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Interview with
SENATOR JOHN LEEDOM
February 10, 1984

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

Senator John Leedom

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date of Interview: February 10, 1984

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Senator John Leedom for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 10, 1984, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Senator Leedom in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions during the recently completed session of the 68th Texas Legislature.

Senator Leedom, since this is the first time that you've participated in this project, let's get some biographical and background information. First of all, tell me when you were born and where you were born.

Senator
Leedom:

I was born on July 27, 1921, in Dallas, Texas. I'm one of the--I guess--rare folks that's native of Dallas and native of Texas. In terms of the years in the State Senate, I found myself, in terms of the seniority age, the oldest in the Senate at the age of sixty-two this last time. I attended Highland Park High School and graduated from Rice University with a M.S. degree in electrical engineering. I entered World War II in the

Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C.

I exited the war when World War II was over as a lieutenant junior grade and went to work for the Sprague Electric Company in the distributing division of Sprague Products as assistant manager. I traveled the forty-eight states, and in 1950 I had decided that the electronic distributing industry was a very fine industry and went in business--in partnership with Mr. M. B. Patterson, who had the money, while I had the youth and energy.

We formed Wholesale Electronic Supply, which has been operating now for thirty-four years at the corner of Ross Avenue and Central Expressway in Dallas.

The electronic industry is a challenging one, and I was honored that at one time the industry asked me to serve--and I served--as president of the National Electronic Distributors Association. It was our industry's turn to furnish officers for the National Association of Wholesale Distributors, so I became one of its chairs and became its president and chairman of the board of the National Association of Wholesale Distributors, which is the granddaddy of all wholesaling organizations.

During this period of time, a good friend who later became our congressman, Jim Collins, of Fidelity Union, which was the first mortgagagee on a new building we built, sponsored me at the Young Presidents Organization, and I

served in it as a chapter chairman, a member of its national board of directors, and area vice-president. But the interesting part of life is, he sponsored me in the Young Presidents Organization...at one of the early meetings I attended, they had the county chairmen, Ed Drake of the Democrat Party and Peter O'Donnell of the Republican Party, speak of the need and importance of businessmen being involved in politics. I responded and was soon asked to participate.

I did choose the party of my heritage, I guess, the Republican Party, because, oddly enough, my dad, who had also been born in Texas, was one of those rare birds that was a Republican. I remember arguing with Charles Purnell, who at one time was the administrative aide for Governor Briscoe, that when we were both seven years old, he was for Al Smith and I was for Herbert Hoover. So I go way back in terms of my Republicanism.

During this period, after I became involved and participated, in 1962 I was asked to run, and I did and became Republican County Chairman of Dallas County. I served in that post through the tragic events of 1963 during the assassination in Dallas and served on until 1966 when we had the successful reelection of Senator Tower. I went to the State Republican Executive Committee, served on it for four years.

Shortly after that, as Dallas went to single member

districts, I was asked to serve and run in the 3rd City Council District in Dallas. I did run, and, as it turned out, I was unopposed. Then two years later, I was happy to file again and then again was unopposed, which was sort of surprising because where I stood was certainly on the side of the conservative issues; but perhaps it was because of the strength of the Republican organization in that part of Dallas because we didn't have an opponent. Because of redistricting lawsuits, we were carried over one more year, so I did serve five years on the Dallas City Council.

At the very end of that ~~service~~, Senator Bill Braecklein switched from the Democrat Party to the Republican Party. Many friends thought he would not have as good a chance of reelection. In the meantime, the former Democrat county chairman had resigned to run for the Senate seat, and people also urged me to do so. I responded and did run and fortunately was elected in 1980 and served my first session in the Senate. The second time, because of redistricting, we all ran again, and I was pleased to win with a very substantial portion of that vote in 1982 and served in this last session.

Marcello: While ago, you mentioned that philosophically you are a conservative. Could you possibly expand on that a little bit?

Leedom: Well, I think titles sometimes, and labels, can be confused.

I think probably sometimes I would find myself trying to say I'm a Thomas Jefferson Republican--someone that believes that the least government is the best, let government stay out of our lives as to the extent of the functions government should fulfill. I find it's philosophically easy to understand that there's two wide schools of thought about what the function of government is. One subscribes to the idea that government should provide for people what they want, and the conservatives, I think, come to the conclusion that the function of government is to provide for people what they need that they cannot do for themselves. There is a vast difference between wants and needs, and it comes on down, then, of what government's function is.

Take the city level, which, I think, helps understand even the national or state level. Today in Dallas, to have a good water system, it takes planning out to the year 2020. We can't all have wells in our backyard. The cost in 1978 dollars when I left the council was about \$250 million to provide for water in that next period ahead. Certainly, we have to have a sanitation system. The South Dallas Sanitation System of Dallas costs more than the new city hall. You'll never see any pictures of it because it's not that glamorous, but it's a need. We cannot all have septic tanks or outhouses. Yet it costs a great deal of money to provide a sanitation system. Certainly, the criminal justice

system...we all want as safe a community as possible. It costs a great deal of money to provide the policemen and the training and then, of course, eventually the courts and the district attorneys and the prisons and the jails. It takes a lot of money to take the undesirables and the undeserving out of society. Then we come along to such things that are acceptable, such as roads and transportation. If you and I were to design a new civilization and had a clean piece of paper and a map in front of us, without question one of the first things after we got through deciding where we would get our water would be to draw how we're going to get from point A to point B, and we'd complete a road system. It'd probably be a lot simpler than the cow pasture we have in Dallas, which became Turtle Creek and what-have-you. Nevertheless, it is necessary, and it takes money to provide a road system. It takes money for the State of Texas to maintain its some 70,000 miles or more of highways, which are in dire needs of varying repair. It just takes a lot of money to do it, and if we don't do it--don't maintain a road system--then everything else becomes kind of chaotic. People say sometimes, "John, you're a concrete man." I say, "Well, just a minute now. Tell me when the quality of life isn't affected when you're in that car. The worst cases can be if it's dangerous and unsafe; the best case can be if you're wasting a half an

hour getting to your loved ones or going to work. If you tell me that's the quality of life that you want, then I will shut up; but if it's not, I think we've got to be aware that we've got to keep working to provide a better transportation system." So those are needs that take a lot of money.

Then when we start to deal with the "want" area, there's no question that everybody wants more. It could be possible that a good born-again liberal demagogue could campaign in August that everyone in South Dallas should have the benefits of air conditioning like everybody in North Dallas has and that the government ought to provide it. It'd be a very popular political issue because it gets pretty hot in Dallas in August. Yet the cost of providing air conditioning for all those who can't afford it is a want as a function of government would be so astronomical that we would probably not have money to do it. So I'd get down on that issue.

The other issue which, I think, is less appropriate to the state but would be to the national government is the defense of our community. To that degree most of us conservatives think that we need a good, strong defensive structure to be sure we don't get lost up in some of the tragedies that have occurred elsewhere in the world.

So I guess, when it gets down to what a conservative

and a liberal is, it's not so much that we don't want everybody to be happy and prosperous and so forth; it's just how it's achieved. I think we basically leave it up to the individual to do most of the achieving.

