhat try to stay at a comfortable place, and it's not that you're doing it because maybe the funds won't let you but because that's just your preference, I guess,

Marcello: Again, I still think it's also part of the image.

Lewis: I guess you have to project somewhat of an image to some extent,

Marcello: What kind of coaching or advice did you receive from Speaker

Clayton after you had decided to run and, of course, after you knew that he was not going to be a candidate for another term as speaker?

Lewis: Well, I never really received any to any great extent, from time to time I would see him, and he would say, "How're you doing?" and I'd say, "I'm doing this." He'd say, "That sounds good, Keep doing it," And that was pretty much the encouragement. I plan on one of these days...his schedule and my schedule are of the nature that we have very little time to even sit down and discuss subjects of this nature, I have not had time. It's surprising that all this time period has elapsed between the first time that I...which is now two years. It was exactly two years, February, two years ago, when we first got involved in this. We actually have not had time to sit down and let me, you know, pick his brain on what I should be doing and some of the pitfalls and whatever. And, of course, one time that he did tell me, he said, "I need to sit down with you and go over some of these things that can be helpful to you," But I have not had the time to do it, and he has not either. Our schedule has not been of the nature that we can sit down and just do it.

Marcello: Now in that early stage, that is, when you had first decided to run and when you were conferring with various members of the House, I would assume that you were only getting verbal

commitments at that time. You weren't into the pledge cards and that sort of thing, were you?

Lewis: We were into the pledge cards, and the pledge card read, "I pledge my support to 'Gib' Lewis to succeed Billy Clayton," which was nothing more than a second to Billy Clayton, is what it was. Of course, once he was acquitted, I talked to some of the folks, and they'd say, "What are you going to do?" And I'd say, "I'm going to do exactly what I said, I'm not a candidate. Billy Clayton is my candidate, and I'm pledged to Billy Clayton. My whole effort is only as a second." I think, you know, that had a great deal to do with maybe the positive image that I received from all the people. You know, I was a man of principle and a man of my word. And maybe at that stage, which I never even tried, maybe I could have been a good challenger to Speaker Clayton. But I was not a challenger because Speaker Clayton is my friend and had been my friend, and I'm a big fan of Billy Clayton.

In the years, I've been in the Legislature--twelve years--I've served with him twelve years, and I've served in every capacity with Billy Clayton. In fact, when I first was elected, I was on his committee. He was chairman of the committee which I was a member of, and I saw how he conducted that committee and the ability he had.

My second term was a situation where Clayton was on the

outs with the speaker at that time. We had a new speaker, and he was on the outs because they kind of considered him a threat, as far as his deciding to become speaker. Therefore, Clayton at that stage did not have a chairmanship, but I did. I was chairman of a committee, and he was a member of my committee, and I have never witnessed anyone who was more dedicated to what he was doing. Whenever I had a difficult task to perform, I'd always turn it over to him because he was a fellow that could deliver the goods. He was a worker. I've seen him many times at two or three o'clock in the morning at the Capitol getting a job done, holding committee hearings and hammering out legislation. So I gained a great deal of respect for him during that period.

And, of course, once he became speaker, well, I gained a great deal more respect for him. I remember that we were having a press conference down in Houston during this recent period, and, of course, at that time it looked very bad for Speaker Clayton, and people were at that stage trying to get me to deny my relationship with Speaker Clayton. At that press conference, of course, we had several reporters pressing me, you know, trying to get me to make some statement that would put me in the posture of denying my relationship with him or trying to withdraw my relationship with him, and I told them at that time, "You know, my philosophy in life has always been 'never forsake old friends for new friends,'"

I've never done it, and I'm not going to do it now, Bill Clayton has always been my friend, and I have a great deal of respect for him, and I'll be honest with you. If he has done something illegal, he's done it unknowingly because I have never worked with anybody who was more honest and sincere and dedicated than Bill Clayton. And over our relationship, as close as it's been, I've never seen him do anything or even indicate in any degree or even advocate anything to any degree that would be unethical or illegal. And when you work with people that close and notice their attitude toward politics, you have got to have confidence in those people."

Marcello: Now when the new Legislature started, were you once again chairman of Intergovernmental Affairs?

Lewis: Yes.

Marcello: I wasn't sure if you had continued in that capacity or not.

Lewis: I continued on it. That's my favorite committee. I've been chairman of Natural Resources, which was over all the oil and gas and minerals of the state, and then I requested to be chairman of this committee, because I like it. It's something I can get into. It deals with state and county and local government, which is something that I've always had a great deal of interest in.

Marcello: Let's talk about some of the specific issues of that recently completed legislative session. What happened to initiative-referendum? I know the Legislature didn't come

up with any sort of initiative or referendum, but why didn't it?

