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Interview with

Alonzo W. Jamison

July, 1965

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Interviewer: Dr. H. W. Kamp

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Oral History Collection

State Representative Alonzo W. Jamison, Jr.

Interviewer: Dr. H. W. Kamp

July 30, 1965.

This is Alonzo Jamison. I'm making this recording, and it's a little frightening to think about running back over a period of ten years service in the Legislature and trying to figure out what I could say about my experiences during that time that would be interesting or of value to anybody. It's, of course, a marvelous experience to serve in a legislative body. And it's a rewarding experience in the fact that it exposes you to a lot of new experiences and gives you a feeling of having some part in decisions that are made affecting public policy. But, anyway, I've tried to think of some observations I could make growing out of my tenure in the Legislature that would be of interest to students of government.

I suppose a first thing that someone might ask about a legislative career would be what is the quality - what kind of moral and intellectual quality - of the members of the Legislature of Texas. Speaking of this period of ten years, beginning with the Session of 1955, I would summarize by observing, perhaps tritely, that we've had some very good members, and we've had some poor members. I think, perhaps, most of this recording may be taken up with my trying to evaluate the quality of the legislatures that I have participated in.

First, one realizes that men and women come to the legislature with differing motives for their service. They come with differing ages, all the way from mere youngsters of twenty-one and twenty-two on up to persons who are in their seventies. Some of them come and stay a short time,

others stay for quite some time. Perhaps it's not necessary for me to elaborate on this, but with my ten years - actually I'm in my sixth term - so that at the conclusion of this term I will have served twelve years - I am not the most senior member of the Legislature. There are a few that outrank me, but I'm becoming a senior member.

I don't recall - I think I've seen statistics - what the average length of service is, but I think that you would find, if you studied it, that in recent years the tendency has been for members to stay longer in the House. When they leave the House, it is often to seek some higher office, and they may either make it or they may be defeated. So that their total length of service I don't know how to appraise. When I first came down in 1955 I have the impression that most of the members stayed about two terms, and after that they either tried to move upward and continued in politics seeking some other office or else they had had the experience that they came down for; they had made the contacts that they had intended, and after a couple of terms they felt they needed to return to their main occupation. But I have the feeling now that members are staying longer, and perhaps one reason is that the salary is better now, and we even have a retirement system. I don't think this is something the general public has paid too much attention to, but the Legislature almost surreptitiously - in the Session before last, I believe - voted themselves into the Employee Retirement System. So we're going to draw retirement pay at age sixty, based on our legislative service. I think it's limited to those with six years service, But at any rate, that is a factor that is causing members to tend to stay in the Legislature, whereas formerly they would tend to

drop out.

I suppose, all in all, I should record my feeling that the Legislature is really a better body, and the members are of a little bit better calibre than one might ordinarily expect if he hadn't served or if he was not in personal contact. Waggoner Carr one time made the observation that in judging members of the Legislature ordinarily your local people always feel that they have a good one, but most everybody else has a sorry one.

As far as a feeling of honesty and dishonesty, incidents have occurred that I have known about where I felt that the moral calibre of a few members was pretty poor. But the fact that these are incidents that I have to search back in my memory to think about is perhaps significant. I don't agree with a lot of the broad indictments of the Legislature that Ronnie Dugger, for instance, has developed in times past in his so-called exposures of lobbying in The Observer. I don't know that I would dispute any of his facts, I would just feel that overall I wouldn't put it all in the same perspective that he does. I realize that one always speaks from his experience, and I think that the lobbyists, most of them who are there year in and year out, who make a study of this business, certainly don't apply uniform techniques to everybody. But in speaking about the influence that the lobby has had over the Legislature, I would think in terms of the kind of approaches they've made to me, and the efforts they have made to influence me, but would have to admit that they might make altogether different approaches to somebody else. They're smart enough to gauge their approach to the people with whom they are working. And if I haven't had to fight off any improper advances or any improper pressures,

that doesn't mean that they haven't been used with other people. But I don't know that their use of them has been any general matter of discussion or conversation in Austin.

And I would say this, too, that perhaps the committees I have served on have not been the committees where there has been the most pressure. State Affairs Committee I served on several terms, and we have had some critical issues there that have involved special interests that were very important. But on some of the other committees that I have served, like Agriculture and Education, we haven't had any vital matters threatening special economic interests like you might expect if you were on the Oil and Gas Committee or if you were on the Insurance Committee or Revenue and Tax.

The one term that I served on the Revenue and Tax Committee we didn't have to pass a tax bill, so my experiences in that area have been limited. I served on a conference committee on the tax bill in the Session of 1959; it was one of the most interesting experiences of my service in the Legislature. That was at a time when the Speaker was appointing a series of conference committees in an effort to work out a tax bill in 1959. Each conference committee appointed either gave up in discouragement and didn't come out with any agreement or else the bills that they came out with were defeated in the House. They never were defeated in the Senate because the Senate conferees represented Senate sentiment while the House conferees did not quite represent House sentiment, or House sentiment was not fully known. Serving in this conference committee, I had an opportunity to observe a little bit about how conference committees operate on a major

piece of legislation. But I can't recall that any lobbyist ever discussed a tax question with me at all while I was on that conference committee. What guidance I got was from the Speaker, and that wasn't anything specific. The committee came back to the House with a bill, which I opposed, and which the House turned down. The conference committee was then discharged.

