

This is an interview with Thad Eure conducted in Raleigh, North Carolina on December 12, 1973 by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries.

Thad Eure: Well, on the 21st, which is right at us, on that day I'll start my 38th year. That goes back a right far piece. A good long time. Yeah, I've been here with eleven governors in a row. And I bet you that 90% of the people in this state couldn't count off those eleven governors. So many of them have been forgotten a long time ago. Passed away before you were born.

Walter De Vries: What major changes have you seen in North Carolina politics in the last twenty-five years? Anything come to your mind?

Eure: In politics?

W.D.V.: Yeah. Well, politics is one of them, the economy as well, or anything in general.

Jack Bass: But especially for politics.

Eure: Well, the whole and overall style of campaigning for public office in this state is just different today from what it was back in '48 as night is from day. Completely different. In 1948, we were just moving out of a period when those interested in politics and

wanted to curry favor with candidates, you only needed to go and see two or three people in a county. And then you could leave and go and see two or three people in another county. Those people were well known in the counties that you would visit and if you were all right with them, you could leave and said that you had that county safe in your bag. And that was just about the beginning of that change. Until we've gotten to the place now where if you want to make certain that you've got a county in your bag, you'd better not stop and see just one or two people. If they found out that you had done that and didn't see quite a number of other people, in fact all you possibly could, you just simply played the devil. Because the people that you didn't see would get the idea that so and so well, we'll show him and they'd do the reverse of what they used to do. And back in those days, the candidates would make a lot of visits and do. . .radio was just getting started good. They'd make a whole lot of speeches on the radio and later they graduated into t.v. and different sort of organizational work. Back in those days, party candidates would always be together. They'd ride together, they'd speak together on things that were not controversial, as far as the candidates were concerned. It was sort of more party organization. And we've gone from that until today it looks like everybody is trying to be his own organization. So, there's just as much difference in politics and campaigning today from what it was back then as I said, from night and day. Now, what sort of

particular inquiry did you want to make about that?

W.D.V.: Well, was that a gradual change or were there one or two elections where there were a lot more changes ?

Eure: It was a gradual change. And it was a long time before it was completely eliminated in some areas of the state.

J.B.: Are there any counties where that still holds true, where one or two people are all you'd have to know.

Eure: Yeah, we've got one or two counties today where there are two or three people that you can see and up until now, they've been able to carry things their way.

W.D.V.: Is one of those counties in eastern North Carolina? I'm trying to think of the man's name, but I can't.

J.B.: Who was that sheriff in Rockingham?

Eure: Well, he. . .no, the principle one that I was thinking about is Madison County up in the western part of the state. Now, you can see Sheriff Ponder up there in Madison County at Marshall and see his brother Zeno Ponder and see Liston Ramsey who's a member of the General Assembly from that house district and I'd gamble that if those three fellows were together, with the organization they have in that county, they could just about write the vote before the election. I think it's more so there than any other county in the state. I think that's generally recognized. But sometimes they lose, but when they do lose, they know why they lost and that's fixed up mighty quick. How, I don't know, but it's pretty nigh often.

I'd say that I could take a half a dozen people in Madison County and just about write the election results, certainly on the win and loss column.

W.D.V.: Well of the 100 counties, there are only two or three where you can do this?

Eure: I think that's so.

W.D.V.: Well, what reason caused that change? Was it television? Do you think that the rise of personal candidate organizations must mean that the state party organization must have decreased in its rank and support? What broke that up?

Eure: Well, I'll tell you my view about it. You see, of our registration showing the total number of Democrats and the total number of Republicans, total number of Independents. . .total number of no party affiliation, except for this switching from one to the other, you wouldnt have to have elections, all you'd have to do is open the registration books and add the totals. Well, now, political campaigns are usually governed by those individuals who because of their stature, because of their influence and so forth, are able to have worthwhile followers. Because of their stature and influence and character, they have followers. Then, there's another group that try to buy their influence with money. They'll make contributions to campaigns or to candidates and they also spend money otherwise. And you'll find that political subdivisions will be this way one time and this way anovertime. And that's because that those followers