Lewis:

I think, you know, there's pro's and con's on initiative and referendum. It was certainly brought out, and the opponents of initiative and referendum made a very strong pitch to the Legislature and also to the community. At first, I noticed that my mail and my contacts were individuals who were pro-I and R. As time went along and as these people organized forces to oppose initiative and referendum, at that stage, well, all of a sudden, those letters started turning around, and they were in opposition to it. It's something that they became a little concerned about. All of a sudden, all that icing on that cake had had a chance to melt and sink into the cake, and you saw the raw cake itself for the first time. They realized that there was quite a bit of danger in initiative-referendum. Even though it gave that approach that the public would be more involved and have more input into the government, at the same time there was a great deal of fear on what could really happen. Emotional issues sometimes are temporary but have a big influence on what happens at the ballot box at that time.

I think at that time--what was it--Proposition 13 or whatever in California had had a chance to soak through to where all of a sudden, they started seeing the problems that

these people in California were experiencing due to that proposition. So all of a sudden, those positive letters became negative letters, and I think whoever was the determining factor there did a good job on selling the general public, and as it turned out, the general public was not supportive of initiative-referendum. I polled my constituents and tried to explain it the best way I could, and they came back negative for it. So it just never had a chance to take off because of the attitude of people started changing towards it.

Marcello: What was your initial reaction to initiative-referendum when it first came up before the Legislature?

Lewis: I think, like everyone else, that I was for it. In fact, I still have a tendency to support it. I supported it throughout the Constitutional Convention and everything else. I guess it's due to my philosophy that, you know, the closer the government is to the people, the better the people are and the more responsive to the people the government is. And that's one reason I like that concept, and I try to weigh it through the pro's and con's,

Of course, there's so many scenarios to initiative and referendum, you know. One is good and one is bad. It's just according to which one is,,,as far as me coming up and just publicly saying, "Yes, I'm for or against initiative and referendum," would be unfair for me to do because, as

we've seen, there's several proposals that do this and this and this. Some of them I support and some of them I do not. But the concept I like. But as far as some of these proposals, I've always not been supportive of.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you liked the concept of initiative-referendum, and then you also mentioned that as time goes on and as the issues were debated, you had a sense that your constituency was in opposition to initiative-referendum. So ultimately then, how did you vote on the issue?

Lewis: Well, I think I voted for it (laughter), the best I can recall at this stage. Well, there were several proposals that was before the House, and some of them I voted for and some of them I voted against. I think most of them I voted for, but some of them I was in opposition to.

Marcello: Yes, I think in one case initiative and referendum would apply solely to taxing and spending bills, and then there was another that would include everything.

Lewis: There was a dozen scenarios. Once that thing got up there, you had everyone running with different kinds of amendments to do this or that. But overall, I've always been supportive of the intent of it,

If the intent is good and something that has some safeguards to it...well, that's somewhat like my attitude toward the state constitution. I know when I first got



elected, like many people, I had not read the state constitution since I was in civics class in grade school somewhere. And maybe listening to people and believing what they said too much, I thought that the constitution needed to be revised, and I was a big supporter of rewriting the state constitution until I became a member of that august body that considered rewriting it. Then all of a sudden, I read it again and realized that we have a pretty good constitution. Now the thing has been amended several times, but that's what's good about it. It has that flexibility that we can amend it and bring it up into modern language or bring it up into the current events. You know, I think we've got a pretty good system of government in Texas, and it's proven out to be pretty good. I think that's one reason right now that we're so solid as far as our economical position in the state. That's one reason we are really the number one attraction as far as the employment in this nation. People come here. Houston is getting no telling how many thousands coming in each month looking for jobs, and they're finding jobs to some extent. We've always had a good, sound economical base, and I think it's strictly contributed to the fact that we've always had a good, sound government. The state constitution has enabled us to follow those guidelines. There's some strict guidelines that we had to follow and keep within those

boundries, and I think it's a good guideline to have, So once I got into that position of making that change, I started saying, "Whoa, was I wrong!" This thing may be old, but it can certainly serve us in modern times.

Marcello: I also think it's interesting that you were in favor of certain aspects of initiative and referendum in light of the fact that you're also a businessman, because I understand that many of the business interests were opposed to initiative-referendum because they saw the possibility of a corporate income tax, for example. You mentioned that initiative-referendum can be an emotional issue at times,

Lewis: Well, I think that's part of the emotion because, you know, the AFL-CIO was in opposition to initiative and referendum. Of course, that was one of the scare tactics that they had. Of course, they were trying to solicit business support for the AFL-CIO, and their threat was, "Well, if that does come about and you do pass a bill calling for initiative-referendum, the first thing we're going to do is call for a corporate income tax." So that was, I guess, the threat that labor put out to business in trying to solicit business support as far as coming out in opposition to initiative-referendum,

Most conservative Republican Party members in the state are in favor of initiative-referendum. In fact, Governor Clements ran for it on his platform--initiative-

referendum--and he is, of course, a businessman,

Marcello: How hard was Governor Clements campaigning for initiative-referendum during the session?

