

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
NUMBER

Interview with  
Walt Parker  
February 4, 1970

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald Marcello

Terms of Use: 2 years After leaving  
Political Office

Approved: Walter E. Parker

Date: Aug 2, 1970

Oral History Collection

Mr. Walt Parker

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: February 4, 1970

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Representative Walt Parker for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place at Mr. Parker's office in Denton, Texas, on February 4, 1970. I am interviewing Representative Parker in order to get his reminiscences and impressions of the recently completed regular and special sessions of the Texas Legislature. This was the 61st session of the Legislature. Mr. Parker, since this is the first time that you have participated in our program, I wonder if you would care to give us a brief biographical sketch of yourself.

Mr. Parker: I was born in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm fifty-two years old. I attended the high schools in Fort Worth and graduated from a high school there in Fort Worth. After graduation I worked a year and a half before coming to college at North Texas State University. I graduated in 1940 with a degree in business administration and a minor in education. I taught business subjects at Farmersville High School and was head football coach and head track coach there during

the year of 1940 and '41. In 1941, in September, I became employed by the Palestine Public School System as an assistant coach and a teacher of business subjects. I stayed there only a half year before returning to the Fort Worth Public School System where I was hired as an assistant coach and a physical education teacher. I left for the service in June of 1942 and was in the Air Force starting as a private and leaving the service as a captain in 1946. At that time I returned to the Fort Worth Public School System and was an assistant coach at Carter-Riverside High School and teacher of business subjects. I stayed in this position for one year, moving to Denton, Texas, as athletic director of the public school system. During the time of 1946 to 1947 I received my Master of Arts degree from Texas Christian University, and later while in my position as athletic director of the Denton Public Schools, I did approximately forty hours of graduate work in the field of education and counseling at North Texas. And that is my background up until the present time.

Marcello: I see. Are you married?

Parker: I am married. I have one son, twenty-five years, who is a graduate, also, of North Texas State.

Marcello: When did you first decide to enter politics? Had this been something that you had been thinking about for some time?

Parker: No, I had never given it any thought until I had a group

of . . . of leading business and school people that contacted me on approximately January 15th of 1968, and they asked me if I would run for this particular office since the Honorable Alonzo Jamison was not seeking re-election.

Marcello: Where would you consider yourself on the political spectrum? What I mean by that is would you consider yourself to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate? Just what would be your position?

Parker: I would consider myself, and I think my voting record will substantiate it, that I am more conservative than I am liberal, but I really think I could be classified in the moderate range according to the way I voted in the last session of the legislature.

Marcello: Let's move on, then, to the general session of the 61st Legislature. Now, certainly the foremost matter which faced that legislature was revenue, taxation, appropriations. One of the first controversies which arose during that legislative session was the problem concerning the one-year versus the two-year budget. Which one did you favor and why?

Parker: I supported the one-year appropriation bill as I was considered one of the team members of the Speaker of the House, Mr. Gus Mutscher, and I supported the one-year appropriation. Let me say that I did not support the one-year appropriation until after I had been appointed to the appropriation committee and saw what we had to do to accomplish it. I had always felt

that we should have semi-annual sessions or meet every other year, but I have changed my opinion since serving on the appropriations committee. And I definitely feel that before the state can ever have an efficient operation of its government, we're going to have to go on a one-year session. And we might have to have one year to work strictly on general bills and the budget and then the second year to work on the budget, only, and emergency measures. But I would favor this, and I would vote for it if it comes up before the House.

Marcello: Why do you think Governor Smith favored the two-year budget?

Parker: Governor Smith is a very ultra, ultra conservative person. I feel like he's honest in his feelings. However, I do not share his feelings on it, and I don't believe that he will ever change. This is just the way he feels--that it's not necessary to have it one year. I just do not share that opinion at this time.

Marcello: Wasn't it also one of his arguments that the one-year appropriation would have been unconstitutional? Didn't constitutional problems arise here?

Parker: Yes. I'm not an attorney. But from the services that I had of attorneys there, I feel that his interpretation of this particular law--that the Constitution says that they will meet every other year--I just do not hold that this is what is actually a fact. I don't believe it would stand up in court.

Marcello: What did you think of Governor Smith's original tax proposal

which, I think, totaled, originally at least, \$350,000,000? Do you think it was evenly divided between business and the consumer?