of the intellectuals and those people with stature and those people with integrity and character, they become disgusted at the results in government and they rebel. And they rebel and go to the other side and it don't make any difference which side it is, they want to get rid of them. And the same way with the followers of those that want to buy their influence with money, contributions and so forth, when they are getting some of it. But when government hits them in a manner in which they don't like, then they'll rebel and they'll go to the other side. And so, we've had a whole lot of that in this state in different areas. I'm satisfied that they have it everywhere. People become more educated, they become more independent. And things haven't been going to suit them, following the leaders that they had so much confidence in. Their integrity, their ability, their know-how and the manner in which they regarded their stature, willing to accept them as leaders. Things go from bad to worse until they just rebel. Now, generally speaking, that's what has happened in North Carolina. Some of the finest governmental administrators who were able to call the shots can't any more. For instance, I've seen the day when one man in the General Assembly would write the entire appropriation bill and would pass it in both branches of the General Assembly without an amendment being offered. That's an impossible sort of thing today. I remember back, of course, this was prior to 1948, I can remember back when two or three people would

write all the tax laws in this state and members of the General Assembly would follow. But that day is past, it's the independence that's been demonstrated by individuals. And then, too, we have a growing psychology in North Carolina and everywhere else, I think. . . as I see it, we've had a growing psychology here that money can do too much in government. Money, I'm not talking about the way it's spent for the people, but the money-angle. They look around and see leaders, the officials of some of our biggest corporations, they could be tobacco companies, they could be some utilities in the state, and they sense that they are supporting some candidate for this office or that office and people will have a tendency to rebel. We have a lot of people that that's all they'd like to know. Just find out who is supporting so and so and then they'll get another candidate.

W.D.V.: Does that explain the '72 election of Helms and Holshouser? The rebellion?

Eure: Yeah. It explains a whole lot of it. Of course, what I think about it. I think that Helms and Holshouser's election in this state was just pure accident. Each one of them had to have as many of the Democrats in this state voting for them as Republicans voting for them. And there are a lot of other reasons why. They were against the Democratic candidate for president, they were against McGovern, they didn't want his like at all and a lot of them voted for George Wallace because George Wallace said those things

that people wanted to hear. A lot of them that did that would never do it again. A lot of folks that voted for George Wallace did so solely on the ground that they heard Wallace and saw him on t.v. say, "When I become president of the United States, these lie-down strikers, if they lie down in front of my automobile, it'll be the last time they'll lie down." It was some silly thing like that that attracted their attention in a sort of way that they felt themselves and so they go out and shout and holler and walk into the box and vote for George Wallace. For no other reason except that. Well, that won't ever happen again. And most of those that voted for George Wallace would have voted Democratic ticket, if it had had somebody other than George McGovern. Then, we've got a growing tendency in this state of people who say that they vote for the man rather than the party, which of course, has always been the possible thing to do. That's nothing but just chatter. Political parties have administered government in this state and this country for years and are going to continue to do so. And if you vote for a man just because his name is Jones or his name is Nixon, whether he's a Democrat or a Republican, whichever wins, whether he's a Democrat or a Republican, then his political party is going to administer government. Now, the people who voted here for Holshouser last November, they thought he was a nice fellow, he was getting along, doing the best he could and here's a man running on the Democratic ticket they decided up as having spent a million

dollars or more to get elected and there are so many of those people that didn't get a cent of it, you know and they wanted to express their attitude against such a picture as that and they went and voted for the man rather than their own party. And as soon as the man gets down here, every appointment he makes to members of the cabinet and the government here, everyone of them was a Republican except one and he's a registered Democrat and there's one other that has no party affiliation at all. Well, now, people that voted for Holshouser were not voting to oust all those who were evicted out of their offices and are seeking employment somewhere. They weren't voting to do that, they were voting for the man. But in voting for the man and being succesful, they finally wound up voting for the Republican Party and they've got Republicans administering the government. I mean, it's just that simple. We are never going to see the day when a man is going to administer government, it's going to be the political party. And Holshouser himself knows that. That's the reason he was so hell bent in getting this fellow who was a Republican chairman in this state, getting him out, because they locked horns and he couldn't get along very well as a man without having his party backing him. And the chairman of the party and the governor crossed up. And so this state saw one of the biggest battles we've ever seen in either state party over the election of a chairman. And Holshouser's got his man as chairman of the party. And that speaks further in the

light of "men administer government rather than political parties."
It's always been and always will be political parties administering government.

