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This is an interview with Don Reed, former house minority leader in Florida. The interview was conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries in Boca Raton, Florida on May 23, 1974. It was transcribed by Joe Jaros.

Don Reed: . . . from 1960 to '61.

Jack Bass: You came here from Ohio then?

Reed: Well, yeah. My family moved to Jacksonville in 1950. I was going to Ohio State then, in '51, I moved down. I left Ohio State in '54, went into the service, came back after the service and went back to Ohio State and got my bachelor's degree and got married and moved down to Gainesville and went to the University of Florida Law School in 1957 and graduated from there in 1960 and then moved down here to Boca Raton.

Walter De Vries: Were you in law school when Pettigrew and Sessums and that whole crowd was there?

Reed: Well, Terrell was in one of the classes, he was just ahead of me or pretty close to the same time. I knew Terrell at law school. I didn't know Dick. I don't know when Dick went. . . I don't know when Dick was there. He may have been there but I don't recall, I think he . . . well, I started in '57 and got out in '60 and I don't know when he was there, what his time was at Florida. But I did know several of the guys and then of course, some of us got elected in '63 to the legislature, mainly as a result of the '62 reapportionment.

J.B.: Were there any Republicans in the legislature at that time?

Reed: Yeah, at the time I was elected, well, in 1962, the . . . let's see, in '62, there was either just Bill Young or Bill Young and one other Republican in the senate. In the house, there were, I would guess, only four or five or six Republicans, if that, in '62. But then in '63, in March of '63, as a result of the reapportionment election that year, we elected . . . it runs in my mind either sixteen or twenty-six. I think that it was sixteen, Republicans to the house and we didn't improve ourselves at all in the senate. Actually . . . and then in '64 . . . I take that back, there must have been twenty-six Republicans in the house in '63, because in '64, the Goldwater election hurt us. It was sixteen, because we went back to ten members in the house in '64 and Bill Young was our only Republican senator. So, we caucused very easily and in very small places. And that was the year that I was elected minority leader, '64. '66, we did have a good year, and then of course, '67 there was reapportionment and a reapportionment election again, with Kirk being in office, why, we elected thirty-nine Republicans in '67. There were around twenty-two or twenty-three in the '66 election and then in the March '67 reapportionment election, we went up to thirty-nine members in the house and there was ten in the senate. So, in '67, we had sufficient Republican votes to sustain a veto. And actually, reapportionment was the biggest single contributory thing to increasing the number of Republicans. And then Claude's election in '66 really gave us the opportunity to move a little bit, which we did. I won't say in which direction.

J.B.: Would you say in which direction?

Reed: Oh yeah, I think we . . . I think Kirk's election really signaled the ^{arrival} ~~arise~~ of the party in the state, from the standpoint at least of name only, from the standpoint of philosophy, I don't really know. Claude wasn't too committed to any philosophy other than his own, whatever that was. But

with that and with some of the things that we were able to collectively really talk Kirk into doing, such as supporting the constitutional revision, which we had started in 1966, I was a member of that revision commission along with Pettigrew and Fred Schulz. Bill Young and I were the only two Republicans on thirty-seven man commission, but we were able to get Kirk pretty strongly committed to the concept of constitutional revision. And then when he was elected in November of '66, he continued to support it. So, then in '67 and '68, we were able to revise the constitution and by that time, it was a pretty bi-partisan effort. So, I don't think that any Democratic governor would have been able to move as many constitutional reforms as we were able to move as the result of Kirk being in office. He really pushed and not being at all wedded to the cabinet system, for example, more necessarily than the Democrats, we were able to fill the list of our Republicans with Democrats like Pettigrew and move that constitution, especially in the area of reorganization of the executive and legislative branches. We didn't really get judicial reform until about . . . I guess it was '72 . . . '70. But Claude, I think, used the constitutional powers of the governor in ways that no previous governor had ever done. He was just another of the members of the cabinet prior to that time. And Claude just systematically took on the cabinet, which I thought was very good, and so did many, most of the Republicans, and people like Pettigrew. We made several unsuccessful attempts to abolish the cabinet system, but they are now doing a pretty good job of abolishing themselves. I think that Kirk's election probably, Kirk's election and reapportionment were the two things which really gave us the opportunity to start moving as a party in the state.