A few days after that I had a telephone call from Mr. Homer Leonard, who is the chief lobbyist for the brewers, and he told me that he appreciated very much that while I was on the conference committee I hadn't tried to tax his industry any, and that he'd be very pleased to have one of those big color portraits made of me and placed in the Driskill lobby. I think these portraits cost over a hundred dollars. I told him that I'd just rather have a little whiskey, and he sent out a case, which I certainly appreciated.

There are positions in which you can be serving in the Legislature where you have an opportunity to observe at close quarters the real workings of the Legislature; on the other hand, you can serve in the Legislature for several terms and because of your committee assignments and because of interests that you have, you may never really know what's going on. I learned more about how the Legislature actually operates, or how it seems to me to operate after I became a candidate for Speaker than I had ever before, and I had been serving for four terms.

I formed some judgments of members, motives, standards, and so forth early in my service, however, and I will cite one instance occurring in my second term - 1957 - when the rural electrification question became an

issue in the Legislature. The rural electric co-ops are cooperative corporations that are chartered under the laws of Texas. Their connection with the Federal government, of course, is that they borrow money from the Federal government. But they are strongly regulated by the states. State law specified what the powers of these corporations are and so on, and whom they can serve. The private power companies had contested the right of an East Texas rural co-op to serve an urban area, and the county had sustained the power companies. The co-ops then wanted to amend the Texas law to override the court decision which had interpreted current state law in such a way as to burden seriously the co-ops. I was selected as the main sponsor for the co-op bill. It was known as the "R.E.A. Bill." Actually, this is something that became a much more bitter issue than I ever anticipated when I first got into it. As a matter of fact, the issue of the power companies versus the co-ops became one of the biggest issues in the Legislature over a period of three sessions, even four sessions, I would say. It was one of the issues that divided the Legislature and divided the lobby and was one of the issues that members had to contend with when they ran for re-election. The simple question, based in the most elemental terms, was are you for the co-ops or are you for the power companies, because it was impossible to be for both on this particular issue because the lines were so tightly drawn. The power companies were anxious as long as the law was being rewritten to have a big hand in the re-writing of it.

This is a long story to introduce what I wanted to point out. This was a bitter fight even in 1957, and the bill was in the State Affairs Committee.

The chairman of the State Affairs Committee was from a rural area with a strong co-op, and he was supposed to be for the co-ops. As a matter of fact, the bill was supposed to be in good shape in the Committee. The Committee members were largely from rural areas, at least the members had co-ops in their districts that they had to contend with politically. We realized that we were having real difficulty in getting the bill out of committee, however, and at some stage of the game while it was in sub-committee, and we were haggling over the terms of the bill, the principal attorney for the co-ops (literally their lobbyist) came to me visibly shaken and said, "I just had something happen to me, and I don't know how to handle it." He said, "The chairman of the State Affairs Committee is from Paducah, and he wants to know if he can't be employed as the attorney for the co-ops." To the co-op lawyer it seemed to be completely out of line for the Chairman of the committee handling this legislation at that particular juncture to request to be appointed attorney for the co-ops. He didn't know whether it was a trick or a genuine shakedown. Any response the co-ops made was apt to be used against them. The lawyer's feeling was: "I don't know what to do about this. Whether just to brush him off and give him a good excuse to be against our bill, or whether to go try to hire him as our attorney and then have him release to the press that the co-ops are engaged in unethical practices: they tried to hire me as their attorney." Well, the man was never hired as attorney. I record it here as an example of improper conduct or action on the part of a legislator. Subsequently, this particular legislator lined up openly with the power company position on their legislation.

This fight between the power companies and the co-ops could stimulate



a number of comments about the legislative process. It is one of those issues where you would just love not to have to be on either side, just strictly looking at it politically. If you were going to be Speaker, for instance, or aspire to be Speaker, it is an issue where you sure hate to make either side mad. It's one of those issues like the truck-railroad fight, where there is no way you can go but you get hurt.

In 1963 an incident came to light and was given publicity that focuses attention on ethics. I don't mean that these are real isolated incidents; they just happen to be incidents that I know about that I think indicate how hanky-panky may occur. The seriousness of it depends on your evaluation. I just mention these that have come to my attention; others may have occurred, but I don't think that this represents a wide spread weakness of moral fiber. It just indicates that you have some ordinary people in the ordinary people in the Legislature who are trying to feather their nest every now and then, and I don't think that means that the whole Legislature is bad.

But one of the things that does happen, and I think maybe something that happens pretty regularly during the legislative session may be tied up pretty much with the kind of Speaker's races that we frequently have to run. At any rate to put it in a few words, the question is to what extent do you need a lobbyist in order to get legislation passed or killed. And do you have to hire any particular one, and how much do you have to pay? Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about.

There is a group of farm organizations who have a pet legislative project. I think the peanut growers are the originators of it. What they would like to have is a bill passed - and it would take a constitutional

amendment - to finance a statewide promotional program for peanuts, to encourage people to use peanuts. They want the authority every time a peanut farmer sells peanuts that they can deduct a little tax on his peanuts. Some other commodity groups are interested in the same kind of program for their products.