Parker: I think basically that when his original tax measure came out that he was woefully short of what we were actually going to have. Governor Smith in his original budget, being what I consider a real professional politician, came out with a budget that, I think personally, he knew wasn't enough, and he knew that the House and the Senate wasn't going to pay a whole lot of attention to his budget in the first place--they never have in past experience--and I just think he had to come out with something and this is what he did. This is just my personal opinion on this.

Marcello: In fact, isn't it true that one of his proposals could not find a sponsor in the House?

Parker: That's correct. He had a proposal to tax \$10 on to a traffic fine. If you received a traffic fine, then there would be an additional \$10 that for every traffic fine would be forwarded to the state. As far as I know, he didn't get a favorable vote in the House of Representatives.

Marcello: What was your opinion on that particular proposal?

Parker: I couldn't support this proposal at all. I felt like if you're fined in one way that this was unfair to assess an additional fine on you to pay for a tax bill.

Marcello: Now another one of his proposed taxes also was levied at the

chemical industry. Some people said this was politically motivated. Do you know anything about this?

Parker: Yes, I . . . well, I say I know about it. I was, of course, associated with it there. I don't really think that Governor Smith ever had any idea that this tax would be put on. But I don't believe that this particular industry supported him in his race for governor, and I believe that this was one of those little political things that was put on to, maybe, get their attention. But I'll also say that the lobbyists for the chemical industry came down and appeared before the committee, and they made a real strong presentation as to why they shouldn't be taxed. I want to also say in support of them that they felt that if a tax had to be levied they were willing to pay their share, but they didn't want to be singled out as just a tax on their particular industry.

Marcello: While we're on the subject of lobbies, perhaps I might inject this particular question. Since you were a freshman legislator at this time, and I'm sure that you perhaps heard all sorts of assorted things about the activities of the lobbies, did your opinion change after you got to Austin and after some direct experiences with these lobbies. And just exactly what is your opinion now with regard to the activities of lobbies?

Parker: Well, I must say that certain lobbying groups have a strong influence on the speaker of the House and they have a strong influence on the governor, and they have a strong influence

on the lieutenant governor. Without their support a lot of times I doubt if these men could ever get elected. But as far as the lobbyists, with me personally, I never had any problems with them. I never received any fabulous sums as I'd always heard that they offered legislators. And, frankly, I found them more helpful than I found them a hindrance. I'll say this for the people that I dealt with that if I had a particular problem and I had lots of them, being a freshman there, that I got both sides of a question from the lobbyists there. In other words, they didn't just present their side; they also presented the arguments on the other side. And, naturally, they tried to present the strongest argument in their favor. But I feel that they also gave you the other side. And then that was my responsibility to weigh it and see which was right. And that's what I tried to do.

Marcello: In other words, if I am correct, you would say that the lobbies do serve a useful function in that, perhaps, they bring information to you which might not be available otherwise. Is that a statement with which you would agree?

Parker: I think this is correct. My labor voting record was not . . . well, I didn't vote too many right times in the opinion of the labor people. But I certainly did not know a lot of facts in this particular field that were presented to me by the labor lobbyists. And let me say this, there's all forms of lobbying control. A lot of individuals who come down there do not



realize that they are violating the lobbyist law that's set up in the state of Texas. When any problem touches them, they're going to lobby for it. But we just hear about the beer lobbyists and labor lobbyists and the Texas Manufacturing Association and the American Medical Association. But there are hundreds of them, much smaller lobbies is what it is.

Marcello: Now, during the regular session of the 61st Legislature, there was also a substantial amount of social legislation passed. Being more specific, I think there were increased welfare benefits provided. Is that correct?

Parker: Yes.

Marcello: What was your opinion on that, so far as the increased welfare benefits?

Parker: Let me say this. I feel that the average person in the state does not understand the welfare situation. And I classify myself as that. I am very much opposed to aid to dependent children in some forms. I went down there to the legislature feeling as I feel like most of the average people in the state feel, that the bulk of the welfare went to this aid to dependent children. I was surprised and I was elated to find out that I was wrong. I found out that only about 10 per cent went to this. And of this I then found out that I had thought that the aid to dependent children ranged in several hundreds of dollars to individuals, and I was quite surprised that the maximum was \$123 which is not enough to take care

of a family. I think that the welfare department needs to do a better job of selling what products they offer. Being a businessman, if I operated my business in the manner in which the welfare department had . . . had run theirs and let the public know just so little on this thing, I don't think I could be successful. I think that this is the biggest fault that we have in the welfare department. They do not get across to the people the things that have irritated the people, the actual facts on it.