Marcello: What adjustments did you have to make in moving from the Dallas City Council to the Texas Senate?

Leedom: Well, not as much as people would think. Actually, the City Council, since it's probably the closest government to the people, brought about an understanding that the phone would ring at anytime, and citizens would be concerned about whether the dogs were barking or they needed street lights and what-have-you; whereas the state government did not have near as much of what is called casework. There is a great deal of awareness that people come to the state government for group interests, and to that point there was a difference. The group interests in the city government, outside of perhaps a zoning case, weren't too much on a philosophical issue. But state government can lean heavily upon group interests, whether it's for the interests of the bankers or the interests of the real estate people or interests of the farmers or interests of teachers, who want more pay. Those are group interests that are not really serving an individual area or an individual need. It's just that the group wants something or doesn't want something.

Marcello: Sometimes the Texas Senate is said to have a club-like

atmosphere. What are your comments on that?

Leedom: Well, I think that's a fair statement, and I think that's to be understood in a relationship that, when you have thirty-one independent individuals who have been through the process of being chosen by nearly 450,000 people, theoretically, from their areas, they come to the room or to the meeting with a feeling of equalness but at the same time respect for what the significance is of being there. To that degree they are also aware that in Texas, having the smallest State Senate in the nation, there is a responsibility to use their prerogatives under the constitution for the best interests of their constituents and the best interests of the state. You develop pretty quickly an awareness in that smaller group of people a sense of who everybody is and what their personalities are. It is safe to say that it is an honor to be in that group, and I think they basically conduct themselves with a demeanor that makes you feel that it's also important that it's conducted that way. So although people will disagree and so forth within that atmosphere, I think there's a feeling that the Senate itself has a spirit to it that's supposed to transcend any one particular issue. From my experience, Lieutenant Governor Hobby, I think, has done an excellent job of maintaining the fairness and equity of that relationship.

Marcello: We'll come back and talk about Governor Hobby in a minute. What sort of a district do you represent? I'm referring now to the socio-economic makeup of your district.

Leedom: Well, in the first place, the 16th District totally encompasses Dallas County. It's the only Dallas County senatorial district that's totally in Dallas County. The rest of them go from the urban areas of Dallas out into other surrounding counties. It's basically an effort to gerrymander the Republicans out of Dallas County. You can't call it anything else but that. The 16th District, though, is intact, but it does range from very high income areas to very low income areas. It ranges from a ratio mix of about 16 or 17 percent minorities to an awful lot of just fine middle folks that are better known to be...I call them the blue-collar, pick-up truck kind of guys, and I get along with them as well as the Cadillac crowd. It probably has, as far as urban mixture, as good a blend as you could have in a county like Dallas. It has an educational mix; it has a socio-economic mix. Again, though, I find that those things are in my opinion greatly exaggerated in their importance in the political process.

Marcello: Can you expand upon that statement?

Leedom: Yes. I think that there are really three fundamentals that we all want, when you cut through it. First, there's a love of children, and most parents, no matter what their

color, creed, race, or economic status, are concerned. They love and have an affection for the welfare and the growth of their children education-wise, health-wise, care-wise, safety-wise. They want to bring them up in an atmosphere of wholesomeness.

I think, also, being a businessman with a private enterprise background, that there's a great deal more awareness by everybody that the best thing a person can have is a good job, and he has that if there's a good atmosphere toward business. Therefore, both the employer and the employee must realize that they need an atmosphere in which they can conduct themselves where the maximum amount of their efforts are returned to them and not going into taxes. I think that sometimes we feel that only the rich are interested in no taxes, and that's entirely...the rich can handle it better than the poor because they can have more ways of handling it. The middle income people are as concerned when we found ourselves with such things as inflation.

I remember that after my first election, the garage was a mess. I'd filled up several garbage cans with political signs, and the garbage men were coming to pick up the garbage that day, and I helped them carry out these trash cans filled with these signs. I said, "This won't happen again. It's just been an election. I'm just cleaning up." He said, "Oh, yes, it was a good election." I said, "Did you like

the outcome of it?" He said, "Oh, yes, we needed this." This was in 1980. I thought he was talking about my election. I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, yes, we needed Mr. Reagan." (Chuckle) He wasn't talking about my election at all. We had all these signs out there. I said, "Oh, yes, inflation was eating your lunch as well as it was mine." He said, "It sure was. We need to stop inflation. I just can't keep up. I couldn't get raises as fast as the prices are going up." He was, I think, typical of what I'm talking about. We sometimes think that those issues only concern North Dallas, but I take the position that they're certainly not. I can attest to it because in my particular district, why, it did range over this wide economic spread.

Marcello: When you entered the Texas Senate, what did you consider your areas of expertise in terms of your committee assignments?

Leedom: Well, of course, in my first term, I was assigned to the Human Resources Committee, the Education Committee, and the Intergovernmental Relations. The only one that I really felt I was qualified for from past background was the Intergovernmental Relations Committee because I had served on the City Council, and that committee does deal with the relationship of the State of Texas to the local governments. I felt very qualified for that and still do. I serve as vice-chairman of that committee. I do understand

the needs of the city councils and school districts and county governments. Education is certainly a big subject, and there's a lot of viewpoints on it today, and I do think I bring to the table probably a more conservative viewpoint that, I'm happy to see, is already prevailing now. When I first went on, they were talking about teachers pay. I was a great advocate of paying good teachers a lot more money than poor teachers, good professors more money than poor professors, but you found out the subject of merit pay was very unpopular, certainly with the public school teachers. It's now becoming increasingly in vogue, and I think we'll find it will be even more so as time goes by. On Human Resources, I was delighted this last session that Governor Hobby was merciful enough to take me off of that committee and put me on to the Economic Development Committee, which I do feel is a sound committee, because I have a business background and do understand the importance of business and economic development.

To answer your basic question, though, I still feel my major qualifications are in the area of finance, and I would be hoping that perhaps in the next session, I might have earned my way to the Finance Committee primarily because of my proven performance this last time on the Fee Task Force, which was the only source of new revenue the state had. It was an interesting subject that you might

want to discuss at some point.

Marcello: You mentioned that you want to get on the Finance committee. Why is that?

Leedom: Well, I think that everything begins and revolves around finance. Backing up a minute and elaborating on what I said about my experience, when I was on the Dallas City Council, I was chairman of the Finance Committee for three years and served on it the whole five. I was chairman the last three. It's just a matter of a few zeroes--the difference between the costs of local government and state government.