In 1963 the peanut growers took the lead in proposing a program of this type for all agricultural commodities. They came to the Speaker and apparently asked him who would be a good man to handle their bill. The Speaker's key lieutenant wound up as the sponsor, and the Speaker's former law partner wound up as the lobbyist at a fee supposedly around ten thousand dollars. I believe that that was what the lobbyist was going to draw, as I understand it, for presenting this measure to the Legislature. Now the peanut growers were obviously told that they had a difficult piece of legislation, and that they needed to have a professional lobbyist handle it. They were also advised that Mr. B. was a very good choice because he was very close to the Speaker and was a former law partner of his, and they congratulated themselves on having the good luck to be able to hire this lawyer at ten thousand dollars. Now to the average member of the Legislature this was a highly needless expenditure for the farm groups to make. There wasn't anything Mr. B. was going to be able to do for them, particularly. They didn't have a real bad proposal or a real good proposal. There wasn't anybody who was going to spend any money to defeat it. There wasn't anybody going to hire a lobbyist against. It looked to me and to several other members like this was a sort of racketeering type thing, in the sense that here is a group that is rather naive about state politics, and here is

a chance to get about ten thousand dollars off of them. The assumption is that B. used some of the money to make contributions to certain political campaigns.

I don't know if I'm wording it right, but the requirement of requiring people to hire lobbyists when they don't really need to is, to me, an unethical practice, and I think it is a bad practice although it's probably fairly common. It seems to happen more to groups that are not too sophisticated. I don't think you are going to get Conoco or Humble to hire a lobbyist that they don't need. They're too well posted. But you get somebody like the Barbers' Association, the cosmetologists, the chiropractors, or you get a group that has some kind of beef or some kind of program that they want, and apparently the idea gets out to them that in order to get fair treatment (they don't put it this way) you have to hire so and so at ten thousand dollars. The idea is that it is a tricky thing to get laws passed, and you need to have an expert.

I myself used to tell the co-ops that they needed a lobbyist, but I wasn't thinking about their hiring a Speaker's law partner or anything like that. I was thinking that they needed somebody who could get personally acquainted with the members, take them out to lunch, gain their confidence, and be a sort of presence there in the Legislative Hall representing the co-ops on a day to day basis, which to me would be a professional job and a bona fide case of lobbying - of having somebody that represented the co-ops whose job was to get to know the members and really to work. It wasn't the idea of slipping some money under the table to somebody in order to get special treatment.

Let me go back now and think about what I've been saying. I'm trying to get over the point that, perhaps, one of the bordering - on - unethical practices that I've observed in the Legislature has been the needless employment of lobbyists by groups, and of particular lobbyists. Of course I suppose people hire lawyers that they don't need. What I'm talking about are incidents where some group comes to Austin and asks the Speaker or asks some knowledgeable person in Austin, "What do I need to do to get this bill passed?" And the answer is, "Well, you need to hire so-and-so because he is real close to this person or that person."

Another facet of law making I want to point to is the occasional introduction of legislation apparently for shakedown purposes. For instance, during this past session, a member of the House introduced a bill making drastic requirements of wrecking yards, requiring that they either be removed from the highways or requiring very expensive walls. There were all kinds of details to be required of wrecking yards. This bill was introduced and received some newspaper publicity and not too much notice, but it was really important news to the wrecking yards. They were going to be forced out of business or be forced to make very expensive changes in their operation. They came to Austin in distress, and they were told what lobbyist to hire. He told them how much money they had to raise (it was several thousand dollars), and they formed a state-wide association and began to get this money together. There was a strong feeling among some of us that there was a definite connection financially between the introduction of the bill and the lobbyist whom the wrecking yard people were hiring. The Speaker perceived the significance of what was going on and announced

that no serious consideration would be given the bill. This thing was an incipient scandal, evidently, and was disposed of in that low key way. This is a specific incident that happened in this past session, and I know that it has happened other times.

The most notable example of this kind of thing was the James Cox bribery case in 1957. One of the basic things surrounding this whole bribery case involving James Cox was something that was similar to the wrecking yard thing. That was that the naturopaths were continually faced in the Legislature with legislation being introduced to put them out of business, and they found that really all they had to do to keep the bill from passing was to fork up some money every session. In other words what they were subjected to each session was legislation outlawing their profession, and they had to raise a bunch of money and hire somebody to kill the bill. The bill was always killed if they raised the money, and they finally caught on to what was happening to them. They set up a tape recorder to record the incident where they were being asked for the money. The people who were putting up the bill to put them out of business were then approaching them to get the money to pull the bill down.

Of course money is involved in politics. You can't have a political organization without money, and people can't live without it; it's a very important commodity. Money is a key to most political activity, so it's not surprising that the whole appraisal of legislative morals - mores - revolves around the significance and influence of money. And these are the most crass uses of money, that is, where you use legislation to shake people down for money. The more subtle use of money is in smaller sums, is in more

genteel manner, and in the type manner that people can reconcile with their consciences. Everybody realizes that it costs money for members to run for the Legislature, and that their friends and those who believe in them are going to help them financially. This includes such friends as the telephone company and such friends as the labor unions, and such friends as teachers (although the teachers are not notable for making financial contributions to politicians). Texas State Teachers Association perhaps is the strongest lobby in Austin in many respects, but has probably made fewer campaign contributions than any other lobby. In fact if it has made any as an organization, it has never come to my attention. But most lobby groups spend a lot of time around election time in showing their friendship for the candidates by making campaign contributions.

I believe Governor Scranton on "Meet the Press" the other day pointed out in politics there are three very important things for any politician: one is money, one is organization, and one is issues. And I think that may be the relative importance of the things. The issues do, to some extent, result in the money and the organization, but the issues that do result in the money and organization may be relatively minor issues. The real major issues in which you may become involved may not result in either money or organization. It's the minor issues, many times, the issues that don't claim too much attention that will produce the money and the organization.