Marcello: In other words in many cases this is a problem in public relations. And you feel that perhaps the state itself is at fault.

Parker: I definitely do.

Marcello: Now, also during the session the state's minimum wage was increased. Were you for or against this particular proposal, and why?

Parker: I opposed the minimum wage from its offset. I did not feel that it would serve any real, useful purpose. Being an employer of people, I know of no one in my section of the country that this wage really will affect. I hire laboring type of people, and my minimum wage that I have to pay laboring people is somewhere around \$2.00 to \$2.25 for laboring class people. And I can't hire them for that. So this just had an effect upon my feelings on this. My district strongly, I felt like, opposed this particular situation.

Marcello: How about workmen's compensation. What was your position on this issue?

Parker: I voted in favor of the increase of workmen's comp from, I believe, of the \$45 a week to \$54 a week raise. I still feel that for the people that actually need workmen's compensation and the people that are not trying to get something for nothing that this is not quite adequate on it. And I did support this and voted for it in the regular session. I think this is about the only vote that labor felt I made a right vote on.

Marcello: Now, of course, education was also a primary concern of the recent session of the legislature. And, of course, one of the issues which arose was that of establishing the University of Texas at Dallas. What was your position with regard to this particular proposal?

Parker: I felt that the legislature should try to increase the quality of education among the schools they already had, instead of expanding it and weakening each of the institutions. And I did not support the placing of a University in Dallas. I was one of the nineteen that opposed this particular piece of legislation.

Marcello: How about the proposal to establish four-year colleges at such places as Midland-Odessa, Corpus Christi, and San Antonio. Were you in favor of these proposals?

Parker: I was in favor of and probably supported all of them. But I

felt that at San Antonio that they had a very definite problem there in that they have a number of people that live in the San Antonio area that cannot afford to live in Austin and go to the University of Texas or go to San Marcos which is seventy-five miles away or attend one of the state schools. And I just felt that in this particular situation, especially in San Antonio, there's a lot of people there and they deserve a school where their people did not have to live away from home in order to go to school. And I did support the University of San Antonio. Now the four-year college or the upper level college at Odessa was, I would say, was kind of a little political situation, and being honest about it, I probably would not have supported that if I had not been on the speaker's team. But you understand that sometimes you have to compromise in the legislature in order to get something done, and this was one of those compromises that I made.

Marcello: Now another situation which arose during that session and I'm not sure exactly how much importance was given to it, was the whole problem concerning student unrest on the state campuses. Now there was some legislation passed to curb some of this unrest. What was your position with regard to this legislation?

Parker: I felt that it was a good piece of legislation. I feel like the law was put in there to try to help the universities maintain the control. But, now, let me say this that I do

not feel like that there is a big percent of the college students that are causing this unrest, I feel like it is a very small minority and a group a lot of times that is not connected with the college in any way. And this was the case at the University of Texas. I personally went and visited the campus. I attended some of these meetings there. And I found that the biggest agitators or biggest people that were advocating this were not people that were connected with the college.

Marcello: What are your own feelings with regard to this current unrest among college students? In other words what I'm trying to get at is why do you feel that there is a certain amount of unrest?

Parker: Well, having a twenty-five year old son, I feel that I've kind of run the gauntlet with him. The students that are in college today have been brought up in an entirely different era from what the people that are actually running the college were brought up in. I feel that they want a little bit quicker action, and they're not willing to wait as long as the people of my particular age or the people that are usually running the colleges, the Board of Regents. They worked their way up and they've spent a little longer time. The average student today is not willing to wait that long. He's never had to wait during his life for anything. Most of the time the economy has been good so his parents have

provided him with things. He's never seemed to need to wait, and as a result his philosophy of life is entirely different from the average Board of Regents. I feel that I would support a student--a man that's in a very strong position in the college, like a president of their student body--being associated with the Boards of Regents in some form or other. I think this would help. I'm sure in the next session of the legislature that this problem is going to be brought up. If it is, I certainly would give it real consideration.