W.D.V.: Has the party kind of leveled off since those days, in numbers of members and registration?

Reed: Not in registration, I don't know what the figures are now, but the registration seems to be continuing to grow.

W.D.V.: Proportionally, it's about the same as the Democrats, isn't it?

Reed: It is now, yeah. There again, I'd say that the Kirk election had a big impact on registrations at that time. People who moved down here from up North over the years prior to that just automatically registered Democrat because as they used to say, they didn't have any opportunity to vote in any primaries, Republican primaries, so they would register Democrat. And the old supervisors of elections used to make that point as a sales pitch at the time of registration, really. You know, "you might as well register as Democrats, because the Republicans don't run anybody for office around here and you won't have any opportunity to vote for anybody in the primaries. So, in that '66, '67, '68 period, a lot of these people re-registered . . . (inaudible) . . . started off with more qualified candidates, but there was just a hell of a lot of Republicans registered as Democrats. It was easy to see that in the general elections. So, yeah, I think that it has leveled off. We're . . . the Republicans have roughly a third of both houses now, a little bit less than that in the senate, but in the house, I think that we have forty-two or forty-three out of a hundred and twenty.

W.D.V.: Well, wasn't there a lot of speculation in the late '60s that because of the election of forty Republicans and the election of Kirk, that you would take over the state government in two or four years?

Reed: There was some speculation to that effect. We speculated on that quite a bit. One of the things, I think, that really probably helped to stop that was the '64 constitutional amendment which . . . I believe that it was '64 . . . they started running the governors in the off year. But at that time,

prior to that time, they ran at the same time as the national elections. The Democrats, I believe that it was '64 when they passed the constitutional amendment and then was adopted by the people, that changed the time of running for the governor so that they moved him into the off year. Then, Hayden Burns was elected for a two year term, ran for re-election and, of course, was defeated in the primary by Bob King High and that's when Kirk was elected in '66. I think that probably, had the governor in particular been running in a presidential year, we would have had better opportunities to continue to elect Republicans to that seat, but I don't know, it doesn't seem to have made too much difference in the other general elections where the house members run every two years, so that they are running in presidential years too. We didn't seem to make any startling movement forward in '68, or in '70, really.

W.D.V.: Did the 1970 Senatorial primary have any impact on that?

Reed: I think a tremendous impact. I think that the Kirk-Gurney-Carswell feud with Bill Cramer was a substantial contributor to Cramer's defeat for the United States Senate. In fact, that's one of the major reasons that I have no intention of supporting Ed Gurney for anything. There have been a lot of promises and a lot of commitments made by Gurney to support Cramer and when the time came, he wasn't there and it created, I think, a really substantial rift in the party. And it was a shame, in my opinion, that Cramer wasn't elected to the Senate. And had it not been for that fiasco, I think that he would have been. He didn't leave the House of Representatives expecting to be defeated for the United States Senate. But I think that Gurney was deeply involved with a very serious double try. Which happens.

W.D.V.: Did that set the party back?

Reed: I think that it did. I think that Kirk and Gurney have set the party back. Because, you know, Kirk was never a party man as such. His comment

used to be, "Be a Kirk Republican."

W.D.V.: What was a Kirk Republican?