When I was with the City of Dallas, I was asked to serve, and did serve, as chairman of a Fee Task Force. We looked at all the fees the City of Dallas was charging for services. The concept was that why should the little old person on fixed income or retired have to pay to subsidize somebody on the municipal golf course. Why not have the golfer pay his fair share for the maintenance and the operation of that golf course? In looking into the fees of the City of Dallas, we found out that there was over \$5 million that needed adjusted. For example, at Love Field their revenue came from a five cents a gallon charge for private planes. That had not been adjusted in thirty-three years. We raised it slightly to get the right relationship. And that went through the whole pattern. That

\$5 million for the City of Dallas, of which 90 percent went into effect within a year, meant about eight cents on the tax rate at that time, saving the taxpayers that much money by actually charging the users for what they were using, and fairly so. The philosophical background for user fees, I think, of course, comes from an understanding that if a hundred years ago, for example, demagogues had said, "Hey, God gives us water free. Why don't we give it to the people free," we'd have a messed-up water system. We're all used to paying for water pretty much in proportion to our usage.

Assuming that that was the case at the state level, I had passed a resolution to create between the last two sessions the Interim Committee on Fees for the State of Texas. Lo and behold, it was true. As we looked into things, we found, happily or unhappily, that there was a great need for adjustments of these fees. As an example, if you lost a title to your car in Texas and sent in for a new one, which you would sooner or later if you lost it, it was costing the state \$400,000 to issue the new title. The state's revenue was less than \$40,000 because they can only charge 25¢, which was the fee established by statute in 1939 and had never been changed. As we looked into this and had the great support of the Legislative Budget Board, they pointed out the charge should be cost-effective

at \$2. We didn't raise it to just be a revenue source-- we raised it to just \$2--but that brought in nearly \$500,000 more money than we were receiving, and we went from a loss position to a balanced position. As we took that philosophy through all the fees of the State of Texas, the oldest being one in 1911 that had never been changed, we found that we had justification for increasing thousands of fees to a total of over \$150 million of additional revenue for the state, which was the only major source of new revenue in the last session, as hungry as they were for new revenue sources. It paid almost twice what the whole justice department of the state has to pay out, so it's not an insignificant amount of money.

But there is another impact of these fees that is worthy. For example, as we increased the fee for overweight trucks on the highways...you could never raise it high enough to make up for the damage they do, but by raising it enough that the economics of considering lightening the load and dividing the load--getting less weight per axle so they wouldn't have to pay as much for their economics-- would then in turn have the effect of having less need. When you charge something to people for what they're using, they don't waste it as much. If there's no charge, then people say, "Hey, that's free. Well, let's use it." So it has a restraint upon the need for services, and I think

that's important.

Now when you talk about being on the Finance Committee in the coming session, certainly the need for more money for roads and for education are in front of us, and I'm going to be taking a position--and do take a position--that the other alternative to reducing services or increasing taxes is to increase productivity, and that can only be done by an awareness of tough financial review.

Marcello: How did you manage to get on this Fee Task Force in the legislature? How did it come about?

Leedom: I just thought there was a need, which proved to be the case. I discussed the concept with the lieutenant governor and introduced a resolution creating the Senate committee. It didn't request any funding or any money. It didn't have any subpoena powers. I didn't want it to have any. I described how it's going to work, but I'll be frank--I don't believe anybody had any idea what I was doing until it was done because at the last minute almost any senator can get a Senate resolution creating some sort of committee if it doesn't cost the taxpayers any money. If he wants to create an interim committee to study the movement of the stars, he can probably pass the resolution because every senator has got some resolution they want passed. Mine passed and I don't think anybody ever realized what it was. I knew what it was, and I was very delighted that it got

the attention it did after it did its work. I was proud that a Democrat, Governor White, acknowledged it in his inaugural address, and he supported it the whole way through. It was one set of bills that had a high priority, and they just rolled right on through because they needed the money so bad (chuckle). For a conservative Republican to pass legislation to get priority position everytime we were ready, why, I was real proud of it because it was an important thing to be done.

Marcello: In the meantime, how did you finance the work of this committee? Was it out of your regular operating funds that were allocated to you as a senator?

Leedom: Yes, yes. That's right. Actually, my staff drew the same amount of salary they did, anyway. Lay members like Mr. Folsom, the former mayor of Dallas, served on it. When I asked him to serve, I said, "Now by the way, Bob, there won't be any expenses paid." He said, "John, I'd be disappointed if there were any." He attended to his own expenses. All the lay members did. The meetings were in Austin so that the bureaucratic members--the ones from the Legislative Budget Board and those people--were there, anyway, and they were doing it at a time when they didn't have their regular budget requirements. They were on the payroll, but they had less to do. I think it's very safe to say their eyes were opened. They'd never been looking

at that dimension in their budget work. So, yes, all the state employees just drew their regular pay, and there wasn't any travel to be done. Those that were lay members paid their own expenses.

Marcello: Who else was on that committee? You mentioned Mr. Folsom.

Leedom: Well, I'm proud of my choices in retrospection. That's because I thought the need for...we had Anna Leslie Muncy, who at that time was the assistant city attorney for the City of Dallas. I knew she was that good--she since had been recognized by that body--and she is now the city attorney for the City of Dallas. She brought to the table a real awareness of the financial aspects of it. And then, of course, we did have Larry Kopp, who was the representative from the Legislative Budget Board. We had Jerry Neef from the state auditor's office. We had Mr. McKinney from the background of the Alcoholic Beverage Board. This was very important because all the alcoholic beverage fees had not been...they'd been set in 1935 and never been changed. That set of changes had to be working with the industry, and he brought to the table a lot of understanding. About \$35 million of the increase in revenues came out of the adjustments in all the alcoholic beverages fees. We had a representative from the governors budget board. And there was one other, and I forget right now. I should remember,

but I don't.

Marcello: So how would this task force have worked? I assume that during the interim, it would have studied the state fee structure, and then when the legislature came back in session, you would make recommendations in the form of legislation.

Leedom: Yes. Really, what did happen...we'd never done it before, so we were kind of running...of course, we realized we had to have a base of information, so by working with the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor's Budget Office --but primarily the Budget Board--we created a questionnaire that was sent to all the agencies asking them, in effect, what they did have fees for and how long it had been since they had been changed and if it had to be changed by statute. Then our staff looked up and verified all those aspects. As we built up that body of information, it became clear that the things like I mentioned--like the title to the car--were there, and then we had the Legislative Budget Board...and they assigned some thirty-two field auditors to the project that they already had working with these different agencies, and their eyes became quite open as we worked into it.

So as we saw what happened, then the lay committee, would meet and review the work. We had it divided into subcommittees, and it began to shape up--what the report

would be. We had a policy of unanimity. If anybody didn't agree, then we didn't make the recommendation. The representative from the controller's office, for example, questioned at one time the virtue of us recommending tuition increases, which was one area. So we did not recommend; we just pointed out that they had not been changed in a long time and that there was a need to recognize that the college tuitions were no longer carrying the same percentage of the overhead that they once did, which had been roughly 15 percent. They were down to less than...right in the neighborhood of 4 percent. But since we did not have unanimity on a recommendation to do it, we did not pursue it. We just pointed it out.

Those things we were unified in the recommendation for, then I took as prerogative to go ahead and have the Legislative Council prepare the necessary enabling legislation. Of course, having worked with an awareness that Governor Hobby...he'd appointed a person who at that time had not been, but later became, his administrative assistant to the committee, which I respected. He put somebody in there to watch what I was doing (chuckle), but because he was on the committee, he was able to report to the lieutenant governor on how impressive this was.