Lewis: Not very hard. I think he had the same thing happen to him as it did many of the members of the House. All of a sudden, when people started realizing, "Hey, this thing does have some inherent evils. It's maybe not as good as we thought it was. Maybe the system we have presently is not all that bad after all." If you really get down to it, most people are critical of federal government and state government, and they're critical of congressmen, senators, and legislators. They're all painted on a broad basis, so they're critical of all of them. But if you really get down to it and ask, "Well, what about your local guy?" "Oh, he's a heck of a guy. Boy, that guy is on the ball. He works hard." You'll find that everywhere. You know, they all like their local guy, but they paint that broad brush on everyone else, that he's evil and mean and dishonest and the whole thing, but luckily we got this one little stick of glue here that's kind of holding this thing together.

So it's just a misconception, I think, that many people have of government as a whole because they don't understand government. I think it goes back to the old cute saying that, you know, "Two things you never want to

see made is sausage and laws," And I think that certainly is true because people don't understand the legislative process. They don't understand that what you go in with and what you come out with is sometimes two different animals (chuckle).

I saw something cute awhile back that someone sent me, a series of cartoons, and it was on building a swing, and it said, "Here's what the guy wanted," What it was was just a rope and an old tire on a limb. And it went through all the process on how the legislator introduced it, what it looked like after it came out of committee, and, of course, it was all different concepts on the whole thing (laughter). And it said, "What the guy really wanted was nothing more than a tire hung onto a rope on a limb." Very simple, but all the processes you go through made it all very complicated.

I think that it's just an inherent thing that people are very suspicious and certainly not trusting of government, and for what reason I don't know. I think sometimes the media sometimes has a tendency to paint a more bleak picture of the Legislature than they should, and, of course, their job is to sell papers, and, of course, they want to pick up any fallacies and publicize them probably a little more than they would what's done right and properly. Of course, that's just what's expected of you anyway.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that AFL-CIO was in opposition to initiative-referendum. Why was that?

Lewis: I really don't know. I never did understand what their proposal was, but maybe they felt they liked the process like it is--don't make any changes.

Marcello: How much contact did you have with Governor Clements's lobbyist in this matter? I'm referring to Bob Close.

Lewis: Bob was very effective to some great extent. He was a past member of the Legislature and knew several members, and he was there every day, you know, trying to push that proposal.

Marcello: Did he ever speak to you personally about the subject?

Lewis: Oh, yes. I think he spoke to everyone personally.

Marcello: How does the governor's personal representative or liaison approach a member of the House on something like initiative-referendum?

Lewis: Well, the first thing they do is, of course, it's just a straight-out approach: "How do you feel about this proposal?" And if they say, "Well, I'm for it," he says, "Well, if you got any problems, get back with me and let me know," And then if you're against it, he says, "Well, what is it that you don't like about it?" And he tries to get some information from you on what it is that you don't like about the proposal. Then maybe if there's a great number that dislike it for one reason or another, then that's when

he starts compromising on that effort.

You know, that's what people don't understand. Most people know whether or not that bill's going to pass before it ever gets to the floor. That's what a lot of people don't understand. They sit up in the gallery and look down and see these House members moving all over that floor. Well, what they're doing, they're not talking about what that guy's up there talking about because they knew two weeks ahead of time what that guy's going to be talking about on that front mike; I mean, you develop a sense that you can listen to what's going on up there and carry on a conversation on the floor. What you're doing is you're talking to people about bills that's going to be scheduled for a hearing on the floor, and you pick it up, you know, just (snaps fingers) like that. It's a pretty good rumor mill, I guess, on the floor concerning who's in opposition to your proposal and who isn't.

Then all of a sudden, if you start picking up a lot of opposition you start saying, "Well, why are they in opposition to this proposal?" Then even in committee, it's the same thing. They got committee members who are opposed to it. You know, you start saying, "What is it about this proposal that you don't like?" And they'll tell you. Then you start trying to work out some kind of compromise that is going to get enough votes that you can get the proposal

passed. You know, you start saying, "Well, if you don't like that, I don't really need that that much, and we'll just take that out of it. Then will you support it?" It's just a compromise of your position. And then, of course, at that point, if you got twenty, twenty-five people, which will make a difference in a vote, and if you can please those people by taking out that provision, well, then that gives you enough votes to pass the bill. That's what you're doing--you're working the floor all the time--because that's the only time you've got a chance to get all those guys together, is to work them and say, "Hey, can we do this, can we do that?" Then you're running back and forth and trying to make some kind of negotiations. The bill's already out of committee at that point, and you can have one of them offer an amendment that'll solidify your position with these people.