W.D.V.: Well, you said the '72 election was an accident. Does that mean that you think in '76 the Democrats. . .

Eure: In my mind, I don't think there's any question in the world about it. I don't believe that we will see half a million Democrats in North Carolina vote the Republican ticket in '76. I have no idea that they will. Now see, we have a registration in this state of more than three to one Democrats over Republicans. And whether it's right or wrong, with all the dismissals in state government that the people have witnessed since this Republican administration has been in power, and with all the backlash and conversations and people who have made up their minds because of Watergate and as a result of income tax disclosures and so forth and so on, I don't think there's any question in the world that 1976, it'll be just like the clock turned them, go back that far and further, because there's too big a gap in the result in November, all this change with about facing that people did. They voted the Republican ticket and never had before. Now, let me give you this illustration. I remember mighty well in 1929, I was a member of the General Assembly. Elected in November, 1928 and that was the same time that Herbert Hoover carried this state. And in carrying this state, the Republicans won 49 seats in our General Assembly and I was a member of that General

Assembly and the way that times changed and very mixed opportunity that people had to go to the poles and elect a new General Assembly, and how many Republicans do you think they elected to the 1931 General Assembly? Both house and senate ? Six. Well, now, we've got fifty Republicans in our General Assembly. We've got thirty-five in the house, we've got fifteen in the senate. Now, that number was elected and that's one more than they ever elected in this century.

W.D.V.: So, you see them rolling back.

Eure: Oh yes.

W.D.V.: You think that will be reflected in next year's election?

Eure: Oh yes. The Republicans won't have fifty seats, fifty members in the two branches of our General Assembly. I have no idea they will. And there are many reasons for it. It's the program in the national government, the psychologies of people, the disgust that the people have for the type of government that they are experiencing. A lot of them are going to take their vengeance out on these ecology rules and regulations. And I'm satisfied that it will be reflected in the next primary and in the nomination of candidates and reflected more in the general election when they elect members of the General Assembly.

J.B.: What kind of Democrat do you see getting elected in the primaries?

Eure: What kind of Democrat?

J.B.: Right.

Eure: Well, I'd say first of all, I'd see those that had been loyal to their party and didn't go off into one of these splinter parties, leave his own party when it was in its deepest trouble. You are going to see more Democratic Party loyalty in this state in the next primary and in the next General Assembly, than we've seen in a long time. I don't believe that we'll see candidates for office adopting their own program, their own platform and running separately, independently like you did last time. I believe that the candidates will get together, they'll ride together, they'll campaign together, they'll be a team. And it was everything else but a team last time. And everybody knew it. The only sort of team that we had in this state in the last general election was that every Republican and some Democrats even switched and got on the Republican party and rode just as fast and just as hard and just as tight as they could on Nixon's coat/tail. If it hadn't been for that alone, Helms would have never been elected and Holshouser never would have been elected. Never.

J.B.: Who do you see putting this team together?

Eure: Well, eventually, of course Democratic headquarters is trying to do that now, but they can't do it. But those that are nominated in the primary and are successful, they themselves will put it together. Because they know that they can't survive.

J.B.: Do you see somebody emerging as a leader of this group?

Eure: Well, I don't see any one individual and I don't think we

are going to have any one individual emerging. But I think that there will be a group of individuals who have been interested in the party heretofore and interested in it now, interested in the type of government that they want administered for the people of this state, some of whom will be candidates for office that never thought about being candidates for office before. And then I think that after the nominations have been certified, I think that you'll find that they will be the ones that will constitute the team that will pull the party back together.

J.B.: You see a new leadership emerging, then?

Eure: There will be.

J.B.: You've had about as good a vantage point from the last 40 years or so in government in North Carolina as anybody, and how do you assess Terry Sanford's administration and what effect did it and has it had in North Carolina? Because we hear a lot about "Sanford people" and the "Sanford wing" of the party and we still hear a lot of references to his administration that ended almost ten years ago.