Marcello: Perhaps the next question that I'm going to ask you is a little bit unfair, but I will ask anyhow. Keeping in mind, of course, that you were a freshman legislator, was there any legislation which you personally introduced during the past session . . . that is, during the general session?

Parker: I introduced a bill along with Representative Harold Davis of Austin. We co-authored this bill. We were trying to get at the man that sold narcotics to minors. At the present time the law reads from two to five years with the judge having the right of probation. We felt that a man that sold narcotics--now we're not necessarily talking to the man that sells marijuana, although I have my feelings about marijuana--we were trying to get at the hard drug pusher. And we felt the minimum sentence should be five years, and we favored no probation at all. However, we got the bill through increasing

the penalties but we could not get the probationary clause eliminated. We were fought very strongly by the judges in the state and also by the real liberal elements in the state on this phase.

Marcello: Now, by the end of this special session you must have formed some sort of opinion or some sort of impression about the legislature. Would you care to comment on this?

Parker: Well, the biggest thing that I found out in going down there was that the most powerful man in our state government is the speaker of the House of Representatives. He receives quite a bit of notoriety but I don't believe that the average person realizes the power that he has. As you know, he appoints all the committees. He appoints every member of the committee. And if you're not on the speaker's team then you're not going to get appointed to an important committee. Since they change every two years you never know from one session to the next as to whether you're going to be on what committee. I personally feel that this system needs to be changed to allow, maybe, a seniority basis similar to what we have in the national Congress to be done in the state of Texas. This would eliminate some of the power that the speaker has, and I think this would give the people a little more control over some of the legislation that is passed or not passed if this were done. This is my personal . . . I feel very strongly about this. I doubt if anything will ever

be accomplished on it, but I certainly feel like it needs to be.

Marcello: What particular committees were you appointed to?

Parker: I was appointed to the Appropriations, Higher Education, Common Carriers (which includes trucking and rails and bus transportation), Highways and Roads, and the Youth Committee. The Youth Committee was a new committee. I felt very fortunate to be on these five committees.

Marcello: How do you make it known as to what committees you want to be on? In other words, how does the speaker determine which committees . . .

Parker: Actually, you receive a little card on which you give your preference to the speaker. This is probably a formality. I expressed my opinions to the speaker before I was ever elected to the legislature. When I told the speaker that I would support him for speakership of the House, at the time I gave him my pledge card I also told him the committees that I would like to serve on.

Marcello: Did you have any other impressions or reminiscences of the legislature which you'd like to give at this time?

Parker: I feel that they serve a good purpose at times, but I feel that a lot of unnecessary time is taken in the passage of memorial and congratulatory resolutions and so forth. It seemed like we took up about forty-five minutes every day to pass these types of messages. I just don't feel like



that we have a place in it. The other thing that I feel very strongly on, I feel that the legislature has too much legislation that has to be passed in order to take care of the county level government that should be handled on a county level, such as the county superintendent. If we want to raise his salary, I have to pass a bill and it's the same type of bill that if you were passing a constitutional amendment. I still have to do the same procedure. If I raise the Commissioner's Court salary and raise the secretary in the county superintendent's office, I have to pass a bill on this thing. I just feel like too much legislation that should be handled by the county is handled by the state.

Marcello: Let's move on next to the special session of the 61st Legislature. Just for the record, what necessitated the convening of that special session?

Parker: I personally felt that we had a fairly good tax bill, and we worked things out on a one-year budget. Governor Smith didn't see it this way. He necessitated a second session which I felt was totally unnecessary. I voted this way. I would have voted to override the governor if it would have been brought onto the floor. But there was not enough votes there to do this, and so when he vetoed the bill, there wasn't anything we could do except take this special session.

Marcello: Also I might add here that between the end of the regular session and the beginning of the special session there

was . . . well, let me put it to you this way. I think the original tax bill called for \$260,000,000 in new revenue. And then this was increased, I believe, by the time of the special session to about \$350,000,000. Well, naturally, this meant that revenues somewhere along the line had to be found to meet this increase. Several legislators, of course, felt that this increase in the state budget could only be met by an increase in the state sales tax. What was your feeling along these lines?