Reed: It beats the hell out of me. If you are a Kirk loyalist, I guess that's what it took. He and I, when he was governor, especially the first couple of years when he was in office, you know, I had private confrontations continually because Bill Murphen happened to be what I thought was a hell of a good state chairman and he happened to be a good friend of mine to boot. And Kirk's position with that state chairman constantly was, "either you're with him or you are with me." You couldn't be with both. I can still remember sitting in his mansion after a bottle or so of Cognac, he leaned over and drew his finger across the carpet on the floor and told me I was either with him or with Murphen and if I was with Murphen, I was obviously against him. I laid a few expletives on him and walked out of the mansion. It really didn't interfere with our relationship as far as him being governor and my being minority leader, but as far as my personal feelings toward him were concerned, he did not . . . I don't know how you want to put it, did not cooperate or participate with the party structure as it then existed. He felt that he was king and that was that. His decision to veto the legislative salary which we had proposed in 1969 I think hurt the party and hurt Claude with some of the Republican leadership. That happened to be . . . we were really in the throes that year of substantial reorganization of both the, mainly the executive, but also the legislative. When most of the leadership that is now there, or has been there in the last few years, was elected, there was virtually no staffing, not much of anything in the legislative process. For instance, we would go up there and have secretaries for the sixty day period that we were there, part-time secretaries and that was it. No professional staff at all. And Pettigrew and Fred Schulz and myself and several others, over those years were able to move that legislature in particular

toward better staffing and a part of the legislative reorganization that we had proposed after that '68 constitution passed, part of that was legislative compensation. Prior to the beginning of the '69 session, I along with several other Republican legislative leaders at that time, met with Claude at Rat's Nest in Palm Beach, the name of the old home up there is Duck's Nest, we referred to it as Rat's Nest. He committed to us, the minority leadership that he would support whatever salary increases that we determined we should make, figuring that we were the ones that were going to have to take the heat on this thing and he would roll with whatever we thought they should be. He supported, at that time, salaries in excess of what the committees for economic redevelopment was recommending. That was in the neighborhood of \$18,000 to \$20,000. I believe that was half the salary of the governor. So, that I coalesced with the Democrats for the purpose of trying to get a strong majority of both parties to support that legislative compensation, based on my verbal commitments to the Democratic leadership that the governor would not veto the bill. The Democrats being a little bit suspicious, they let me introduce the bill, move it through the committee and manage the bill on the floor. And we passed it, there was no problem. Then, on the last day that he should have done it, he requested a joint session and came up and addressed us and called us all a bunch of thieves and announced that he would veto the bill right there in front of God and everybody. With people like myself, we felt that he had given us . . . (inaudible) . . . he substantially impaired his credibility with us. I think that contributed to his defeat as well. I wasn't able to get too excited about going out on the stump for him, like I did the first time around. And we lost in 1970, we lost some good legislators, Democrat and Republican alike and I'm convinced that one of the reasons that they lost in areas where they did, for instance, Broward County, the Ft.

Lauderdale News and Sun Sentinel were just violent against this salary increase. They are a Tribune owned paper and the same in Orange County and the Orlando area, also a Tribune owned paper, but violent against the salary increases. There were some new legislators elected in 1970 and the whole thrust of their particular campaigns was the salary increase. But they bellied up to the pay window the same as everybody else after they got elected. And I think that helped break up the Republican solidarity, really, behind Kirk. I don't know if you have ever met him or talked to him, he was as flamboyant as hell and probably did more for the state of Florida, either knowingly or unknowingly, than any governor has ever done. He really, he pumped a lot of excitement into the process. And totally unpredictable. And sometimes right. His appointments were. . . .

J.B.: Was his unpredictability based on just having an erratic personality?

Reed: Well, I don't know how to answer that. Claude was certainly not a politician. When he ran for the United States Senate in 1964, nobody even really knew who Claude Kirk was. Then he decided to run for governor in 1966, I was in on that on the ground floor and worked very hard for him. He didn't even know how many members there were in the legislature, he didn't know what cabinet officers there were, he didn't know anything about state government. And he didn't bother to learn a whole hell of a lot about it while he was governor. He spent a lot of his time enjoying being governor. He had, I think, just super advice, especially the first couple of years of his administration. So, you know, I don't know what the tag is as far as his personality is concerned, and what to credit to him as just being not knowledgable at all about the legislature or state government in general. But he was able to pick some awfully