Eure: Yeah, well. It's still alive. It's got to be reckoned with. Now Kerr Scott, Governor Scott, he had an organization in this state that was awfully powerful in the past, and of course someone in the past like that for a number of years, and new people come on the scene and that power and influence wastes away mighty fast.

Bob Scott ran for governor just at the right time. If it had not been for his daddy's powerful organization, Bob Scott could never have been elected governor of this state. Right strange thing about that. Bob Scott is the only person serving as lieutenant governor who went from the lieutenant governor's office to the governor's office. Now, a large number of lieutenant governors have tried and every one failed except Bob Scott. Bob Scott would have failed except for his Daddy. He had been dead and gone, but not dead and gone for too long. That's it. Well, now, see, Terry Sanford is still living and his group, they are keeping in touch with each other. Of course, it always gradually, you know, diminishes. Anybody that's had the power like that. Just like most of the Scott forces have diminished down to where it's rather a thin wafer now. I don't know that Bob, his son, of course, he had new folks added to it and they've still got the old and all, but Bob Scott's group in the state, right now, with what he brought from his father's group and that he cultivated on his own, never did get to be as powerful as Kerr Scott's once was. Now, by the same token, Terry Sanford, he had an awfully powerful group and it got to be more so when Kennedy was elected president. Terry Sanford got on that bandwagon. He was able to get a whole lot of people in this state good jobs and places of prominence in the state and in Washington in the Kennedy administration. But see, now, as that passes along,

those folks, now, they're back home. Some of them are trying to recoup. Henry Hall Wilson, for instance. He's right in the middle of the Terry Sanford organization. He'd never have been on the president's staff in Washington if it hadn't been for Terry Sanford. There are a lot of people that Terry had around him that he was able to help in the federal government. But, time passes and Terry can't help anybody in the federal government now, with a Republican administration, you know. It's just like the old saying. . .

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Eure: . . . he had been State Treasurer for a number of years and was a credit to the state, reached its pinnacle, everybody liked him, he was well known. And he ran for governor and some of the leaders in this state have discussed it several times right here in this office, that Charlie Johnson was the only man that ever announced for governor of North Carolina to be elected and never get out of his chair. And a lot of folks believed that. And that sort of psychology permeated the state to such an extent that lo and behold, Kerr Scott did beat the lard out of him. People in this state just won't stand for such psychology as that. There's no way in the world that you could beat Charlie Johnson, but they did. That Skipper Bowles with all of his money, and his wife's money and his brother's money and the things he was doing and the

polls he was taking and telling people what was going to happen percentage wise and other wise and routing and running a campaign without Democratic headquarters, rather running his own campaign, separate and independent committee, people just didn't stand for it. They had no notion to stand for it. You can't have politics away from people. People is politics. That's politics.

W.D.V.: Only one lieutenant governor was able to run and win as governor. That was basically because of his father's popularity?

Eure: I have no idea. I think that he would have admitted that himself. I think Bob Scott would admit that if it hadn't been for his father's popularity and his black-top roads over the state, in the hinterlands of North Carolina. If it hadn't been for that, I think he would agree that he couldn't have made it.

W.D.V.: What does that say for Jim Hunt in '76?

Eure: I don't know. Jim Hunt may be nominated by the widest majority of anybody that's been a candidate for governor of this state. I don't know. What I'm trying to tell you is that it's people. People is politics. And you're not going to have one without the other. Jim Hunt may, well, he wouldn't be breaking a record, Bob Scott broke the record. But we had Wilkins Horton, lieutenant governor who ran and missed it and we had Sandy Graham who ran and missed it. We had Dick Fountain, who ran and missed it. And I think there are others, but they just don't come to my attention right now.

W.D.V.: What's been the effect of reapportionment in North Carolina?

Eure: Well, I don't know. I think the people in the state have gotten over reapportionment, they were mighty mad. We got a little over 1/5 of the counties in this state that do not have a resident of that county sitting in either branch of our General Assembly. Now, that was mighty hard for them to take at one time. But I don't hear them complaining about that now. Got one county in the state with ten members sitting in the two branches of the General Assembly. And twenty some counties without one representative sitting in either branch. But I don't hear the people today complaining about that too much. I don't hear too much complaint by the people of this state now about this segregation that was such a burning issue. Not too many people complain about that. And psychology can run just like a fire in a broom straw field.