Most members of the Legislature eventually reconcile themselves to accepting gifts - contributions, and the thing that makes it easy is that normally the people you've been voting against don't offer you any contribu-

tions, and normally your financial help that's offered comes from people with whom you've already voted or indicated some sympathetic interest. In my case I never had received very many financial contributions until I ran for Speaker. In the Speaker's race I had to have a good deal of help, and it came from local people and also from some lobby groups. But I know last summer in my campaign for renomination in which I had only a nominal opponent - in fact he had withdrawn from the primary but very few people knew it - I got a check one day for a hundred dollars from the Texas Association of Plaintiffs Attorneys from a man in San Antonio. This was practically the only contribution I got, and it loomed pretty large. Somewhere back during my legislative career on some issues that they thought were very important I obviously had voted for them, and they remembered it and sent me a campaign contribution unsolicited. I'll have to say that I accepted it; I didn't return it, but this Session I was feeling kind of bad about it, because a bill was introduced which obviously the Plaintiffs Attorneys were going to oppose, and it was a bill that I thought had a good deal of merit. I couldn't help thinking about that hundred dollars, as I thought about the bill. I never was really put to the test, I'll have to say, because the bill was kept in subcommittee and never did come out for a vote. But I think that I might have had to have voted against the Plaintiffs Attorneys and just had to consider that their hundred dollars was in recognition for past views rather than future ones.

I don't know how much money is spent by lobby groups and individuals in elections, but I'll say this: I was told in the Speaker's race - and I think it's true - that if you could make a fifty or hundred dollar contribution to a candidate's race, he really would appreciate it, and as a

Speaker candidate, I was expected to be financed well enough that I could put a hundred dollars' contribution in some of the various legislative races with candidates that were for me and pledged to me, and I could do that in some instances. I just cite this to indicate that I think a hundred dollar campaign contribution is considered to be a pretty important contribution in the average district. Now in the large cities that might be a different matter.

Most of these contributions are given in cash. Now the Plaintiffs Attorneys gave me a check for a hundred dollars, and I reported that on my statement of campaign receipts and disbursements, but I'll have to admit, since this is going to be closed for a little while, that I have received cash contributions from individuals who have suggested to me that they were giving them in cash so that I would not have to report them, and I have not reported some of the cash contributions that I have received. I think this is quite common with members of the Legislature and with other candidates. You get them from people where you feel satisfied in your own mind about accepting them, but you really hate to open yourself to the fact that your opponent could demagogue on who had given you some money.

I would say this, that with respect to Speaker's race campaigns, there is no law requiring any report of Speaker's race contributions, and perhaps I got a little in the habit of accepting contributions there and not reporting them, and it's carried over into my legislative race. But people who give you contributions in cash would just as soon not be identified sometimes themselves, and they request that if you can square it with your conscience that you accept that in some spirit so that you



don't report it. And of course that means that you can't look at the candidate's campaign contributions report and get any clear conception about what his financial support has been or even what his expenditures have been.

You can't serve in the Legislature for any length of time and have any aspirations for higher office without becoming quite preoccupied with the lobby, with lobbyists. So I may spend an undue amount of time in this little testimony about the activities of the lobby, but the lobby, as it's understood in the Legislature, is certainly a most important force in the actual workings of the Legislature and the workings of the whole political system in this and, I'm sure, in every other state, because it's through the lobby that the organization and the money comes; the issues - you may use some creativity in developing issues. Or the issues result, perhaps in some instances from conflicts in lobby groups, or you may have great issues that the lobby is not interested in much one way or the other. But the lobbies in Austin represent interests that are involved in state policy, and they do have things that they want to get passed or they want to get killed, and they may not care how you stand on a great many issues, but on the one issue that's dear to their heart: that's all they're going to judge you on, that issue that they're interested in. But it is through the lobby groups that you get much of your political organization for a major race, remembering that most lobbyists either represent big corporate interests or they represent organizations of one kind or another; they have statewide memberships.

In fact the reason the teachers are important politically in the state

is not because of the money they give in political races (they don't give much) but it is because they are organized in every district. The teachers don't have to contribute any money to peoples' campaigns; the fact that there's enough of them with all their families and all their friends and what they say over the back fence to influence a political race is sufficient. That's all the power they need. They furnish organization and votes.

So you get interested in the lobby, and the lobby is certainly interested in you, and you have to realize that the lobby has an important role to fill, but you have to realize that you can sometimes be misled by their power and their influence. I don't think you can get from a lobbyist himself always a reliable picture as to how important the lobby is. The lobby frequently plays down its influence. If you talk to a lobbyist he'll indicate that really the lobbyists don't have much to do with legislation, that they're just there to present things to the committees and that the good judgment of the Legislature always is used on these things. Some lobbyists will tend very muchly to play down their role. I think other lobbyists tend under certain circumstances to exaggerate their importance. I think it's real easy for some lobbyists to oversell themselves, particularly a lobbyist who is not on a retainer year in and year out, the so-called freelance lobbyist whose clients tend to change from year to year. He's in the business of representing, and he will represent one group one time and another group another time. That lobbyist needs to value himself very highly for his value and influence are his stock in trade. He may make exaggerated claims as to the number of members whose votes he can control and the number of members that he can defeat, and the

number of members that he can elect. I think sometimes organization groups like the labor lobbyists are forced into that position of exaggerating their importance in order to make a good impression on the people that are hiring them. I ran into this in the Speaker's race. I think I observed several lobbyists who talked a lot bigger than they could deliver. Now that's not necessarily bad, in fact it made me feel kind of good about some of the members that these lobbyists thought they were going to be able to deliver that they couldn't.