Parker: I supported the state sales tax. I felt like that this was a tax after talking to numerous people throughout the district, and I had to campaign real strong, that the average person on the street favored paying the sales tax over any other form of taxes. Now, I know that there is a controversy about the personal income tax, but I personally could not find enough people in my district that would support it at all. I found more liberal thinking people favored a personal income tax. But even then some of these people who are good friends of mine, they want to do everything else before they put that personal income tax on. And so I supported the sales tax with a proportional amount being placed on business. Now we mustn't overlook the fact that the franchise tax was increased. And a lot of people don't realize this, but a big part of that budget was the increasing of that fifty cents additional on that franchise tax which is a business

tax only. I supported a tax on cigarettes and what they call the luxury taxes. I felt that people that could afford those things could afford to pay the taxes.

Marcello: Was the House ever very close in these special sessions to passing a state income tax?

Parker: No, sir. I don't believe that you could have mustered during the 61st Session forty votes that would have supported a personal income tax.

Marcello: Of course, one target was an increased tax on alcoholic beverages. Did you support this particular proposal to increase the taxes on beer and whiskey, for example?

Parker: Yes. Placing beer under the sales tax was the stumbling block between the House version and the Senate version. You have . . .

Marcello: This originated in the Senate, is that correct?

Parker: That's correct. They wanted a tax on beer and . . . well, they wanted beer placed under the sales tax. The House did not. The leadership of the House, Mr. Mutscher . . . his district is a predominantly German-orientated district and they considered . . . beer to them was the same as food would be to someone else. And he did not support it. He was given a lot of credit that the beer lobbyists were forcing him not to support this tax on beer. But I can truthfully say I think this was wrong. I don't think they forced him in any way. I think that this was his personal feeling, and he did

not support it. And this is about the only time that I had to . . . to go against the speaker's wishes. And I was one of the forty-nine that voted originally to place beer and whiskey under the sales tax. Of course, as you know, it takes seventy-six, so we just couldn't get it placed under there.

Marcello: Can you describe any of the activities of Homer Leonard at this time? Leonard, of course, is the chief lobbyist for the beer industry.

Parker: Let me say that Homer Leonard is a former speaker of the House, a very brilliant man. He has five or six other men that are associated with the beer lobby. At no time . . . at no time was I ever asked by anyone in the beer industry to vote either for or against the beer tax. Now, I believe if you'd check with the other members of the House that you could find this statement repeated over and over again. The newspapers were charging that these people were in a coalition with the members of the House of Representatives, and to my knowledge this is not true. If they did anything it was maybe with the leadership of the House and leadership of the Senate, but as far as the individual members, they never asked me to either vote for it or against it.

Marcello: What are the associations between Leonard and Mutscher? I gather it is a rather close association?

Parker: Well, it is the same association probably that was with Ben Barnes and the beer lobbyists and, probably, the speakers

before them. They're a hard-working organization and they try to present this side of it. They feel like that they've got ample taxes on their product in comparison to taxes on other products that are being sold. And they try to support it. I had no dealings with the beer people other than just attending a social function that they would have occasionally for the members of the House. But this was no different than were the social functions held by the League of Women Voters which I attended. And so when you get into trying to condemn somebody for some of these things, it's kind of like living in a glass house. You sure better look out because the walls might collapse on you.

Marcello: Now, of course, the House, therefore, rejected this Senate proposal and eventually, the bill had to be referred to a conference committee. What was the House's alternative proposal to the inclusion of beer under the sales tax?

Parker: The House had several proposals. The House really wanted to raise the sales tax somewhere closer to the 4 per cent level that we did to the 3 1/4 per cent. I believe, basically, that this was the difference between the House version and the Senate version of the bill.

Marcello: What was Smith's position with regard to this whole question of including beer under the sales tax at this particular time?

Parker: I never could give you his position on anything.

Marcello: Well, also, I might ask you this. Now around the same time

that the legislature was kicking around this issue of including beer under the sales tax, some people in the Senate also proposed the inclusion of food under the sales tax. Now, first of all, what was your position with regard to the inclusion of food under the sales tax?

Parker: When the Senate was talking about the inclusion of food under the sales tax, their purpose was to reduce the sales tax which their bill did in this food tax bill. They were trying to eliminate a lot of the exemptions and lower the overall state sales tax, but to include everything under it. They thought that this was a good way to raise the additional money, and they felt like the people might favor this. But they found out differently (chuckle). And as a result of not having to vote on that situation until it came from the Senate, why, at first I thought it might be a good idea because we could reduce the overall sales tax. But evidently the housewife didn't feel this way, and when it came to the House, why, of course, it was 147 to nothing. I mean it wasn't hard for a House member to make up his mind after the housewives had let the people that were representing them know how they felt about it.