Marcello: Now clarify my thinking on this. As a former member of the Legislature, Mr. Close could actually be on the floor, could he not?

Lewis: Yes, he could be on the floor.

Marcello: How about Waggoner Carr? Did you have much contact with him? Waggoner Carr and Texas Thirteen?

Lewis: I never did, never did. I heard his ads, which I thought were terrible, but as far as having any personal contact, I never had any at all.

Marcello: Okay, let's go on and talk about another issue, and this one was rather an emotional one. I'm referring to a raising of the ceiling on interest rates in Texas. Now initially, what was your reaction in general to proposals to raise or lift the interest rates?

Lewis: Well, of course, your first reaction is being in opposition to it, which I think we all are, you know, when you look at something up front like that. I've always voted in years past in opposition to increasing interest rates. In fact, I think I did this year again. I'll have to check my voting record on that, but I don't remember right off what my posture was on it at this stage. But you have to take into consideration the economical climate, something that certainly we in Texas have nothing to do with. Also, of course, no one likes to pay high interest rates, but at the same time we have to look at the economical climate on a broad spectrum to the point that, you know, are we going to allow people to buy on credit. In other words, what had happened, you've gotten into a situation where those lending institutions and those people who sold on credit could not afford to sell anyone anything on credit because they couldn't afford it. They couldn't afford to loan money out at 1 percent and pay another higher percent for that money when they got to go to the bank to carry on business. So you have to look at it on that viewpoint.



I believe I voted against it when it first came up, and then when it came back, I think I voted on final passage for it because they'd hammered out some areas I had some concern about. It looked practical, and, of course, I look at things practically, not as a politician. A politician has a very strong political vote, and it can be used against you very easily. You know, "He voted for higher interest rates." Well, of course, that fires people up, but all of a sudden, those folks say, "Well, if it hadn't been for high interest rates, I wouldn't have been able to buy that refrigerator that we needed to buy because that guy wouldn't have sold it to me on credit. I'd have had to have cash." It's a "Catch 22" type of situation, really.

Marcello: I think that with HB 1228 that established an interest rate of 24 percent, and I'm assuming that's the one you're referring to.

Lewis: Right. Well, what it did, it established a ceiling. I think that was a misnomer that many people had. It allowed interest rates to go up to that amount. It was a flexible, permissive type of thing that allowed it to go up to that ceiling. It just established a new ceiling on interest rates. It didn't automatically say, "Well, you've been paying 10 percent, and now you're start paying 20 percent." It allowed them to go up to that.

Of course, competition is what keeps this world alive, I'll tell you what, I love competition. If it hadn't been for competition, my business would still be down in a small, little shanty somewhere, and I'd be still be producing a shoddy product. But my competitors keep me moving, keep me active, so where I'm continuing to buy new equipment. It affords me to buy better equipment and produce a better product. And that's what competition is all about. And I'll tell you, as competitive as the money business is-- and we're talking about banks and savings and loan institutions and all those people competing against each other--I assure you that they're going to keep that interest rate as competitive as they possibly can,

Right now the problem we have is the federal government. The federal government has become the biggest borrower, and so, therefore, the banks and savings and loans are having to compete against the federal government, which certainly puts everybody else in an unfair position. So that's the problem we're having.

Marcello: I think it's interesting that Senator Jones over on the other side at one point made the comment that he was in favor of lifting the ceiling altogether and just letting the market determine what the interest rates would be.

Lewis: Well, several states have that--have no ceiling, no ceiling at all--and they seem to be keeping it in check pretty well.

Of course, everything contributes. You've got to look at the whole, broad spectrum again to the point that we in Texas have to compete with other super states. The super states are the top four--New York, California, Texas, and Florida. Those are the states where all the moving and shaking is happening, and the economy is good. Where all the other forty-something states are suffering, well, these four states are doing well because they got a real, good, healthy economy. When you cannot compete on the free marketplace, and there's some provision that's prohibiting that, we all suffer. We don't have the jobs available. If you don't have the jobs, you don't have employment; if you don't have the employment, you don't have the money on the marketplace to spend. So we all suffer for it. As long as you can keep it where you got a free-moving economy where people participate in that economy, we have to have some flexibility to allow that to come about.