Marcello: Who was this person?

Leedom: Jerome Chapman, he is Hobby's right-hand man down there.

Camilla Bordie, who is the parliamentarian, also was brought into it so that we were able to get their guidance. We originally presented about twenty-seven bills, and then we were advised to roll a lot of them into a more omnibus bill. We kept the alcohol separate; we kept the parks and wildlife separate because it was more of a political issue-- the raising of fees for hunting licenses. But we put the big bulk of them in an omnibus bill, and it was scheduled for a quick hearing in the State Affairs Committee with Ray Farabee. Camilla Bordie and the lieutenant governor were totally aware of what we were doing.

I will say that the industry...of course, we were affecting everybody's expenses of doing business, and many of the business people said, "We're glad it's you, Senator, carrying the bill because you're a businessman and understand." There were some adjustments that were necessary, but by-and-large, all of them realized that nothing had happened in sometimes as many as thirty years, and it was time for some review of them, and we got it through.

It leads us to what we're doing this time a little bit, Ron. I was asked this time by the lieutenant governor to head another interim committee for the study of agency fund management, and we are busy in it. The treasurer, Ann Richards, is a member of this committee and very much

a participant. We're still in the questionnaire period. It's a much more detailed questionnaire going out to all the agencies of the state on their funds and what's involved in the whole thing. It's a little broader.

We have four subcommittees, and one of them is really asset management because we're aware that assets include more than just cash. The state has an average of \$3 billion on deposit at one time, not counting its retirement fund. And in this day of the awareness of money management-- money market funds and NOW accounts and all those things-- no longer does money sit in checking accounts not drawing interest. It's just a matter of how you handle it and where it comes up to maximize it. And if we can maximize it and pick up another point or two on deposit, we'll pick up \$60-80 million more just right there.

There's another dimension to it, of course, and that's how fast the money comes in, and it's the reverse of float and delay. If we can cut the float and delay down by three or four days of that much money, we add a great deal to the amounts on deposit.

But on asset management, again going back to my city council days, governments just like to have assets. They don't look at them as assets; they just own things. They don't need them. They own them, but there's nobody paying taxes on them, so there's no burden. There sometimes is

some upkeep, but basically on a lot of them, there's no upkeep. I know when I went on the Dallas City Council, and being a believer in private enterprise--the less government, the better--and a conservative, I said, "Golly, what is Dallas owning a radio station for?" There's thirty-one private radio stations in Dallas, and Dallas had owned WRR. They were losing \$200,000 on it, once you look into the figures, a year in operating costs. It was not paying any taxes, and it was losing \$200,000--just to maintain a radio station which there was plenty of competition for. So the council pretty quickly was able to get a consensus --we got six or seven votes--to decide to put it up for sale. Then we went through the normal procedures of brokers and things, and within about a year-and-a-half, we had a satisfactory offer for approximately \$3 million for WRR. We sold it for the \$3 million.

But I'd also passed an ordinance to create a revolving capital fund, and it meant that the sale of any assets of the city had to go into this fund. It could not go into the operating expense budget for that year and then be a one-time prosperity. That \$3 million went into that fund. Again, it was put out at interest at about 9 percent, so you picked up about \$270,000 in interest. We quit losing the \$200,000 operating loss, and it went on the tax roles as an asset and picked up about another \$200,000 in ad

valorem taxes. The net result was that the city taxpayers picked up nearly \$600,000 or \$700,000 in benefits a year for each year by selling that asset. If we'd not sold it, we'd be out that \$700,000.

Now the State of Texas just has an untold number of assets in that same context, land being probably the largest. There's just an awful lot of land that, if we were to sell it, people could properly utilize it for farming, ranching ...perhaps we'd keep the mineral rights, but we'd go ahead and sell the surface land. There's no guess how much the state could raise, and if it was by statute required to be put into some revolving fund--not to be used up in some desperate need for money at a time to balance the budget --I think we could find that the state could begin to move in the direction that, say, the University of Texas and A&M system has moved, where certainly the funding that comes out of their assets is a sufficient amount of money.

Marcello: This Fee Task Force is very interesting because it's one of those things that I don't think there's a whole lot written about it and so on while the session was going on. Like you say, it probably was one of the few areas during the 68th Legislature where attempts were made to increase the revenues for the state. It seems to me that that perhaps might be a good avenue toward membership on the

Finance Committee.

Leedom: I hope so. Since we're in an archives sort of thing here, it's safe to say that you can go back to 1911, and so that's been a long time that nothing was ever done.

There's three sources of funding for government, if you think about it--the government's tax base--and that has some limitations no matter what government it is, whether it's a school or county or city. That tax base is under great stress, and it's a most unpopular tax base because it's so close to people. When you try to raise it, people go to their school board member or their council member or their county commissioner and say, "Hey, get off my back!"

So the next form of revenue for the government is to go to somebody else's tax base--more distant. A very common practice is to go to Washington and get money. Then we also go to the government down in Austin. The schools get funding out of Austin. Everybody wants funding out of Austin. The only problem is that that's beginning to run into some limitations today, and the bottom of that barrel is in sight because of the decreased revenues in the oil and gas industry. Also, the federal government is out of sight because their deficit is killing them, and there's not much relief there.

So the third source of revenue for a government is to

charge people for what they use. That's going to be an increasingly acceptable form. I do think a caution has to be taken there so that it's not used as a revenue source. It's to be used for the purpose of making it fair for the person that uses the golf course, the person that loses their title to their car...I told that story to one fellow, and he said, "Well, you could have charged me \$10. I just had that happen." I said, "Well, \$10 would have been a tax; \$10 would be a revenue source past the cost of recovery. But there's no reason for somebody to subsidize your carelessness in losing that. Now you'll be more careful with it." And that's true of all of them. I'm proud of it.

To answer a little bit of your thought of why it was so low key, a gentleman with AP wrote it up at one time, and he did a nice article about the thing. He pointed out that it had been real low key. Well, a Republican senator of my ilk, with the background I had as county chairman, was not unnoticed by the Democrats. I'm really aware that if I'd went in and made any effort to say, "Ah, looky what they've done! They've overlooked all this...." if you trace \$150 million over just his last two years and you factor that back to what it should have been, you can figure the billions that we should have been collecting, and it would have been perhaps an easy thing to grandstand

and say, "Look how great we are and how bad they were."
But it wouldn't have achieved the results, and I was interested in results and not the partisan benefits or political benefits.

Also, I think we all recognize that in life you can get a lot of things done if you don't care who gets the credit. If you don't get too much credit for doing it, you get a lot of things done. If it turns out that it's going to make someone else look bad or it's going to look like it's going to make someone else look too good, I think both envy and jealousy as well as other things can evolve. So I thought the job ought to be done, and we're doing the same thing with this other one. We didn't have any press conferences; we're not blowing air. We're just going about getting it done, and I feel confident that we can achieve things with the new one.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned the makeup of this committee, and I guess I tend to think of one of the current blue ribbon committees chaired by Mr. Perot relative to the state of Texas education. I guess it is important on these kinds of study committees to have people with names that have a lot of clout or influence.