Marcello: Evidently there was some miscalculating on the part of several legislators with regard to this inclusion of food. I think at one time, was it not true, that Mutscher had assured Barnes that he, meaning Mutscher, could round up the necessary

votes to have the food tax passed?

Parker: Oh, I know this to be a fact that . . . that, or at least I feel that it was a fact, that Governor Barnes being the professional politician he is would never have allowed this to have taken place had he not thought that the House would pass this particular piece of legislation. I think he was quite fooled on this and, of course, you know, he had to work real hard to get this passed in the Senate. He got it passed in the Senate, but I also personally feel that this is one of those political moves that was just really inserted in there to try to get the House to swing off of the no tax on beer. And I think this ploy worked successfully. I think this was one of the turning points in it.

Marcello: Right. And I think we might mention here in the meantime that the Senate had, I guess, previously rejected the House's alternative proposal to the inclusion of beer under the sales tax.

Parker: Right.

Marcello: And this thing was still being kicked around. Is that correct?

Parker: That's correct. I honestly don't feel that there was anybody in the Senate who felt that the tax on food would survive the conference committee. That they knew this tax bill was going to be prevented. I just believe this is one of those political moves to try to force the House to get off their stand on the beer tax.

Marcello: Also, very shortly after the Senate passed the food tax, isn't it true that Speaker Mutscher adjourned the House for the weekend? And many people say that this, in effect, also gave public opinion time to react against the food tax.

Parker: Yes.

Marcello: And this helped to kill it in the House.

Parker: Yes, it did. He adjourned the House prior, I believe, before the bill could get to the House. Anyway, he adjourned it so that we would have that weekend to talk to our constituents. I didn't have to talk to any. They talked to me. And I was convinced that the food tax was a bad vote. The people definitely do not want it, and I could not support a tax on food at this time.

Marcello: By this time you had this trouble over the one-year versus the two-year budget, you had the trouble with regard to the inclusion of beer under the sales tax. Do you feel also by this time that perhaps the leadership was becoming so desperate that they would accept any tax proposal which might possibly pass? Were things getting . . . I don't know if desperate is a good word to use here or not, but . . .

Parker: Well, I'll say this. The tempers got real short, and there were several people that almost became physically involved over this thing. I think that the speaker of the House became disturbed at the lieutenant governor. And I think both of them, the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the House,



were disturbed at the governor because we could get no direction from the governor. He'd made up his mind it was going to be one way and that was it. And irrespective of what 181 people thought, he was going to do it just his way. I'm not trying to run down Governor Preston Smith, as he did a lot of great things. But it just seemed like that if he would have ever said--forcefully said--during the first session, "I will not accept a one-year appropriation bill," I don't think the leadership of either the House or the Senate would have insisted on passing a one-year appropriation bill. But Governor Smith never made this direct assertion. He would always say, "I do not like a one-year bill." Having been brought up under a very disciplinarian type of parent, I found out when they were a little bit on the wishy-washy side that I always probably did the things that maybe they didn't like. But when he says, "I will not do something," I always knew that that was exactly the way it was going to be. And I didn't try to change it. I very strongly felt that Governor Smith made a big mistake and that he could have easily avoided a special session if he would have been more forceful six weeks or a month before the end of the first session.

Marcello: You've previously mentioned friction between the speaker and the lieutenant governor over some of the revenue proposals. Would you care to elaborate on this?

Parker: Well, I feel that the speaker felt like that the sales tax should be increased to a 4 per cent level, whereas the Lieutenant Governor, Barnes, did not feel this. I feel like there was some friction brought about by this particular phase of it.

Marcello: Not friction which was severe enough, however, to bring about a complete break between the two men. Nothing of that . . .

Parker: Oh, no, sir, I don't think there ever was a break between Governor Barnes and Speaker Mutscher.

Marcello: Finally, then, this whole impasse was broken as a result of Senator Ralph Hall's compromise package. Were you generally in favor of this compromise proposal?

Parker: Yes, sir. I felt like Senator Hall and his committee came up with a package that was basically fair. The consumer tax were proportioned to the tax on luxuries and also the tax on beer. And I think it was about the best package that could come out of this particular legislative body at that time.