Anyway, I don't know what the precise power and influence of the various lobby groups is. It's hard to know in the case of a member making a decision - it's hard to know to what extent he would have made the decision out of his own conscience and out of his own judgment, as opposed to how much he was influenced by lobbyists involved in that thing. It's hard to decide. In my case, I think, in stands I've taken on issues it's hard to decide how much my decision is based on my own innate judgment and thinking and how much I'm influenced by the personality of the lobbyist, his connections back home, and what he can do to me or for me. It's hard to judge that in my own instance a lot of times.

Lobbying is a very skillful and subtle thing, and I wish that I could have the privilege sometime of hearing an old lobbyist instruct a new one. I would sure like to hear them state in their own words the tricks of the trade, because it's obviously a trade where the tricks are passed down.

Now I think that one of the things that I have become increasingly aware of, and particularly as a result of my experience as a Speaker candidate, is what I would call "candidate recruitment." When I first ran

for the Legislature, I was encouraged to run by a couple of men in town who sent word to me that they wanted to talk to me, and they said that "our present representative is not going to run and we think we ought to have a good man representing the county, and we thought of four or five prospects that would do a good job for the county, and you are one of them. Would you be interested in running?" I have wondered since whether this incident was a part of an organized recruitment effort for conservative candidates, as these two men were political conservatives with many out-of-county connections.

But there is no doubt that there is systematic recruitment of candidates for the Legislature throughout the state. Lobby groups realize that it's a lot easier to influence a man who already leans in their direction philosophically, or has a sympathy for their cause; it's as simple as this. If there's a co-op in a district and their representative has been voting against the co-op, well the co-op board is going to get out and try to find a candidate to run who is sympathetic to their view. Basically, that's recruitment. If the teachers are dissatisfied with the way the man's been voting from their district, the teachers are going to get out and encourage somebody to run that will be sympathetic to their view. If somebody running from a district where the Texas Manufacturers Association has some contact, if somebody is serving that district who is voting against the TMA, the TMA is going to encourage their local members to encourage somebody to run from that district who will be more sympathetic to their problems.

I know that the lobbyists fan out over the state in the two or three months before filing deadline. They get out and travel and try to find out

who is interested in running for the Legislature in those counties, and they try to find out how their leanings are, what their political beliefs are, what their contacts are. I know that the legislative lobbyist for the AFL-CIO, for instance, will be on the road pretty steadily for a couple of months before the filing deadline, visiting sections of the state where he has contacts, checking up, and going into areas even where they don't have much labor membership, but where he hears of a person, or thinks that they might be able to elect a person that will be sympathetic to labor. They're out on the road trying to get these people to run for office, showing them the ropes. And business groups do the same way. Railroads are particularly active in this and so are the trucks. They will try to get "the right people" to run; it's sure a lot easier to get somebody who already leans your way without having to persuade them too hard.

This is something that goes on, and it's accentuated in a contested Speaker's race, because the lobbyists will tie in with the Speaker candidate whom they are supporting, so that this recruitment of candidates serves a double purpose, not only of getting a candidate elected who may be sympathetic to a certain point of view, but also getting a candidate elected who will be committed to a particular Speaker candidate. When there is not a contested Speaker's race, I think the candidate recruitment goes on, but it's more obvious and more apparent and is known to more people when it is tied in with a Speaker's race, because if you happen to be in one of these contested Speaker's races, you are well aware that one of the ways you win Speaker's races is to try to get more of your people elected who are committed to you, and get the people who are committed to your opponent defeated in their

own home districts. The contested Speaker's races that I've observed since I've been there have certainly been decided on this basis. The outcome was decided in the home districts as between the vying supporters of the two vying candidates for Speaker: which ones got elected and which ones didn't.

I'm going to discuss now my observations about the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives as I have formed them in watching the election of Speakers through the years that I have been there, and also based on my own unsuccessful race for Speaker.

I've been personally connected, of course, with the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives in each of the six Legislatures that I have been a member. In four of these Legislatures out of the six, the election of the Speaker on the opening day has been simply a formality, a formality in the sense that everyone knew well in advance who would be elected Speaker. In the other two Legislatures the opening day election for Speaker was quite meaningful, for there had been close, hard-fought contests for the post, and these contests were in doubt until the opening day when the members actually cast their votes. These races went, as they say, down to the wire. These were races: the race for the session in 1959 when Waggoner Carr and Joe Burkett opposed each other, and the race the next year for the session of 1961 when Jim Turman and Wade Spillman were the candidates who battled clear down to the wire. So these were the two that were contested down to the wire. There was an additional Speaker's race where there was a contest, that was the one I was in, but that race did not go down to the wire. After the primary elections in the Spring of 1962, I

realized that I was not going to have the support to be Speaker, and I withdrew. By the time the Legislature convened in January of 1963 there wasn't any question but that Byron Tunnell was going to be elected Speaker.

The races that go down to the wire, that go to the opening day, that I have observed, do so despite the strenuous efforts of the candidates and their supporters to resolve the issue prior to the opening day of the session. Only the members of the House, of course, can vote in these races, but the general public has a chance in these hotly contested races to be treated to some publicity to what is going on, because each candidate will use the newspapers, as he can, to create the impression that he is going to win or to try to build up some kind of public support for his candidacy and to the detriment of his opponent. So these down to the wire Speaker's races do attract some public notice, but of course in the instances where they aren't contested the question of who's going to be elected Speaker and the selection of the Speaker receive little public attention, even though the office is one of the most important in the state. And even in the case of the publicized races, the public will rarely have a notion of what factors are at work in the election of this powerful statewide official, the Speaker of the House. And even political scientists seem to have had little opportunity to probe this important area of political decisions.