good people, I think. He was a fighter, he would take anybody on, anytime, any subject, whether he knew it or not. Generally, he didn't know it. In his campaign, the big issue was, when was he going to start making some statements of substance, because all he would do would talk about what he was going to do when he was governor and then in response to direct questions, he would always say, "When my White Papers come out, this will all be explained to you." About two-thirds of the way through the campaign, we sat down and decided that we better get out some goddamned White Papers. Because he was using that as a crutch for not being able to answer specific questions about what any governor should probably know about state government. So, we pumped out twenty-five or thirty pounds of so-called White Papers on various subjects, you know, nice big . . . (inaudible) . . . Late in the campaign, he just laid them all out at a Jaycee meeting and said, "Oh, by the way, anybody that wants to read my White Papers, here they are." Boom! "Now, let's go on and talk about some other good things and don't bother asking me questions about the things that you have been asking me about, because they are all in the White Papers." Well, there was . . . I don't know how many pounds of it there was.

W.D.V.: Did he read them?

Reed: Well, by the time the High group and the Democrats in general, and the press, by the time they were able to get through reading the things and attempting to digest them, the campaign for all intents and purposes was over. You know, the election was there. And I'm not too sure, I'm not too sure even in his last election, how many people actually voted for Claude Kirk as opposed to voting against Robert King High and by the same token, in the Reubin Askew election, how many voted for Reubin as opposed to those that voted against Claude Kirk. But it doesn't matter which way they go, they count the same.

W.D.V.: Is the party ideologically more conservative today than it was

four years ago or eight years ago, the statewide party, and/or the legislative delegations?

Reed: No, I don't think so. I don't think that it has really moved much philosophically in the last five years, at least.

W.D.V.: Well, was it different, say, in '64?

Reed: Yeah. My first year up there, for example, the Republicans in the house, the speaker was then Mallory Horne who is now president of the Florida senate, Chuck Holley and Doug Lefler and one or two other guys back in '63 were the only Republicans appointed to any committees of substance, the rest of us were on three committees: resolutions and memorials, atomic energy and executive communications. The resolutions and memorials committee handled resolutions and memorials, which have no impact, you may as well have done nothing. The executive communications committee handled communications from the governor, veto messages, letters, whatever, and the atomic energy committee, I never could understand what it did, but there was some legislation on the books at that time that had some kind of atomic energy commission of sorts in Florida with no power. So, those were the three committees that most of us were on. And in '63, one of the resolutions that was introduced into the house was the . . . oh, what the hell did they call it, I forget now . . . the repeal of the income tax. The Liberty (?) Amendment. Well, the only Democrat on that committee was the chairman. The whole committee was Republican. The resolution or memorial to Congress, I guess it was, was referred to our committee. We reported it out favorably and the memorial actually passed the Florida house. And I don't know if you recall, but the Liberty Amendment, but every Birchite in the country, plus a lot of other people, thought that was just super-keen, you know. Just repeal the income tax . . . philosophically, you

couldn't even get the Republicans, well . . . in '66 and '67, really, you couldn't get the Republicans to seriously offer that same memorial to the legislature. So, I think that the early days, both the Republicans and the legislature in general was a different kind of conservative than they are today. And of course, back even in '63 or '64, the Florida legislature was what we call Pork Chop dominated, where a very small percentage of the population of the state really controlled the legislature. Small counties and rural areas.

W.D.V.: How would you characterize it today?