Marcello: While we're on the subject of money, let's move into the area of tax relief. I think that when the session first started Governor Clements had hoped to bring about perhaps a billion dollars worth of tax cuts. What happened?

Lewis: Well, I think you probably came to a realization that, to meet all the needs that have to be met in the state, that's not a feasible program to have. I think he's made some effort, and some good efforts, I think, as far as maybe

cutting back, trimming some of the fat out of the agencies. I know that his proposal, when he first ran, was to cut back so many thousand jobs, something like that. But once you really realize that, you know, there's really not that much fat in some of these agencies...of course, I'll admit there is some fat in some, but, I'll tell you, Texas has... I don't know if it's inherent in the people or what, but I serve on the Executive Committee of the National Conference of State Legislators, and that board has an opportunity... in fact, I'm leaving to go back to Washington...we met with the President two weeks ago. It puts me in contact with these other states and some of the programs they got and some of the attitudes--to see how they operate. I don't know if it's just the individuals that produce that kind of a robust, hearty, conservative group, but we don't have much waste. We give the taxpayers a pretty good return on their dollar, and we don't have a great deal of fat in any of our state agencies. We give the taxpayers their money's worth, I think, as far as backing service, and rarely do you find somebody just not performing to their fullest,

And I think that once the governor realized that he had maybe been observing something that was going on in Washington, someone who's gone up and dealt with those people all of a sudden realizes that the state government

is really as a different concept, that we have a different concept right here in Texas. There's a little difference between us on the Colorado River and those on the Potomac up there. The attitudes of the people are different. Again, I think that gets back to what I was saying about us being a little bit closer to the people. We feel are more responsive to the people. At the same time, we have a little closer scrutiny than these people. I think that once he got there he realized, you know, that what he thought existed really, in reality, did not exist.

Marcello: Interestingly, Speaker Clayton came out in opposition to the proposed tax cuts the governor wanted. Why was this?

Lewis: Well, I think Speaker Clayton's been in politics ten or twelve years or twenty years, I guess, at that stage, and had a little more insight on what's going on. Of course, he serves as a member of the Legislative Budget Board, which continually, all year long, reviews the appropriations, expenditures, of all the state agencies. That's what they're doing every day, not only during the session but during the interim. He serves as a member of that board, and what they do continuously is review these state agencies on their appropriations and expenditures. He has first-hand knowledge of whether there's some fat there or not.

Marcello: More specifically, what part do you think his wanting a state water plan would have played in his decision to oppose

these tax cuts, In other words, that state water plan, which was one of his pet projects, was going to cost some money,

Lewis: Yes, Well, of course, the governor's tax cuts was nothing more than, he said, "Well, we got a surplus." I think he was taking maybe the same approach that Reagan has tried to take with his appropriations cuts, his budget cuts, and also, his tax cuts, I don't agree with President Reagan's tax cuts, I think he's made a gross mistake in his tax cuts to the point that the biggest danger, I think, we have in this country is our deficit--the national debt, I think every effort should be made to try to balance the budget because that's where everyone is suffering, That's what has brought on high interest rates, That's brought on a lot of the disadvantages we have, We have such a huge deficit, and I think if the President would have said, "Okay, we're going to make these cuts; we're going to try to get back in a balanced budget position; and to do that we're going to have to maintain the present level of taxation." Of course, his concept was that if you didn't have the money, you don't spend it, and that's true, That's a good concept to have in Texas, whereas we have to balance our budget, In other words, we can't spend any more than the comptroller says we have. But that's not true in Washington, where you got a printing press out there running

money that allows you to have a deficit.

Of course, I think the governor's concept is somewhat similar to that. He felt that the money was not available; therefore, we would not have it to spend. There's thousands and thousands of good programs that need addressing, that need increases in budgets, that need to be ran properly. You have your education system, where schoolteachers want an increase in salaries, which is a hefty hunk of your budget already; you got the state employees also trying to live under inflated conditions, and you try to keep them up with inflation and try to reward them with the work that they're doing. Well, it's very expensive, and I think that in trying to cut back, he decided to cut back on some taxes because we're going to spend it if we got it.

All of a sudden, however, you have to realize, too, that we do live in a situation where, if we want to make our public employees and our schoolteachers second-class citizens, well, that's the way you do it. You're going to have to address those issues and address them very realistic because, the first thing you know, you're not going to have any employees that's worth a flip. Those good-quality employees are going to be getting a job in a private sector and making a lot more money. So, therefore, all you're going to end up with is the rejects of society.

And the same thing is true in education. All you're going to find is people who you want to be a contributing member to society being educated by people who can't get a job in a private sector. So it's a dangerous situation.