So I'm going to comment a little bit about selection of a Speaker where it's contested, and, I suppose, it might be well to point out the factors that are involved in a race where it isn't contested. But perhaps my observations about the contested ones will shed some light as to what the situation

is when there is not a contested race.

Now, I might observe that the race for Speaker of the House, when there is one, is a major undertaking for the candidates that are involved; it's a statewide campaign; it's expensive, and it occupies the full time and attention of the candidates for months before the Legislature convenes and even for a year or two or longer prior to the convening of the session in which the man is to be elected Speaker.

Now I realize that my remarks about the selection of a Speaker in Texas have to be taken against the background of the fact that we do not have a two-party system in Texas, and I imagine that if we did have a two-party system that the election of a Speaker would be somewhat different than the way it is now. But the fact that we don't have the party system means that the Speaker candidate makes his race on his own personal responsibility.

The race for Speaker in 1959 between Carr and Burkett can be described mainly as a struggle between two strong, ambitious politicians in the House who didn't have any important differences in philosophy, and whose lobby support was very much the same. In the race between Jim Turman and Wade Spillman in 1961, the conflict represented quite a division within the lobby, and quite a division with respect to philosophy. Turman emerged as somewhat the liberal or moderate of "independent" type candidate, while Wade Spillman had strong, strong support from the lobby groups who customarily are very influential and decisive in the election of the Speaker. But Turman had important lobby support, and in fact was able to develop his candidacy because of a split in the lobby.



Now let's take the Speaker's races that I've observed. The one for Speaker in 1955 by Jim Lindsay: well, when I got acquainted with the situation, Jim Lindsay's opposition, whatever there had been, had faded away, and in June and July when he visited with me as a potential member he had it sewed up; he didn't have any opposition. So I don't know what happened there.

Now the next race, during the session of 1955, the race for Speaker for 1957 began, and the candidates there were Waggoner Carr and Horace Houston from Dallas. There seemed to be some doubt for a while as to which one would develop the most strength, but by the time the session had ended, it was obvious that Waggoner Carr had developed a great advantage over Horace Houston so far as the Speaker was concerned. By the next Spring Horace Houston had withdrawn from the race, and as a matter of fact he was defeated for re-election in his own district in Dallas County anyway. So that took care of that, so we can say that Carr was elected largely unopposed except for these preliminary skirmishes.

Then during the 1957 session, the question arose of course as to who was running for the 1959 session, and Joe Burkett from Kerrville developed as a leading contender. Thinking of the one term tradition for Speaker, the lobby had pretty well settled on Burkett as Carr's successor. Then Waggoner Carr decided he would run for a second term. This must have discomfited the lobby to some extent, but most of them didn't have any reason to oppose Carr's bid, and so the Burkett-Carr race developed with the lobby helping both but otherwise somewhat sidelined. Carr won it against Burkett, and I don't think it was any great philosophical difference or any great difference of policy,

as Burkett and Carr probably thought about a lot of things in somewhat the same terms. Carr, perhaps, was a bit more moderate in some of his outlook than Burkett, because Burkett was a staunch, unreconstructed, rural conservative. Carr had a little bit of the more moderate approach to some things, or at least in his sneaking and talking he seemed to indicate that.

Of course you couldn't say that this was a triumph over the lobby in any way, because Carr and Burkett both had strong support from the various lobby groups who have run the state and the state Legislature - perhaps instead of saying run it, say they have had the greatest influence on legislative policy. These business groups through the years that I've been there have hung together to shape legislative policies in a pro-business image and a more or less sceptical attitude or hostile attitude toward labor and toward spending policies and other things that would tend to be out of character with a pro-business administration. These business groups work together and cooperate together to maintain their influence and to maintain a strong influence over the Legislature.

Now of course you can imagine that these groups, business groups, that are in this coalition have varying degrees of loyalty, and you can imagine that it's perhaps a difficult thing sometimes to hold the railroads and the trucks into the same group, to support the same candidates. And you can imagine that there would be certain segments of the insurance industry and certain segments of the oil industry that would have conflicting interests that would make it difficult for them to work together one hundred per cent at all times.

This very difficulty was what made Turman's race possible for the 1961 speakership. He was able to make his race because there were certain business groups and so-called conservative economic groups who had experienced dissatisfaction with how they were doing in the Legislature, and they were willing to break away from the coalition that they had been members of before. This was enough, then, to split the support that would normally go to the business candidate, and enabled liberal groups and other groups to come in and team up with certain business groups and make it possible for Jim Turman to wage a successful race for Speaker. To some extent Jimmy Turman was a candidate of the Outs against the Ins. He had been a supporter of Waggoner Carr and was a key committee chairman of Waggoner Carr's, but the groups that supported him inside the House and outside the House were largely the people who had been the Outs during the previous Speakerships, and they finally were able to organize and win because of Turman's tremendous energy and his considerable abilities as a politician.