Marcello: One of the principal features of that compromise package, I guess, was the destination tax. Was that correct? Were you in favor of that?

Parker: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I feel that any one corporation that's selling inside our state should pay just as well as the one selling out of the state. A lot of states have this. I just feel that I don't think it will retard our business in any way. I feel like if this tax is properly collected and properly administered that this tax could become one of the

biggest taxes in our history.

Marcello: Speaker Mutscher at the beginning opposed this compromise proposal, did he not?

Parker: He had some feelings against it. Yes, I'd say that.

Marcello: Do you have any idea why he was opposed to it at that time?

Parker: No, I don't believe I could really give you any true statement on that.

Marcello: Let me ask you some general questions, then, with regard to the entire legislative session. What responsibility must Preston Smith bear in this impasse over the revenue bill? Now you've talked about this a little bit here, and how would you sum it up?

Parker: I feel that the head of any organization or any political organization should be forceful in his direction. I do not feel that he was as forceful as he could have been.

Marcello: Do you feel that the people who voted for the inclusion of food under the sales tax are going to have some trouble in the upcoming election?

Parker: I think if they try to hide behind the fact or try to explain their vote they will. If they will just be honest and say it was a bad vote, "I didn't realize the people felt the way they did," I think it will not be a real issue.

Marcello: Now, also, during this past year we've heard a lot of talk about the so-called taxpayer's revolt. Did you notice any evidence of this in your particular district? What are your

feelings about this so-called taxpayer's revolt?

Parker: Well, let me say this. The only way that you can avoid adding new taxes is to cut down on the amount of spending. My answer to the people on this has been, "I'll be glad to cut down on the spending, if you'll cut down on the asking of the things that you want." We can't add to our educational system, we can't add to our welfare program, we can't add to the general welfare of everybody in the state without some way to pay for it. I don't really know the solution to it. My people in my two counties--Cook County and Denton County--were very much opposed to any increase in taxes; although, let me say that I received very little mail in opposition to the tax package that was passed.

Marcello: Now, of course, there was quite a bit of bickering during the 61st Legislature. Do you think that this bickering in any way will affect the stature of the legislature among the voters? In other words, do you think that as a result of the scuffles that went on during that time, do you feel that the opinion of the voter for the legislature has somewhat been lowered?

Parker: There's a possibility that this could be. I feel like a lot of my constituents felt--that we were wasting time there. But I don't feel like we were. We passed the tax bill in the first session, and it was vetoed by the governor. And then it only took forty days to pass the final tax package. If

we would just compare this to the national level to where it takes the whole year to pass it--and we passed the package in forty days--I felt that we did a good job on it, as rapidly as we could. Frankly, I would have liked to have taken a little more time. I thought we were a little bit rapid on it. But I feel like the people might have been upset. I have not had a lot of comment, either one way or another, from my constituents on it. I had more comment on one little bill that we passed that I didn't think was too important. And this was on the family code revision. But I received over a thousand pieces of mail in a very short period of time. And no part of any bill that we passed during the regular session did I ever receive any amount of mail like this.

Marcello: While all this was taking place, the voters defeated a referendum calling for increased legislative salaries. Do you think this was in any way indicative of their disenchantment with the legislature?

Parker: I think that we passed a tax bill, and the average voter said, "Well, they're gonna raise my taxes, I'm not gonna raise their salary." And I feel like this was their reaction. Yes, I definitely feel that if no tax bill had been passed, they probably would have voted for this increase.

Marcello: How do you assess Speaker Mutscher's leadership during this past session. Do you think he provided the leadership that

was necessary?

Parker: I felt that Speaker Mutscher did provide the leadership that was necessary. I feel, personally, that the Speaker of the House is too powerful, as I said earlier in my meeting. And meaning no reflection on the speaker, I just feel that certain rules need to be changed--and especially the Committee system--to eliminate the power that this one man has, because he is not elected by the people to be in this position. I feel that if he were elected to the speaker of the House by the people in a direct vote, then, maybe he could have the power that he does have. But the way it is now I just cannot support the power that he has.

Marcello: How would you assess Governor Smith's first year as governor? That is, excluding what you've already said about his leadership with regard to the taxes.