J.B.: What do you think are going to be the burning issues in the next ten years or so?

Eure: One of the burning issues in the next campaign is to see that we don't have another Republican administration any time soon.

J.B. What's going to be the issues that come to focus on that?

Eure: Well, what I just said is going to be the biggest issue.

J.B.: Well, what's going to be the argument against having a Republican administration?

Eure: Well, first of all. Is it the Republican administration in Washington and further reorganization of state government in North Carolina. You see, with all this change in voting, they can go to the registration booths and change their party affiliation, and you talk to some people who voted for Helms and voted for Holshouser last November. Some of those have had an opportunity, even after the primary, when nobody was running to suit them in the primary. . . see, we had a low vote last time. We should have voted over a million and a half votes and we fell several hundred thousand votes short of what we should be. Now, there were people who just weren't going to vote for either one. But you are not going to find with a three to one registration in this state, with all that's happened in state government and federal government, you are not going to find a half a million Democrats going to vote the Republican ticket next time.

W.D.V.: Well, hasn't the total number of people voting in the election decreased, wasn't 1972 one of the lowest you've ever had? In this state.

Eure: No, no. . .

W.D.V.: Why is it decreasing, rather than increasing?

Eure: Well, it's not one of the lowest, is what I'm trying to say.

W.D.V. : The percentage of voters has in effect, gone down. The percentage of people 18 years and older who were able

to register and vote was 31% in 1972 in North Carolina.

Eure: Oh yes, when they reduced the voting age, we should have had at least a million and three-quarters in the state. But we didn't do it. That was a great surprise to the people of this state, the size of our vote. They had lowered the voting age. Frankly, it was a great surprise to me. But it's just like this. People, we've been in an economy where people have been thinking about making money and going places and doing things and not paying a damn bit of attention to government. I've seen the day in my home county, it's a rural small county. . .they didn't have but two courts a year. Fall term and spring term. And when the judge would arrive at the county seat to hold court, why it was just as big an occasion as the county fair and more so. And the judge would come in and they would clear the walk in front of the court house and it was just like the President of the United States was walking in. And now, you could go to that rural county and they couldn't tell you when the courts are, or what judge is coming to hold the court. You can have courts anywhere in the state now, and unless it's some spectacular case, you just might as well not have room for spectators in the court. The judge, the jury and the witnesses, members of the bar who are interested in the case being tried. I bet you that there are at least two superior courts sitting in Wake County right now. You walk from here to the Sir Walter Hotel, I bet you that you won't find, speak to everyone you

see, you won't find half a dozen who could tell you what judges are holding court here in this county, today. What I'm trying to tell you is that people have gotten to the place where they have little confidence and mighty little respect for law and constitutional authority. I've seen the day when the superintendent of schools would go down to my rural county where I was born and raised. Every school in the county would turn out and go to the court house or some school auditorium to hear the state superintendent of public instruction speak. And they had a bigger crowd back then, with fewer people living there then. And you'd have days when even the governor or the United States senator would go down and make a speech. They are getting away from it. They are thinking about the taxes they have to pay. They think how little they save for what they have to pay. Thinking about how they are regulated. Right now, I wish I had some of the letters I'd received, and I've got nothing in the world to do with it. People in this state write letters. A new man out here at the motor vehicle department, Boyd Miller, the new Motor Vehicle Commissioner, filed a regulation in this office about carrying gasoline in drums on motor vehicles. They are just raising the devil. They've been regulated, they've been taxed, they feel like the public officials are not close to them. They don't care. And the General Assemblies. I've seen the day when this whole front or bottom floor would be crowded with people and you couldn't get up the stairs there when the General Assembly