I have spoken of certain business groups maintaining a coalition, a working-together to influence legislation and the outcome of Speaker's races, and I think currently and during recent years this coalition has been composed mainly of the major oil and gas companies and their associates, such as The Midcontinent Oil and Gas Association, the electric utility companies, The Associated General Contractors; also, The Texas Good Roads Association, the various chemical companies, The Texas Manufacturers Association, and certain of the law firms in Houston that through the years have represented various business clients. These people all working together have a great deal of power and influence of a statewide nature, as

you can imagine, and there are a great many issues that they have in common, a great many attitudes that they have in common, and although they may have some differences, generally on major issues they'll be standing together on things. Also, the beer and liquor people are brought into this coalition, although there are times that they have some bitter differences as to taxation. The railroads and the trucks, being major business groups in the state, are pulled into this coalition, and there are a dozen or so major trade associations that will join in. These associations may not have such vital stakes in the thing, but they will throw their influence in with the big boys in order to be close to the seat of power.

I failed to mention the insurance industry. I think the insurance industry (that part that is Texas-owned, that is) would rank right up with the utilities and with the contractors and with the chemical people as being a very big influence in the politics of the Legislature and the politics of the state and as these politics work into the Speaker's race.

Now these groups, when they all work together, can command an awful lot of money for their candidates, and they are very knowledgeable as to politics. These groups have contacts that are statewide; they have contacts in practically every legislative district and, regardless of specific differences they may have, between them they are unified by being employers. They are unified by being possible tax targets, and they have a great deal of common interests in a great many issues. They take a big role in Texas politics. Now this is a group that hang together and have - I would say at the present time and in the times past, except for Jim Turman's administration - they are in the

driver's seat so far as any lobby is concerned.

Now the Outs-the people who tend to oppose these people and would like to really offer formidable opposition, who would like to put a coalition together to beat them- the Outs so far as these groups are concerned are the labor unions, The Farm Bureau, (while you would think it had very little in common with the labor unions, the anti-union Texas Farm Bureau is also anti-big business); the REA co-ops, independent oil producers, when they will revolt against the majors and enter into politics on that basis; plaintiffs attorneys, out-of-state insurance companies, certain segments of the small loan industry. Teachers' organizations, junior colleges and so on are to some extent a little bit standoffish so far as the "In" business groups are concerned, because generally these business groups are not too sympathetic to the aims of the teachers' organization in respect to pay, etc. In the past in Texas there has been a division among the loan companies, the Texas-owned loan companies, the small loan companies, and even some of the large ones Texas-owned have tended to be a part of the political establishment, and that means the big out of state loan companies have tended to want a change in the status quo so they have tended to align themselves with the Outs and particularly back in the years when the question of writing a small loan law was a very important question before the Legislature. The out-of-state loan companies tended to support very strongly the idea of a small loan act, while the loan companies within Texas and the small loan companies tended to oppose it. And you found that these people who were opposing the loan shark legislation generally were part of the Establishment.

Some elements of the insurance industry that opposed the Texas system of setting rates, such as the Allstate people and others, are prospects for joining the "outs" and in the Jim Turman race, they aligned themselves with his forces while the regular insurance companies of the state were for Wade Spillman.

Well, anyway, those are examples of some of the cleavages, some of the groups that tend to work together, a list of some of the Ins who are part of the Establishment who tend to work together, and then I've listed some of the Outs that I've observed.

Now one finds in working in a Speaker's race and as he becomes really cognizant of the way the Legislature operates, he finds a very close identification between these special interest groups and individual legislators. It is to be expected that there's a close association. For instance, most of these groups, Ins or Outs, try to achieve their aims through election of candidates that are friendly to their point of view. They give them financial assistance and other help, give them assistance in running their campaigns, and it's obvious that a member of the Legislature will be influenced in a choice for Speaker by whom the groups that are supporting him are supporting for Speaker. This will tend to be more important in the highly populated districts. But you can see that the lobby has a big influence in the election of a Speaker from a psychological standpoint as well as from a financial standpoint, because it's important if a candidate is working for instance with the Texas Manufacturers Association in his local race, he's certainly going to be influenced by whom the TMA wants for

Speaker.

I suppose that waging a Speaker's race is a good deal like waging any other important campaign: a candidate for Speaker must always make a strong show of support, indicate that he's winning, because this is a big influence. People like to be with a winner, particularly in a Speaker's race, because the winner has very important plums to pass out to the members and to his supporters. Certainly a Speaker candidate who is successful is in a very strong position to reward his friends and punish his enemies.

To show the appearance of being a winner is very important in your relationships with the lobby. It helps you get money; it tends to make the lobby come across when they originally would not otherwise. So it takes a vigorous candidate who can give the impression of being well-financed and give the impression of steadily picking up support. That's very important in a contest, a Speaker's race, as I suppose it is in any other race.

One of the peculiarities of the Speaker's race, of course, is that it's conducted with a limited constituency. It's not conducted with the mass public; it's conducted with the members of the House and the candidates for the House. In addition to the 150 members, there may be five or six hundred various candidates at one time or another. Those are the people (plus the lobby groups) that the Speaker candidates are working with, and it gets to be pretty personal. And the members and the candidates expect to have personal attention paid to them.

The pledge card is the instrument that is used to tie down or nail down a person's support. The candidate has a bunch of cards printed on which he

can have the members sign that they pledge their support, and this becomes the legal tender; this becomes the score card, and the method of telling where you are and how you're doing so far as a candidate is concerned. He has these cards printed, and he goes out and tries to get as many pledges as he can for his support. What the members do on these cards is to pledge themselves to vote for this particular man when the time for election comes.

Members and prospective members will sometimes be pretty careful about pledging at first. They'll look around pretty closely, and a lot of pledges are hard to get at first. Somehow the candidate for Speaker has to break this barrier, and he has to get enough cards to put him in the race and make him a contender. Yet the members, as I say, are cautious about it, because a misstep in pledging may have serious consequences for the rest of the man's political career.