I think that probably he came to that realization somewhere during that first tenure: "Hey, this is not what we want. We want the best for our young people. We want the best people in those classrooms educating those people, giving those people the best education they can get."

I think we all mature in politics. On my concept of politics today, there's a great deal of difference than there was ten years ago. If you stay in politics and become more aware of what is around you, as far as the needs and how you address some of these situations, I think you mature, and you educate yourself a great deal, too. On the outside many times, it's easy to criticize and say, "Well, they're not doing a good job, and they're not doing this, and they're getting paid more than they should, and they're not handling what they're doing properly." But once you have a chance to sit down and look at it and analyze it and have a closer contact with it, you realize that, yes, they do deserve more. Yes, they are doing a good job. Yes, they are handling everything properly. So it's a maturing factor, too.



Marcello: What was your initial reaction to Speaker Clayton's state water plan?

Lewis: I was supportive of it because I think that for us to maintain a vital economy in Texas, we're going to have to have a very aggressive water plan. If we're going to continue to attract industry and which will employ Texas citizens and which would give us all a better standard of living, we're going to have to have adequate water to operate these industries. That's a very major part of it.

I think Speaker Clayton had a good approach. Apparently, a lot of politics got involved more than they probably should have, as far as leading to the defeat of that proposal. I personally have not got problems with dedicated funds, and that apparently was the biggest objection that most people had. That objection came on two sides. You had some who were displeased with Speaker Clayton for political reasons. One segment that was trying to imply politics to it, and, of course, they came out vocally in opposition to it. Then you had those who were dependent upon state appropriations fearing all of a sudden that maybe this is going to cut off some of the available funds that could be appropriated to that program that they're interested in. Like schoolteachers, for example, they had a great fear that "Well, if we do that and dedicate that fund, that means that those surplusses are not going to be available

for us to use for salary increases and education." So that built in opposition to it. So it has built-in opposition.

Personally, I did not share those fears because I think one of the reasons why we got a great school system now is because we have dedicated funds--the two university systems. Even though it might not be as good as we'd like it to be, it's a heck of a lot better than some other states. One reason we have one of the finest highway systems in the nation is because we do have dedicated funds earmarked for those programs. Much argument as we can find and will be finding in the future on the Permanent University Fund which concerns our two great institutions--the University of Texas at Austin and A&M University. But we're in a position, due to those dedicated funds, to build two schools that will be of a superior nature that I don't think are going to be equaled by any other schools in the nation--probably not today. I think you're going to find that those schools are going to be on the same level as Harvard and Yale and some of the finest schools in the nation. It's because the funds are available to do this. They are dedicated for excellence in education. So I don't share that fear that many of these other people did, but that was what I attribute to the downfall of the Speaker Clayton's water fund.

It's something that, as speaker, I am certainly going to continue to try to find some approach to it, some avenue that we can follow to address that issue, because I personally think that the worse thing that you can do is react to a situation. I'd rather act than react. When you react, you have too many opportunities to make big mistakes at that point.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about a subject that probably occupied every legislator's time more than any other issue, and that's redistricting. Let us talk about congressional redistricting first of all. As a Democratic member of the Legislature, what kind of a redistricting plan were you interested in seeing coming out of the Legislature?

Lewis: Well, my interest was finding one that was going to stand up under the criteria of the federal government and the Justice Department and the Voting Rights Act. I think, really, that that effort was foremost on members of that committee's minds. Unfortunately, you got into a situation where it became a partisan-type situation where everyone, I guess, was clamoring for something that was going to give them an upper leg on anyone else. I think that was a very unfortunate position for them to be in.

Marcello: But doesn't redistricting always essentially become a partisan thing?

Lewis: It always becomes a partisan thing to some great extent.

You have, of course, a population shift, which we certainly had in the last ten years, from rural to urban. This means that you're losing some rural representation. There's some of these members who were representing one district and all of a sudden ended up in another one, and then you'd have two incumbent members representing one area. Of course, that always hurts. You would see friends pitted against friends. You try to make provisions that that don't come about. You may stretch it around, where you maybe are infringing upon the urban areas to make up that population deviation. But it comes down to that. Of course, unfortunately, just due to the pure economical and social backgrounds of people who have a tendency to consolidate their living quarters in one area of the city or a community, there is a situation where you can draw lines around them and can condense those people into an area that will vote one way or the other. Of course, I've always had problems with that. To me, I think what they ought to do is split it up and run at it just like it is because we're all Texas citizens, you know; and as far as trying to draw something or make something to where it's advantageous to the other person, I've just never been a big supporter of that.

Marcello;

What was your reaction--and, again, I'm talking about congressional redistricting at this stage--what was your

reaction to the proposal of Republicans that there ought to be, in essence, a black congressional district established, that is, a congressional district that would be capable of electing a black?