Leedom: Well, I'm sure it might on education. I don't know if that's the case. The reason I didn't...excuse me...
Jerome Chapman is the administrative aide for Lieutenant

Governor Hobby, and I didn't know him. I don't think his name was well-known. Hobby recommended him because he had somebody he knew and certainly could trust to report back what was going on. A professional does that sort of thing.

My two choices that I mentioned...one that I knew, Anna Leslie Muncy, was an outstanding attorney, and I'd worked with her. She was an outstanding contributor to the committee...dedicated. She had the area of education. She found that there were many oddities in the whole structure of college education, which you can appreciate. There were some colleges taking fees for microscopes and things that you can't justify any way legally, and some of those things were pointed out.

The choice of Folsom wasn't because of his name. It was because I felt that Mr. Folsom, in the first place, is a very strong financial person and has a great overview. He had a great overview at the city level and what we'd done with the city fee task force. Therefore, he had a continuity of understanding that would have helped us.

Of course, the rest of the people were basically lay people, I mean, were professional people in the state. So we really wanted talent more than we wanted names.

Now the Education Committee, if they've done that-- and I suppose some of that has been done in direct proportion --I think they'll have problems. As far as the legislative

representatives, Mr. Lewis and others, they're there for obvious political reasons because they're going to be the ones that get the job done when they come back. Carl Parker from the Senate Education Committee has to try to get the job done. Mr. Perot, as far as a choice, certainly, I think, was a name, and I still sit and marvel at Governor White appointing him. I'm not sure that he fully understood Mr. Perot's independence, but I think he's probably learned it since then. I don't know that blue ribbon committees, if they're going to get a meaningful job done, need names as much as they need talent. If the talent and the name go together, then that is desirable.

Marcello: Earlier in our conversation, you mentioned that you considered Lieutenant Governor Hobby to be a very, very fair lieutenant governor. Could you elaborate on that, please?

Leedom: Well, yes. I think he's had a feeling, as I said at the outset, that the Senate as a body itself has an importance in his life. He had a family background to understand it. I think he's felt that the spirit of the Senate--the understanding of the Senate--transcends...he doesn't just want it to be a debating society, a bickering society. I think he has realized that if he allowed himself to enter meaningfully into one side or the other and tilted a certain situation the way he felt...let's suppose it would be pari-mutuel betting, which I was in opposition to. I don't

know where he stood on it. It might be on the opposite side, but I don't say that he was. But he allowed that situation to be handled as the Senate should handle things. Everybody had a chance to speak their mind and do their thing. In my case, the opponent I had in my first campaign, Ron Kessler, had been his campaign manager, and Mr. Hobby had been in Dallas on more than one occasion campaigning on behalf of my opponent. But when I was elected--and I kiddingly said, "He just picked the wrong horse. He didn't have a chance."--we had a good relationship. His appointments, I think, were fair, and his recognition I've ever seen to anyone down there has been fair.

There's one other dimension, I think. I'm reminded of a funny story. I had a press conference one time with Eddie Rickenbacker. He had the time, and he carried on for about two-and-a-half hours. The reporters asked him various questions because he was a great piece of Americana. One of the reporters asked him if he'd ever been in a dogfight with the Red Baron during World War I. He pulled himself up, and he said, "Absolutely not! The Red Baron was a professional, and I considered myself a professional, and a professional never goes in without an advantage. I never gave him one, and he never gave me one, so we never were in a dogfight." I've seen that characteristic in Mr. Hobby. He is a professional. He's not going to get

into anything unless he has an advantage, and I've always felt I didn't want to get in too many battles unless I had an advantage. So I think he is a very professional lieutenant governor. This tape won't be heard, I guess, for some time, but I think he could well go down as one of the great leaders in Texas for his conduct, the way he's handled this last session, particularly where we had sort of a vacuum--a new governor that didn't know what he was doing, a speaker of the House who was new and was being tested and then immediately had his set of personal problems and indiscretions, probably justified, as revealed by the press. The leadership really fell on Lieutenant Governor Hobby to a heavy degree to keep the whole legislature moving forward. He saw to it by getting out of the way early a lot of important legislation that had to clear, and I think the record would show that for the first time the Senate passed more legislation than the House because he moved it out of the Senate while the House was still trying to figure out which way the doors were.

Marcello: You've anticipated my next question because I have seen it written that of the "big three" in the legislative session, that is, the speaker, the governor, and the lieutenant governor, Hobby seemed to have been the one that stood out.

Leedom: He did. Of course, really, on the whole it will always

be that way if it's staffed by somebody as competent as Hobby. The lieutenant governor, I believe, is unquestionably the most powerful position in the State of Texas. First, the Senate has life and death control of any legislation--not necessarily passing it, but stopping it from passing--and his ability under the present rules, which he has been instrumental in keeping, enables him to make committee appointments that control that ebb and flow. He assigns the bills, so he has a great control of what happens. He's also chairman of the state's overall Legislative Budget Board. He sets the financial tone of the state in terms of that board's action. The governor in Texas is at best an administrative figurehead, and that's maybe as it should be. That's certainly the way our forefathers wanted it, and at the present time, I think it's a pretty good idea that we keep it that way.

Marcello: What roles do the Republican members of the Senate play? That's a rather general question, and I'm not sure that I've asked that the way I wanted to. But is it safe to say that they represent the swing votes, perhaps, in the Senate?

Leedom: Well, we certainly did in the 67th Session. The eight Republicans had a great deal of ability to be allied with five or six Democrats, as we saw in the redistricting bill when Senator Wilson did such a yeoman job of creating congressional redistricting. Eight Republicans joined five

or the appropriate number of conservative Democrats to vote for it. This last session, there were only five of us, and it's safe to say that I don't think we were very unified. One or two members, and certainly one at least, maybe two in fairness, were more interested in "going along to get along" than I would like to see Republicans be, and we had no consistent force. I found myself much more comfortable with Senator Howard, as an example, and where he would be on a vote than, say, Senator McFarland. Senator McFarland is liable to be over wherever...and I'm not saying it in any personal sense. You asked what role do the Republicans serve. We're certainly far at this present time from being a viable two-party house. I personally would hope that we would gain that, and it would take a lot more party discipline than people think we Republicans have. The Democrats have a mechanism for more party discipline because they have the incumbency, and they have the ability for committee assignments. They have the stroke to keep their party pretty well in line. The Republicans have nothing to keep us in line, so everybody can do their thing unless there's a common thread or philosophical course. I can say this with love because I've already said I've been one all my life. Republicans feel that before you can be a statesman, you have to be elected. A lot of them translate that into trying to guess where the crowd's going,

rather than get in front of the crowd. Obviously, that's a self-defeating philosophy.