Well, how do you tell when a Speaker candidate is doing well? How does he get the point over to the members that they ought to support him? Assuming that they're being careful and going to be careful and judicious about whom they support, careful and judicious about wanting to be with the winner, wanting to be with somebody that they think they can win with, how does he go about gathering support? Well, he has to show that he's well-financed as I've said before. He has to be able to entertain. It's considered to be a great element of prestige to be able to use an airplane when you need to. You need to open headquarters in Austin, and a candidate needs to be out over the state, needs to be working in every district. He needs to be able to acquire a few new pledges on a regular basis so that he can show a trend in his



direction, and it's important for a candidate for Speaker to have some lobbyists actively working in his behalf. This is more important with the older members than it is with the new members, but it's important with the new members, too, in the sense that they are making their identification with lobby groups in the course of their election campaigns.

It's considered good strategy if you're running for Speaker to do everything you can to see that your opponents in the Speaker's race have opponents in their own races in their own districts. Byron Tunnell is supposed to have said in connection with my race against him that the greatest mistake the Jamison forces made was in failing to get him an opponent in his home district for reelection, and that certainly was a disadvantage from our standpoint. He could run unopposed in his district. I had an opponent; I don't think that Byron had anything to do with getting him. He was not a strong opponent at all and presented no threat whatsoever, but psychologically with the members over the state who were not familiar with the home district situation, it was easy to see that Byron had no opponent at home while Alonzo Jamison did have an opponent.

The intervention in local races, the recruitment of candidates and the participation in local races is something that seems to be a regular part of these contested Speaker races. It's something to be deplored, perhaps, but it seems to be a natural outgrowth of the tremendous competition that's involved. There's no question but that a man, when he pledges someone for Speaker, runs a risk if he makes this pledge before the filing deadline for candidacy. He certainly runs the risk of having the other Speaker candidate

that he didn't support get interested in getting him an opponent in his own district.

In noncontested Speaker's races there is probably a lot less interference by the lobby in the local legislative races.

The Speakers' races tend to be decided in the primaries. Certainly the one that I was engaged in was decided in the primaries. Too many people that had signed pledge cards to me were defeated, failed to get elected, while the Tunnell people did sweep the primaries. And that was of course the decisive and turning point in my particular Speaker's race; and it just so happened that in other Speaker's races that were contested, like the Turman race and the Carr race, the primaries were not quite so decisive, and therefore the race could continue on until the actual election day.

The history books will give the figures on the races, but how close the Carr-Burkett race in 1959 was is indicated by the fact that Carr got 79 votes in the secret ballot, and Burkett got 71. In the Turman-Spillman race the margin of victory for Turman was a good deal higher: he got 83 votes, while Spillman got 66 votes. It's interesting to observe that quite a number of those 83 votes for Turman never did vote with Turman again during the entire session. A good many members had found themselves morally committed to Turman for Speaker because of pledge cards, but they decided that they would not support his program, and in fact they became a part of his opposition, some of them immediately after the election for Speaker. If Turman had kept in support of his own policies all the people that had voted for him for Speaker, of course he would have had a very commanding influence

in the House. As it turned out Jim Turman had a pretty rough time in leading the House to the particular programs that he was interested in.

The Spillman group, though defeated for Speaker, did not just fall apart. In fact the Spillman people organized a caucus, met on a regular basis, had their own committees, and they presented a very well-organized and a very determined opposition to practically everything that the Turman people wanted to do. We really had a two-party system in the 1961 session in the sense that we had the Turman party and the Spillman party, and that was a pretty bitter session because of that situation.

Some people have considered how the method of selection of the Speaker could be improved in the interest of better government. I know some of the fellows that supported Jim Turman were originally attracted to him because they felt that he was going to be independent of the lobby, and one of the reasons that he was going to be independent of the lobby was that most of the lobby was supporting his opponent. They felt to support Turman was going to mean a freer legislature, and a legislature less dominated by the lobby. But of course as time went on, Turman and his people had to obligate themselves to certain lobby groups in order to get the money and the statewide support to carry on the race, and some of the fellows said later, "Well, we won, but darn it I don't know if it was any great triumph because we had to compromise ourselves in so many areas with so many groups in order to win that it was not near the satisfaction in winning that we had hoped to have."

It was not quite the triumph for independence that some of the members had anticipated that they would have. That certainly is true. I found it to

be true in my race for Speaker, although it certainly did not assume the proportions that Jim Turman's did, and my race was a failure while his was a success. There isn't any question but what I would have found if I had been elected Speaker that I would have been circumscribed in some areas, just by the practical politics of the fact of who had supported me and who had opposed me.

Well, I guess that's a part of politics, but you have the feeling that it would be nice and it would be better for the state if a Speaker could be elected without having incurred a tremendous amount of prior obligations to certain special interests, but how to do it, I don't know; most of the members seem to like it - the present method of selecting a Speaker - pretty well because the members certainly have it in their power to change it. Since the race between Carr and Burkett had been so bitter, some of the members began to make suggestions and to offer bills and even Constitutional amendments that would change the method of election of a Speaker. All of these proposals have fallen on really deaf ears so far as the House leadership is concerned, whether it was the Turman leadership or whether it was the Tunnell leadership. They don't seem to want to change the system, and the members don't seem to be interested enough in changing it to try to change it in opposition to what the Speaker himself wants. So the system continues because it seems to suit the victors, and it seems to suit the lobby groups that are involved. How it will be changed, I don't know. I doubt that it will be changed.