Lewis: Well, I think that when we got down to that stage, it was purely partisan politics, is all you were talking about at that stage. Of course, I think that proposal was strictly to pack blacks into a district so as to free more affluent white Anglo people that would be more inclined to vote on Republican ticket. I think that was unfortunate. It wasn't what would benefit that community as a whole; it was just what would benefit that particular party. I think that was a situation that arrived there.

Marcello: In other words, what we're referring to is the creation of such a district that would probably cause the defeat both Martin Frost and Jim Mattox.

Lewis: Right.

Marcello: Now you're a conservative Democrat as you mentioned earlier. They're liberal Democrats. Did you personally still want to see their districts preserved? Or at least did you still want to see Democrats elected?

Lewis: Well, I personally like Martin Frost, and I like Jim Mattox. I've got no quarrel with either one of them. Of course, my attitude on Dallas County was what I thought was best for Dallas County overall, and in any decision

I made, I was never protecting or harming either one of those two fellows. It was something they were very concerned with; I was not concerned for it. I was concerned with what I considered a fair congressional redistricting plan, and my concern was in Tarrant County. That was one area that I told people, you know, that was trying to pull on me to support this plan and this plan, "Here's what the people in Tarrant County want," I said, "They're interested in having two congressional seats in Tarrant County; they want to have more influence than they got now with one congressional seat." I said, "If you can show me a plan that does that, that's what the people in my district want." I'd already had a meeting with these people, and they said, "Hey, we feel like we're coming into our own in Tarrant County, that we've got the population that entitles us to two seats, and we want you to help us do that." That's what my commitment was, and that's why I told them, "You give me that plan, and I'm going to be supportive of it, and that's what I'm concerned with at this point," which is what I was concerned about.

Marcello: What was your attitude toward preserving a district for Jim Wright?

Lewis: Jim Wright is a sly fox (chuckle).

Marcello: To say the least (chuckle).

Lewis: To say the least (chuckle). Every plan that was drawn by

a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or whatever started off with Jim Wright's seat. He drew his own seat and everything else was drawn around Jim Wright, if you want to know the honest truth, on congressional redistricting. He drew it himself, and every plan started from there and branched out from there. There was no attempt to ever deviate from what he wanted.

Marcello: I guess you never saw so many congressmen descending upon Austin in your life, did you, as you did in this past session?

Lewis: I saw them in '71 (laughter). Same thing,

Marcello: Again, how would one of these congressmen approach you? Okay, here's a congressman who's interested in a particular outline for his district,

Lewis: Well, their approach was this. He'd say, "Hey, I need some help. Are you going to be able to help me?" And you would say, "Well, what do you need help for?" He'd say, "I need to try to preserve my district here. Now here's what I propose and what's trying to be done to me." So I'd say, "Well, we'll see what we can do." So you try to work around it.

I think most of the heat of redistricting came on the shoulders of the people on that committee. I pretty much left it up to the committee. In fact, I stayed completely away from it because of my delicate position as a

speaker candidate. I had gone through a redistricting session in 1971 and saw very close friends become enemies overnight because of how one person voted on a plan that would have been detrimental to his friend and he didn't even realize it. So I tried to stay as completely away from redistricting as I possibly could, and I did. And I got criticized for it, but that's fine because I'd seen that fight develop before, and I saw people who thought they were close friends become overnight enemies due to redistricting. That's a very delicate, very emotional-type situation that I didn't want to become a part of, and so I just divorced myself from that process and just looked at it with concern about Tarrant County.

Protecting Jim Wright is what my deal was because I think he's going to be the next speaker of the U.S. Congress, and I think it contributes a great deal to my district. He's my congressman, and I'm going to do everything I can to preserve that influence that he's going to have in Congress. For me and my constituents here, that was my concern, and I told them, "This is what my concern is, and no other." Of course, I got criticism from people in Dallas and people in Houston because I didn't support this plan or that plan that they felt was favorable to Democrats or favorable to Republicans. I said, "This is all I'm worried about. I'm going to vote for the plan that



gives me this, and y'all worry about your own plans."

So that's what my posture was during that period.

Marcello: This is an interesting point you brought up because, for the life of me, when I did my background research for the interview concerning this legislative session, I didn't see a whole lot of space being given to your activities. That is not to assume that you weren't doing anything, but you had to be low key, considering the situation you were in at the time.

Lewis: Well, I was low key. In fact, I tried to stay as far away from it as I could for that purpose.

Marcello: And I assume this was especially true in the case of redistricting, which had to be the most emotional issue of the session.