I think our President...I was a strong Reagan supporter. I was a delegate to the 1976 convention. I led the Reagan campaign in Dallas County, which was outstanding, and I have to comment that it was in opposition to the established party leadership. We had an incumbent President that was a Republican, we had a U.S. Senator who was for it, our county chairman...everybody was for the status quo of our incumbent President. So the ones that wanted to campaign on Mr. Reagan's behalf were standing up to our own party; but the people wanted it, and we won handily as the record would show. But Mr. Reagan does put the flag up and subscribe to the principle I do--that leadership is saying, "Here's the flag. Come to me." If there's enough of us that want that, then you'll prevail. I think the history of flags is interesting. It's not because they were pretty. The history of flags would show that they had them because that's where your side was; you'd rally around it. If you were winning, you'd rally around it, and if you were losing, you'd rally around it. We've regressed into a political philosophy more and more that we've got to win and then worry about what's going to happen. I'm not concerned about it other than the fact that I think all of us, at least I feel, have a responsibility to say, "Wait a minute." That's

why I feel comfortable with the city council when they first announced...a very strong opponent, Adlene Harrison, who is now head of the DART board. She was the city councilman. She withdrew. She realized that her position wouldn't stand up. And the same thing applied in the district. The 16th District has in it fine representation of an entirely different stroke. Congressman Bryant comes out of that same district. City Councilman Lee Simpson comes out of that same district...David Cain, a representative...now Charles Gandy and Granoff...these are all 180 degrees on the opposite side of my philosophy. Yet I don't have any question in my mind that the reason our organization wins is that they know where we stand on these issues, and we can identify.

But when you move out of the local area and get down to Austin, all of a sudden this "old club" idea comes along, and everybody is going to be in the club. And I say that with a love, but at the same time, when you say, "Are the Republicans a swing vote," I don't think that in this last session we had that kind of unity to say we could. In fact, there were many times that...well, just take pari-mutuel betting. You've already indicated you've interviewed Senator Harris, and he and I were the two opponents to each other on that (chuckle). He was for it and I was against it. He won in the Senate, but I think our efforts in the Senate

also slowed it up enough that the community was able to respond, and the House, by three votes, defeated it. No, we don't have that kind of unity that I wish we had, although I think that's not maybe a fair issue. More often than not, we find that our votes were parallel. I probably paralleled to Senator Howard's votes more than I did Senator Harris's.

Marcello: Am I to assume, then, that there was really no such thing as a Republican caucus such as there is a black caucus or something of that nature in the legislature?

Leedom: That's right. Of course, I'm so partisan that I wish there were. But I think there's an awareness--a fear, is probably a better word--that if the five or six Republicans ever got in a caucus, we'd never get a bill out (chuckle). They'd say, "Well, let's stop that caucus." In the Senate, you know, the first thing you have to do is get a consensus to suspend the rules and bring it up out of its regular order, and that takes a two-thirds majority. So any eleven folks on the other side--and there are at least eleven liberal Democrats--can say, "We'll teach those Republicans. Anytime any one of them brings a bill up, we'll all vote against it. That will stop that caucus before it ever gets out of its tracks." So it's an awareness, and I call it a fear on my part. I think that I'd like to see us do more of that, but I don't see it in the next session certainly. I think we'd have

to have at least eleven members so we could pull the same act on them and say, "Okay, if you're going to play that way, we'll play that way," and maybe that would be the best thing for the state because there won't be very many laws passed (chuckle). But be that as it may, I think the Republican Party in Texas at the legislative level has a few more years to go.

Marcello: All of this brings me back again to my original question, I guess, concerning Lieutenant Governor Hobby and his fairness. How did he treat the few Republican members with regard to committee assignments overall?

Leedom: Well, I might be sounding egotistical, but that's what tapes are about, I guess. When I did visit with him after the election, I asked to be assigned, as a freshman, to the Finance Committee. He showed his professionalism. My reasoning, of course, came from my background. I'd been chairman of the city council's finance committee, and I could say, "Hey, I think I know something about government finance. Check around and find out." He couldn't refute that. The major thrust, though, was that there was not a Republican on the Finance Committee, and never had been; and there was nobody from Dallas, and hadn't been for ten years, on the Finance Committee, and Dallas is a very major taxpaying part of the state. So I presented those two as good reasons that I should be appointed. He ought to have

a Republican on it, and he ought to have somebody from Dallas. Well, he did that. He appointed Ike Harris, and (chuckle) he's from Dallas. This was a good appointment, and Ike served well in that post. So to that degree, we got a major position. Ike Harris was also chairman of the Economic Development Committee because of his seniority, and that's as it should be. The rest of us are new enough to not really warrant chairmanships. His appointment of myself as vice-chairman of the Intergovernment Relations Committee under Senator Traeger was a joyful thing. Senator Traeger is a real joy to serve with, and I felt that he was very fair. He made some good appointments of everybody. I guess the most cherished...he put two or three...I think there were at least two on the State Affairs Committee, another important committee. So I think that for the few of us, we did get good assignments. You know, why not? We're not going to influence anything one way or the other, anyway. But I think he was very fair in that.

Marcello: Now there was an issue that came up in the House, and I would just like to have your views on it. How do you feel about financial disclosure on the part of state legislators? I'm referring to the problems that Speaker Lewis had.

Leedom: Well, I can only comment by what I did. When I first was elected to the Dallas City Council, I felt that financial disclosure was an important thing, and so I voluntarily...

there was no ordinance or requirement, but I just filed with the city secretary my balance sheet showing what ownership I had in everything and let it all hang out. Of course, the press picks it up, and it's reported in the paper. If I recall, one or two other city councilmen did the same. In my case it wasn't for any aggrandizement or lack of aggrandizement. I just felt it was fair that they know what I own interests in, where I own land, and where I own stock. And that was it. I think financial disclosure is not undesirable. I also probably did it for another reason--so that I could be called upon to speak against the concept. I think there are a lot of people who feel, correctly, that their personal financial life is their own business, and they don't feel that they should be required to show their holdings. Now to get people to serve in public office--and I've done a lot of recruiting--at best a qualified person feels he's going to give up... certainly, with the legislature--and I don't think it should be changed--you're not going to do it for the money that's paid for the job. So you have to have a desire to "save the country," that is, "I want to do my share, pay my dues; I want to go ahead and do it." To get good people to run for public office, it's going to take a certain amount of time from their family, from their business, and what-have-you. It's a big sacrifice.

Then they are going to be in a bit of a fishbowl. They're going to be subject to people disagreeing with what they do, and it's going to be publicized if they say it wrong. A lot of people aren't conditioned, I don't think...inherently, nobody likes criticism, and they're going to get some. So you have to kind of become used to it and conditioned for that type of thing.

Then to ask somebody to lay open all their own personal financial background for the purpose of somebody to look in and say, "Ah, look what he owns or doesn't own," is a little bit too much. I did it and would do it again and have done anything I've been asked, but I think that it should be on a voluntary basis and let the public decide at that point what the virtue of that is. Then in a campaign, if I was running against somebody that didn't and I did, and I had any reason to think his ownings would be in conflict with his ability to perform on the job, I think the public might then make a judgement based on that issue. He might still refuse to do it, or he might do it. But as far as legislation saying that you have to totally reveal everything you own and so forth and so forth...it's a good question, though.