Parker: Governor Smith was very good to me during the session and outside of the fact that I felt that we needed a little more direction or a little more forceful direction on the tax measure, I have no actual complaints about his way of doing it.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. This is, perhaps, a loaded question, and you may plead the Fifth on it. Now that Ralph Hall has declared himself as a candidate for governor, whom are you going to support?

Parker: Well, I've never been one to hide behind anything. I

probably will have to support Ralph Hall because his philosophy in life and philosophy in government is a little more aligned with the way I feel.

Marcello: Do you feel that he has a fairly good chance of defeating Governor Smith in the Democratic primary?

Parker: I feel that he'd have just a running chance. An incumbent, according to past records, has a built-in vote that someone challenging him has to overcome. And it's going to be real difficult for Ralph Hall to defeat Preston Smith.

Marcello: I'm sure that Senator Hall realizes this. And do you also think that perhaps he is looking forward to 1972, perhaps?

Parker: Well, let me say this, that I came back from Austin last night with him and spent an hour visiting with him very thoroughly, and this was not the intent that he gave to me on the plane in a very personal man-to-man type talk. He definitely feels like he has a good running chance of defeating Preston Smith. And if his name is allowed to be placed on the ballot, he's going to make a run of it. Of course, this will create real problems in a person like myself. I have two ways to go. If I go with Preston Smith for governor, I'm all right if Preston is elected. If I go with Ralph Hall, and he is defeated, then any personal bill that I would have passed in the legislature I'm sure would be vetoed by Preston Smith because this has been the attitude that he's taken toward it. He's a very . . . he's

the type that . . .

Marcello: He's very vindictive.

Parker: Well, he's a person that if you don't support him he's certainly not going to help you. And this has been proven time and time again.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about Ben Barnes. Of course, we all know of his recent decision to run again for the lieutenant governorship. How do you think he would have fared in an election with Senator Yarborough? In other words, assume that he had decided to run for the Senate. Do you think he would have defeated Ralph Yarborough?

Parker: It's just my personal opinion, no better than yours.

Marcello: Sure.

Parker: But I don't think that he could have although I have never supported Senator Yarborough too strongly. I feel that he has a built-in vote, and it's going to be real difficult for anyone to defeat him. Yarborough voted maybe a little farther to the right or left--either way you want to say it--but he hasn't voted enough to really irritate a lot of people, and I personally don't feel that he'll have much difficulty in his race. I do not think that Ben Barnes could have defeated him. And I think Ben Barnes realized this fact.

Marcello: Do you feel that Barnes' recent marital difficulties are going to have any effect on his future political career?

Parker: Of course, I was . . .



Marcello: I mean to say it certainly can't help him any.

Parker: No, I was very disappointed that this came about, knowing both parties in this situation. But I personally feel that if he was re-elected as lieutenant governor that two years from now it would make no difference. I think about the case of Governor Rockefeller in New York, and it hasn't seemed to affect him. And I believe his religious situation in his case where it's more predominant than the one concerning Governor Barnes.

Marcello: Let me ask you this question. Some people have said that most of the problems concerning Texas are liberal or conservative in nature. Other people have said that they are urban and rural in nature. Which position do you feel to be correct? Or what is your opinion . . .

Parker: Let me say this. That I think that more emphasis is placed on the liberal and the conservative. I think that this is blown out of proportion time and time again. I believe our problem is urban and rural. Naturally I represent what is considered a rural district. I also know that after the 1970 census is completed the House of Representatives will gain for the urban people approximately nineteen seats which will give them control of the House. I don't think this will take place before the 1971 session. But in 1973, Texas will shift from a rural dominated House of Representatives to an urban dominated one. I do not see problems connected as being liberal

and conservative, although maybe my views are different from someone else. I just don't like to feel like that this is the problem. I feel our problem is the city versus the small community.

Marcello: And, in conclusion then, how would you assess the performance of the 61st Legislature as a freshman representative?

Parker: Of course, I feel like I was baptized pretty well with this situation. But I feel that when historians analyze what was done, they will find that it was a very fruitful legislative session. I think we got started on some problems in the field of education and in the field of air pollution. I feel like that they will take off after this session, and they'll look back and see that we didn't do so bad in this session. I just hope that the next one is a little bit easier than . . . if I'm fortunate enough to be re-elected that it is easier than the one I've just gone through (chuckle).