was in session. And now, it's very seldom that you see a gathering down here at the legislative building, crowding. Maybe the state employees will get in there to hear the governor's budget message or occasions of that kind. They don't care anything about that. The Vice-President came here to speak, Agnew came here to speak. Why you would have thought that people from all over the state would have been here, but it was just a regular day down here at the legislative building. They don't do that anymore. So, now, the way that politics are, is the same as the way of people. The two go together. I don't know what sort of psychology will be prevailing when we have our next General Assembly. That is the one that is coming in January 16th. Of course, that's the same General Assembly, the same session. It's just an adjourned or recessed session. But that's one General Assembly that's divided itself for a period of sitting. And nobody can tell you what their reactions are going to be after being back home. There's been something individual here, this year in 1973. And so many of them, if they last very long, unless they change the date for the primary, they'll have to be announcing their candidacy and be campaigning for reelection before this crowd ever gets away from here, once they convene in January. Well, don't I know that it depends altogether on what the psychology is back in their house districts and in the senate districts as to whether they have a long session or a short session. And it depends here on what the psychology is about these

rules and regulations and what have you, as to how they will vote on different matters pending in the General Assembly before they adjourn. You can say what you want to, all these members of the General Assembly come here to enact law and in voting on those proposals before the General Assembly, most of them try to anticipate what the headlines in the paper is going to be the next morning that will affect them, in their constituency. So, politics and people. You can't separate them.

W.D.V.: You've worked with ten Democratic governors and one Republican governor. And you've been in office now for a year.

Can you tell if there's any difference other than the

How do assess Holshousers whole part, as compared to the other ten?

Eure: I don't know if he ever has. . . talking about the Council of State. . .

W.D.V.: Does the Council of State meet regularly?

Eure: Yeah. It didn't used to, that's a policy he's adopted. And now they meet the first Tuesday or the second Tuesday in each month.

This is the first Tuesday, that's right, in each month. And then of course, it meets any other time that it's called into session.

Now, of course, as you've seen in the papers, there's a whole lot of division in policies and programs and so forth between the governor and lieutenant governor. One's a Democrat and one's a Republican. If there's been any meeting of the Council of State in which the governor has outlined any program or policy and so

forth, I don't know it. See, I have a bunch of commissions up there for the governor to issue and make appointments. I countersign those commissions. I've never had a conference with him in my life about who he's going to appoint and why this appointment and all that kind of stuff. Just seems to be none of my business and it ain't, so. . . .

J.B.: How big a factor is television in all this change?

Eure: How big, I don't know. I just know it's tremendous. But, there's another thing. Everybody's got their own idea. I think that in the last campaign, if Skipper Bowles had just simply cancelled about half of his t.v. programs, that he would have been in better shape. I think you can get too much exposure. Now, if you are sitting in your living room and every day you get to a place where just like, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing," that everybody heard and talked about, you don't hear that any more, it wore itself out. You won't ever hear that again on t.v. It just wore itself out. All right, now everyday when you come in and you listen to some news program and maybe right in the middle of a news program, some of these stations will have it regular fixed that maybe six o'clock in the evening, maybe eleven o'clock or twelve o'clock in the day, some of the radio stations on the hour, every hour, well if you've got to sit there in order to know what the news is and see for several days a candidate for governor standing at a mill shaking hands with the workers that pass through, if you just keep seeing

that, well after a while you're just going to get fed up. If he had cancelled, I'm talking about Skipper Bowles now, if he had just cancelled about half of that, he'd have been in better shape. Just exactly like, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing." It ran out. So, timing is the most important thing in politics. It's timing. It's just like learning to use a surfboard on the waves and the ocean. You get right, and you come on in, if not, you slam into the ocean. Now, of course, there's nobody been an expert on timing. Nobody. A whole lot of people have just been mightly lucky. There are some other reasons, you never know what the psychology is, you'll never make a horseshoe out of a stick of steel, you're never going to do that unless you do it when it's red hot. You let it cool off, and you're not going to do anything.

J.B.: Which governor do you think has had the most lasting influence in the state?

Eure: The ones I've been with?

J.B.: Right.