The people that want it are also inclined, I believe, to speak with forked tongue. I think that there's an insincerity in that whole thrust because there's an awful lot of revealing that has to go on. Take the lawyers,

which comprise a large part of the legislature---seventeen in the Senate--they're not talking about the financial disclosure of who their clients might be, who would be paying them a retainer fee. You mention that, and all of a sudden, man, there's no action at all. But they want a businessman to try to point out what his financial holdings are so that if somebody happens to buy a truck from a company he happens to be related to, oh, there could be a conflict of interest. So I think it's not quite straight-arrow. I do believe that anybody who's in a business that's selling a product, which we are, in the state should always be involved in competitive buying and bidding. That's maybe a little sensitive subject to us, but still I think everybody in public office needs to be as close as possible to being like Caesar's wife. That's part of the basic political process, and that's one of the reasons I'm for a strong two-party state, and I hope that in these two years at least that some candidate can come along and point out the indiscretions, if there are such, of somebody who's not conducting himself honorably.

Marcello: Did you perhaps get the impression that not too many legislators took financial disclosure seriously until Speaker Lewis had his problems?

Leedom: I don't really have a feeling one way or the other about that. I know that I'm on the board of a bank, and they

send questionnaires, and I do the best to fill it in. Sometimes, if there's forty pages, I admit that I get kind of impatient with why all this stuff is necessary for whatever reason. I have an idea that it could well be that in the forms that were sent in on those things, there might have been a carelessness or a casualness in how it was done. I don't disagree that Speaker Lewis probably should have been more careful because of his preeminent position. To be sure, his should have been more carefully done than someone else's. I think they all should be carefully done. Certainly, you're right. It wasn't taken too seriously.

The press, of course, is...now you're getting into a whole new area, but as far as history is concerned, I think we'll be able to look back at some point, years down the road, and wonder if our forefathers were anticipating that legislative body named the press and their impact on legislation. A good friend of mine in the press said, "You overstate our importance." I said, "Knock it off! Why do totalitarian countries own their press? Why is there such thing as no free press? It's because the press is powerful, and I respect it's right to be powerful." But on the other hand, there's no counter; there's no ability to "untoot" the horn. Some reporter decides to write an article, and the headline writer writes the headline, but the retraction--the rebuttal--comes two days later or the

next day, and it's back in another part of the paper because it really wasn't a good story. But the damage can well be done. You never see one newspaper picking up and saying, "Hey, did you see the bad article that was written in the other newspaper?" The newspapers themselves protect each other just as lawyers protect each other and doctors protect each other. The only difference is that when you get into such things that come about as financial disclosure or what-have-you, when it's all over, the damage has been done to the person's reputation.

I can go to a very prominent man, one I encouraged to run for mayor of this town. His main concern was, he said, "My mother told me the most important thing I had was my name and reputation. You lose it and you've lost everything, and I'm so subject to somebody coming along and saying that I made a vote on a zoning case because of some property holdings, which wouldn't be true." Of course, the answer to that, as I told him, "If you were dishonest, Bob, I would not be for you." That comes with the territory--the implication that you're not honest. It goes on that there's a conflict of interest. But any honorable person, no matter how tough you are, sooner or later one of the sure ways to get under somebody's skin is start implying to an honest man that he's not honest (chuckle). It's awful hard for somebody whose integrity has never been questioned to sit and have people

question his integrity. I think that's a hazard we have with these things. I think that the care in which conflict of interest and ethics and all those things are done is very important because we do have a process every two years of washing the bad guys out. The one sure thing that will defeat any opponent is if it's proven that he's had his hand in the till. They'll put up with woman-chasing and womanizing. They'll put up with a lot of things, but they won't put up with somebody that is proven--now I don't say accused, but proven--of having his hand in the till.

Marcello: You know, on this same subject, one legislator with whom I've spoken observed that maybe somebody like Speaker Lewis is becoming an anachronism. In other words, as Texas grows, becomes more urban, perhaps more sophisticated, the "good ol' boy" approach to politics is maybe diminishing, especially in the State Legislature. Do you think this is true?

Leedom: Well, I don't think there's any question that the state's growing from a rural area to an urban area and that the balance of power is slowly moving to the urban areas; but it will be a very difficult move. Take roads. Roads are a big issue. We need more transportation. Suppose the rural senator goes in before the highway commission and requests a road, with all the city councils and the county commissioners and everybody there, and he says, "I want a road from point nowhere to point nowhere else, and I've

got to have it. It's going to be \$20 million, but it's sure going to be nice for those ol' farmers out there." There might be six cars an hour on it, but he's going to get that road at the present time because the urban legislators are not going to say, "Wait a minute! You're taking our money out there." They're going to go back to the "good ol' boy" attitude and say, "I don't want something unless there's enough for all of us." Until we get where there's really not enough for all of us and we decide upon a system of need and not greed or a meritorious system based on traffic count and accident count, future growth, that is, until it becomes as computer impersonal as possible, the "good ol' boy" system will continue to work. I don't know who the gentleman was who said that, but I don't see that. I think that right now the old cliché, which is and always has been, "It's not what you know; it's who you know," is still going to have great power.

The speaker, as I understand it, has great power in his appointments, and anybody that wants to move in the legislative process has to go along to get along. There will be some changes, but he still appoints...I don't know what he says. I know what I would say. I'd call the guy in and say, "I'd like you to head a certain committee. Let's talk about your philosophy. We don't have to agree

all the time, but we sure don't want any surprises. We want to have a feeling that we can move legislation."

I think Hobby does this well. I think he let's everybody have their say and run with their bill, but when it gets time to move the freight, he says, "It's time to get with it, and let's see how it comes out. Let the Senate's will be," I think the speaker has that same power. Now whether he does it with a slap on the back and a handshake or whether he does it with just plain ol' "I got the power and you better listen" is an academic subject as long as it gets done. I think the speaker has probably always had the power, and I think Lewis covers that raw power with a friendly ol' spirit. Hobby doesn't have it. You know, Hobby's really kind of a cold fish.

Marcello: He's not of the "good ol' boy" mold.

Leedom: He hasn't been there, but he achieves the same results. I'm a salesman by profession. I kiddingly say, "I'm a professional salesman by the grace of the Lord and a politician by request." There are all kinds, but the net results come if you get the order or didn't get the order. And we're all salesmen, Politicians are selling all the time, and so some salesmen can sell both from technical knowledge and precision or by urbaneness and sophistication. Some are going to sell because people just like him so much they're going to buy from him. I

don't think that's going to change. I think there's a capability for people in from urban areas to be "good ol' boys" just as much as there is from the country people. (chuckle).

Marcello: We were talking about appointments awhile ago, and this leads into another topic that I want to cover relative to the 68th Session. Before he left office--not too long before he left office--Governor Clements proposed somewhere in the neighborhood of about 105 appointments. What was your reaction to this as a Republican senator?