Lewis: That's right, I had the benefit of going through one of them before, which many people did not, I was one of the very few that had, and I saw what had happened during that period. I had made my mind up that that's a "no-win" situation. The best thing for me to do was to stay as far away from it as I possibly could, which I did. So that's why you saw absolutely no print on me at all. That was the posture I had, you know, and my position was that I was going to support whatever the committee came out with and support these criteria. So I outlined my criteria, and the speaker came to me, and I'd say, "Here's what I

want, and here's what I'm going to do." I had everything up front and never left anything to guessing, and so everybody knew what I was after.

Marcello: Let's talk about a couple of more rather emotional issues, although perhaps not as emotional as redistricting, and then we can probably conclude this interview. I'm referring, first of all, to the law and order issues that came up during this particular session. What was your reaction to that law and order package that was brought forward by the governor?

Lewis: Well, I sponsored part of it. I was one of the sponsors of that proposal. I thought they were good. We can go a great deal farther, I think. In some areas they're going to be very beneficial, and in some areas I think they may have been a little shallow; but it was a good package, and I think it served a purpose of bringing attention to the need to address crime and law and order. I think it served that purpose to some degree.

Marcello: This, however, could be an emotional issue, at least so far as some of your fellow legislators were concerned. I'm referring, more specifically, to the trail lawyers.

Lewis: That's true. They were in opposition to some of the proposals, but most of them they were supportive of, themselves, I think.

Marcello: Another issue that came up which had some emotions attached

to it was property tax legislation. Again, what we're talking about is reforming or refining the Peveto Bill that was passed the last session.

Lewis:

That is true and that's going to be a very controversial subject. In fact, if there is going to be any controversy as far as any committee actions that the Legislature took, it was the property tax revision. I think, personally, it's a misunderstood proposal, and I think it's also a proposal that's been taken advantage of by the people who are in the business of raising taxes that support the school systems or county systems and such. I think it's something that is grossly misunderstood, and it's something that's very simple. All you're doing is establishing a procedure to evaluate taxes to where they're going to be uniform. There's nothing wrong with uniform evaluation, but a lot of people are trying to make it confusing for their own self gain. I think it's a tragic thing because no one's tax should be up at all. All you're doing is just reestablishing a method of valuing that tax. And that tax structure should be adjusted to take into consideration where, if you've been paying \$100 a year on property, your next tax bill should be \$100. The only thing that's happened is that they've reappraised,, they have put a constant market value appraisal on that property. It's very confusing, and it shouldn't be. It's very simple.

Marcello: Well, there was a great deal of opposition because some of the local taxing units wanted to tax at full market value, did they not?

Lewis: Yes.

Marcello: I think that Dallas County, in particular, wanted this.

Lewis: What you ran into was that you ran into somebody trying to tell somebody else how to do their business. Your tax assessor-collectors felt themselves challenged by this new appraisal board that's going to take this out of their hands. They had their little kingdom out there where they got twenty-five or thirty employees working under them that stand to lose their jobs. And that's where their problems are coming from. Overall, it's designed to be a money-saving instrument for the taxpayers. You're cutting down on duplication of employees, and when you do that, you're saving the taxpayer money. But, unfortunately, a lot of people have demagogued the issue. They've clouded the issue, and they've taken advantage of the issue.

Marcello: Let me ask you one last question. This is kind of one looking into the future. Assuming that you become the next speaker of the House of Representatives, and there's no reason to doubt that you're not, what two or three issues do you see looming on the horizon that are going to require a great deal of attention on your part?

Lewis: Well, I think one of the issues is going to be President Reagan's proposals as far as returning responsibilities back to the states. It's going to be one that we're going to have to monitor very closely. I know that what he's proposed has been to turn several programs back over to the states, and we're going to have to finance these programs, and certainly I think we can and we will. But what he's proposing and what comes out of Congress is going to be two different things. We've got to see how Congress reacts to these proposals, and once they react, we're going to have to sit down at that point and address these issues. That's going to be a major issue.

I think a continuing issue we're going to have in this state is, of course, crime again. I think we're going to have to have more cooperation with our judicial system, with our law enforcement system. The prison system is something we're certainly going to have to address.

I think water, again, is going to have to be a major priority we're going to have to look at. I think a redress of some of these issues has kind of been looming for a long time.

Marcello: Well, Representative Lewis, I think that's a pretty good place to end this interview. Once more, I want to thank you very much for having given me this time. I know

you're a very, very busy person, and at the same time I hope that next time you'll decide to continue with these interviews, and hopefully we'll call you Mr. Speaker at that time.

**Lewis:** I hope that's right (chuckle). Thank you very much.

**Marcello:** Thank you.