Eure: The most lasting. To tell you the truth, they forget them so fast. You got down to the average person and say, "Well, what were some of the highlights of the Cherry administration? What are some of the highlights of the Kerr Scott administration or the Broughton administration? What are some of the highlights of the Eringhaus administration?" How many answers do you think you would get? They forget them so soon. Now, the man who knew, and I'm

talking about politics and people, the man who knew more about handling people than anybody I've seen in the governor's office, was Senator Hoey, Clyde Hoey. In my opinion, he knew more about how to handle people than any man I've seen sit in the governor's office. Now, I want to give you a little illustration about that. It used to be that the governor made engagements to see groups who wanted to come to Raleigh and discuss programs and give their feelings about it and make complaints and ask favors and so forth. And the governor would stay in his office. Unusual for him to be away. Maybe for a few days in the month he would make engagements in different areas of the state, you know, important occasions. Otherwise, he would stay in his office. People would come see him. And I've seen the day right here when there would be four or five groups of people out here in the corridors and in the rotunda of the Capitol waiting for their turn to see the governor. Very few people come to Raleigh now to see the governor. They are notified in advance about what it is they want to see him about, they are then directed to see Mr. So-and-So and Mr. So-and-So and Mr. So-and-So, and that's who they go to see. Everybody knows that's so, because of all the engagements of the present day governor . It's a format that they fall into. And when it got started, others have to follow. Going to some small occasion, you know, and if they don't, it's just that they telephone and he feels like he's got to go, so they go. So, it's going on with the governor out of the country and in

Russia and so forth. Every day or so, you see where he's naming somebody for office, making appointments right here in the state and he's in Russia. Government's going on and it's being done by somebody else. It's got to be so. It's not like it used to be. When I first came to Raleigh, all the governmental buildings were right around the Capitol square. You could walk across the square and see somebody else in another agency. Knew them all personally. But the time that I'm talking about. There was one group waiting for their turn to see the governor, their hour. And they came in here, right where you're sitting in your office, and they were unloading their burdens on me, some complaint about what they had that was going on in their area. The governor could do something about it. And of course, I hoped the governor could do something about it, sympathized with them all I could. And so, I said, "Well, now, if you don't mind, when you're finished with the governor, if you have time, drop by here and tell me how you got along." Well, they did, they came by here with an entirely different attitude from what they demonstrated when they first came in here. And so we talked awhile and I said, "By the way, how did you get along with the governor? Is he going to help you out?" Well, they just laughed. "You know, we didn't even talk to him about it. We got in there and he's just the finest man I ever saw. He was telling me about some of his problems he had to contend with and how well he's handling this great big program and so forth. And about another

one he's going to get into, what great benefit it's going to be to the state. He's a marvelous man. We didn't even talk to him about our little affair." Now, that's knowing just when to grab the ball and what play to call and whether to carry it himself or let someone else carry it. That crowd went back home satisfied and was praising him, talking about what a great governor we had. When they came up here, they were giving him hell because he wouldn't do this and he wouldn't do that. Then, they didn't even talk to him about what they came to talk to him about. Isn't that marvelous?

W.D.V.: That's a good story.

Eure: Well, I've never seen another able to do it. If there was, I would have heard about it.

J.B.: I was thinking in terms of which governor's programs had had the most impact in the state. Which governor's administration and programs had the most impact in North Carolina?

Eure: Well, what period of time do you want to talk about?

J.B.: Let's say in the last 30 years.

Eure: Well, that would be hard to say, because we've been working on every one of them since. But, the heaviest impact that the people of this state have seen was the proposals that were promulgated and he drove them through, was Max Gardner. O. Max Gardner. See, he came in during the Hoover administration, a Republican administration. He was elected in 1928. But he set up our highway system. We had county highway commissions, he set that up. He consolidated the

University of North Carolina, that was his program. He advocated and was responsible for the Australian ballot, the secret ballot. Now, things like that are something that you can't get away from. Well, that started with Max Gardner. Well, every one of them, we've had election reforms, we've had corrupt practices acts and of course, we've had many highway commissions and we've gone building roads and we keep on bringing new institutions into the greater University of North Carolina. We've got a university system, we've got community colleges, we've been expanding. But it all started with Max Gardner. Now you see, with all that educational program and so forth, now you see that Terry Sanford is going to go down as a great educational governor. There wasn't very much that Max Gardner could do about getting money. He was practically driven to what he did that was such a great accomplishment, because there wasn't any money during his administration. He kept this state from issuing scrip to school teachers, it was being issued by every state that I know about. He was able to get people with money in this state to go to New York and personally help borrow money, some banks didn't want to borrow money and there were some financiers in this state that had money in their banks that if you lent it to them, why I'd withdraw my account right now. Well, in this state, he paid every teacher on something other than scrip. No scrip was issued. Now, that was hard days, so you don't forget those sort of things. But, you see, as we move along in government, and all you've got to do is