Leedom: Well, naturally, I supported the appointments, but again, I would say that I think history would show that one outstanding characteristic of Governor Clements was that he did make good, qualified appointments. His appointments were not partisan. In fact, I can remember earlier in his administration being very upset by some of the appointments he made that were flagrant Democrats, and the real question was that you should have been able to find a Republican with the same qualifications because, you know, I've never felt that Republicans were second-class citizens, and now we had a chance to say, "Hey, let's use the patronage," and so forth. I think Governor Clements erred in attempting sometimes to realize that he wanted to run the state as a businessman and maybe went out of his way to perhaps appoint some people who he could justify were qualified

and not make a search for a Republican.

But of those appointments, it's hard to say that (chuckle) the former speaker of the House was a Republican, and yet he was rejected by the hard partisanship of Mr. White. Connally...there were many fine...I guess Barshop was a good example. Barshop gave more money and supported more Democrats and everything, but he was being turned down. The first time I ever met him I was very impressed. I stayed with the appointment. I was walking out of the building with him, and Slagle, the Democrat State Chairman, walked by. I said, "Wait! You two ought to meet each other." I said, "Mr. Slagle, this is Mr. Barshop, the guy you're trying to keep from being appointed to the board of regents. Mr. Barshop, this is Mr. Slagle, the SOB that's thwarting your appointment, and I think you ought to meet each other." And Slagle looked him right in the eye and said, "Well, I have nothing against you personally. I know you're a fine man. The only thing is the wrong governor appointed you."

Now if we're going to have that response in Texas... and I'm not saying there hasn't been some in the past. I just don't think it's...I would say, to test myself, that if I'm around and Governor White goes out of office, and he were to make 105 appointments or whatever number, and they were his appointments and there was no proven

reason that they'd had their hand in the till or that they were morally unsuited, I would support his appointments. I think the continuity of good government in our system is more important than the raw partisanship of "These weren't mine. I want people that I owe political political payoff."

In a debate one time with Senator Washington on what statesmanship was, he said, "Senator, would you define it to me." Of course, I used the old favorite that a statesman is someone concerned with the next generation, while the politician is concerned with the next election. After the debate and session was over, I went over, and we shook hands. I said, "I guess I should define statesmanship. If I draw a four-year term and you draw a two-year term, I'd be a statesman if I swapped with you because I need you to 'go fishing' two years from now and I need to work like the dickens for the presidential election." (chuckle)

But I think we do need to make every effort now and in the future to realize that...and I didn't know what statesmanship was, really. I was elected as county chairman, and I had two pieces of advice. One of them said, "Be yourself, John," because I was following a great man in Peter O'Donnell. That was good advice because there was no way for me to be a Peter O'Donnell--financially, intellectually, or other ways. He was an outstanding

individual. But the other piece of advice that I remembered ...you get many, but the one I remembered was, "Be a statesman." I didn't really know what that meant, but I had a chance to find out later in many forms. One was when we had a candidate that wanted to run for sheriff at that time against a sheriff that was a Democrat--Bill Decker. We didn't need that change. We had a good sheriff. I prevailed upon the man...you know, the party doesn't need that race. We've got a good sheriff in Dallas County. Just because he's Democrat doesn't make him a bad sheriff. So I think that we need to realize, even though I'm highly partisan, that there's times...and we see this at the national level. We've got to put down this bickering over nothing just because it's not my idea originally, and I think to that degree, I supported the appointments, and I would again.

Marcello: My own impression is that the governor--and this could have been any governor--was well within his prerogatives in making those appointments.

Leedom: Oh, yes, right. Yes, I think technically and historically and everything else, it would have been shown that that was the case. The historical nature of it was that this was the first time it was from a Republican to a Democrat. If it's been a Democrat to a Democrat, they would be stepping upon their own supporters' toes. And there was the

question that many of them that were involved--but not all of them--were heavy Republican supporters and so forth, so "they all gotta go" was the philosophy.

Now they didn't all go. I did play hardball on Mr. Hay. They wanted to bounce Judge Ovard, who was a very qualified administrative judge; they didn't want to accept his reappointment. But one of the Senate traditions, as we know, is that the governor's appointments have to be agreed upon by the senator in the district, and if he disagrees, thirty-one senators disagree. I respect that tradition. I was tested in my first appointment period in the first session because Governor Clements had appointed somebody that the senator from his district didn't want, and there was a feeling with us new young Republicans about how we'd react. I just spoke up in the caucus, which was closed, and I said, "I respect tradition as much as anybody, and I certainly am one who believes that if that senator doesn't want him...although I understand the individual is very qualified, if he doesn't want him, I don't want him." So I proved my point. So that was created early in our caucus. We would not break Senate tradition on this thing. So I wanted to approve Jess Hay, who was a very fine man. I talked to Jess, and I said, "Jess, if you've got any reservations about Judge Ovard, I'll back off, but you know and I know he's very qualified." "Oh, yes, John." I said,

"In that case, the only pawn I have is that I'm not going to approve you until they approve him." And that's really what happened. Senator Mauzy, who was trying to clear the deal, backed off finally because he knew he wasn't going to get Jess...Jess Hay was too powerful to be turned down. And that's the sort of thing, I think, that is unfortunate, but, again, it's the way the game is played.

Marcello: Ultimately, what happened in the case of those appointments? Did the Senate vote on each one of them individually, or did it vote on the whole group of them?

Leedom: Well, what happened is that the Nominating Committee moved them on through--Senator Howard was very fair--and they were reported out by the Nominating Committee. Now the first bunch Governor White asked back...there was a vote for, oh, I think, fifty-five or sixty of them to be returned. He had the votes, he got them, and they were returned to Governor White, and they never came back over.

Marcello: So he in essence rejected those?

Leedom: He rejected those. They didn't come back.

Leedom: Those that the Senate kept--there was about fifty-some-odd of them--went to the Nominating Committee in the normal process, and as they came out, then, as any senator can, he says, "I move to sever the name," and he would sever that person's name from the list. The rest of the list would be passed, and then the name that was severed would be voted

on, and it required twenty-one votes to get them passed. So you only had to have eleven votes to stop them. The great majority of those that were severed were all voted down. In fact, I think Jess Hay might have been one of the few exceptions, and that was only because I said, "You've got to vote on Ovard first, or I'm going to just automatically sever and ask for a vote on Hay and vote him down. I'll stand up and say I just reject him." So they wouldn't do that. A lot of pressure was put on me. I didn't enjoy it, but it didn't bother me, either. But they were separately done.

Marcello: Senator Leedom, we've been going at this interview for ninety minutes.

Leedom: We have (chuckle). That's long enough.

Marcello: I have a lot more to cover, but I know that you have other things to do, so why don't we stop here, and we can hopefully come back sometime within the next couple of weeks and go at it again.

Leedom: (Laughter) Sure, sure. That's fine. Anytime. I said at the outset, Ron, that when people ask how long I can talk, I say, "By the calendar." I appreciate the conversation. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you.

Marcello: Well, we want as much detail as we can get. That's the value of using a tape recorder, and you've been splendid so far.

Leedom: Well, fine. I appreciate it.