just look right here and see the expansion in government in space required to administer it, it's because of increasing governmental demands and increasing population. There have been mighty few years that we stood still, population-wise. And people are amazed when they come and go to these old legislative chambers up there and to realize that's where all the laws were enacted. Not a space in the world for a committee hearing, not a space for stenographers or anything else. Not but one way to get in or out of either of the chambers, there was one door. And yet, when this capitol was built, our forefathers started to work immediately after the old Statehouse burned in 1831, to build a structure here to take care of the needs of government in this state for all time to come. And they located the executive branch on the first floor, the legislative branch on the second floor and the Supreme Court, the judicial branch on the third floor. Two big rooms up there. One was the library and the other was the Supreme Court hearing room. They thought that they had taken care of the needs of government for all time to come. Then for a long period of time, they built buildings as you know around the square here. Now, you won't find another new building to be built around the square. It's all going down yonder. They've got an 18 floor complex straddling Halifax Street, close to Peace College and the whole governmental center is going the other way. They thought it was a foolish thing to have all that legislative building down there, how long ago? Just ten years ago. And now,

they are hollering for another building, for office space. They go in there now and take petitions now for rooms so that members can use two rooms rather than the one they've got now. They are going down into the basement and making offices out of space that was planned for parking automobiles just ten years ago. So, there's no end to it. I don't know what they'll be doing just ten years from now.

W.D.V.: How did you manage to get re-elected all these times?

Eure: Well. . .

W.D.V.: Is there a secret that you haven't told somebody?

Eure: Well, I'll tell you.

W.D.V.: Haven't you been re-elected more times than any other state official?

Eure: Yeah. I've been dean of the Secretaries of State in the United States since 1961. Well, I can tell you two or three things why. I've tried to do my job. I've never fooled with anybody else's campaign. After the nominations, then I've worked just as hard for my team as I've worked for myself. I've never wavered from the Democratic Party. That's my party. If I can't support my party, I can't expect my party to support me. That door you see right there hasn't been closed day or night for thirty-seven years. Had one governor that wanted to come in here and have a conference with me and just as he was about half-seated with his hands on the chair, and ready to sit down, he didn't, but looked at the door and went

to close it. I said, "Please don't close that door. That's important. If you want it closed, I'll go down to your office." Nobody has ever visited this corner of this building, no matter what I was doing, no matter how important it was, or how busy I was, that left and went back home saying that he couldn't see me. I tried to take care of my correspondence and then if there's another state official in state government with all these hoards of school children that come to Raleigh every spring of the year before commencement time, . . .you can find thirty or forty buses parked sometimes, anywhere they can get. . .never been a group here that tried to get in that didn't come in all the way, every one of them. And I talked to them a tried to tell them a little something about government. And before they left, I'd tell them, I'd say, "Now, when you get back home, the first thing I want you to do is to remember me to your papas and mamas." And I think they've been doing it. Nobody has any secrets.

W.D.V.: Anything you do later on?

Eure: No, just do the best you can, that's all. In other words, it didn't take me long to tell you whether I could see you today or not. I had to look and I had some lady coming in here at 2:30 and I got back from the house, my wife is sick and I had to go home and fix a little something for her to eat and then wash the dishes and put them all back in place before I came back down here. And that lady, two of them, that lady was in here a little after two. So, I sent

her back to Charlotte. You just do the best you can, that's all.

(interruption on tape)

J.B.: . . .as far as North Carolina politics are concerned.

(interruption on tape)

Eure:. . .who in the world ever thought that Richard Nixon would lose the governorship of California like he did and then talk to the press like he did and then come back and get the vote he did. And be President of the United States. Nobody else can.

(interruption on tape)

J.B.: We need to describe the atmosphere in Eure's office. A big marble front fireplace with brass andirons.

W.D.V.: The doorways were marble, high ceilings. . .

J.B.: High ceilings, Confederate Veterans Association certificate on the wall.