Reed: I think that through the various reapportionments now since 1962, that that legislature is more representative of population areas. There is still a lot that needs to be done, unfortunately, the urban legislator is no different from the rural legislator from the standpoint of wanting to bring home the bacon. It's just Lamb Choppers now, I guess, instead of Pork Choppers. They are evened down with reapportionment, the reapportionment that was passed in 1972 was constructed to not require confrontations between incumbents, for the most part, the leadership still drafted the legislation so that there weren't any serious problems with incumbents having to run against incumbents because of the changing of the district boundaries. And mainly the Democrat urban areas, Hillsborough, Tampa, Hillsborough County, Duvall County, Jacksonville, Dade County. Too many of the guys lived too close to each other. For instance, Sandy Dahlenberg and Jeff in Miami, live about three houses away from each other. Well, there was some very delicate drafting of boundary lines in some instances down there in order to see that there wasn't any real problem of the troops having to run against each other. I think that overall, I think that apportionment has just been super for the state. I don't

agree, as I say, with the way that district boundaries have been drawn today, if the man, one vote concept really applies, we still don't have it. I've been a strong advocate of either single member or very small multi-member districts uniform throughout the state. And the districts are pretty much equal population-wise, but they vary in the numbers of members that still run within those districts, from anywhere that one member will run within a district to where, like in Palm Beach County, six all run within a district. I would prefer to see that no more than three.

J.B.: Do you see any further suits on that for single member districts?

Reed: No, not in Florida, I think. The question as to whether or not we have met the percentage deviation or tolerance that the court would accept is pretty much moot, I think, at this point. Of course, with the requirement that we apportion ourselves every ten years, we will probably be able to meet the new changes, you know, the population shifts, substantially. But you know, the urban legislator is no different from the rural legislator in that kind of self interest. I haven't found him to be.

J.B.: Why did you endorse Pettigrew for the Senate and what reaction have you gotten?

Reed: Well, of course, Dick and I have become good friends, both in constitutional revision, in that commission, and in the legislature itself. And then after that, in statutory reorganization and through the authority that we then had in the '68 constitution, Dick and I just coalesced almost continually for the passage of those reorganization acts. Even through judicial reorganization, in the philosophy of the cabinet system itself, I think he's a hell of a guy, he's extremely honest. He won't compromise a particular position if he thinks that he's right, which I sort of like. The

one thing that we were always able to do was, especially when he was speaker and when we were involved in reorganization, if there was an issue that we just couldn't resolve, we would just take it out on the floor and whoever won, won. I see Dick as the guy who stands an awfully good shot for the Democratic nomination and I think that Ed Gurney is going to be the Republican nominee. I have no intention of supporting Ed Gurney. I think that he has hurt our party with what he did to Cramer. I don't think that he has been particularly effective as a United States Senator, and there is a little personal gig. I was a candidate for United States District Court Judge back in '70, I believe, '70 or '72 . . . and I had the endorsement of, well . . . let's see, Reubin was governor, so it would have to have been probably '71, around in that period. I had the endorsement of Lawton Chiles and Reubin . . . when was Lawton elected? '70. It had to be '71 or '72 then. I had the endorsement of both party chairmen, the junior Senator from the state, the then governor, who was Reubin Askew, a Democrat. To the best of my knowledge, all the members of the Florida Supreme Court and the leadership of both parties in the state. And Gurney allowed as how he had this shot at me and he took it. That's the way I interpret what he did. And now, I've got a shot at him. I'm now a private citizen and I'm going to support whoever I damn well please.

J.B.: Why did you decide not to seek reelection this last time?

Reed: Three major reasons. My family was probably the most important. My law practice, or my living, was the second and I really feel that most of the major reform that was really fun had been accomplished and I just felt that from about then on, mopping up was going to be the biggest single point of that legislature, from the standpoint there again of modernization and all that stuff. I guess that I was just plain tired. I was minority leader for, since '64, and I learned that most of my troops didn't get particularly involved in learning

their job and I spent a tremendous amount of time gad-flying issues because I couldn't seem to get all my guys to settle down and become experts in particular areas themselves. And so, I just retired. I think that's too long to be in a leadership position. I was just sort of burned out, really. But it was certainly a voluntary decision. I mean, in my family, I have four children, the oldest of which is now fourteen and the youngest is six. All that Little League baseball teams and all that other good stuff going on while I was in Tallahassee. My wife didn't come up for the sessions because the time that the legislature met, April and May, is a bad time to take kids out of school and transplant them, especially small children. Went back and forth during legislative sessions, and then all the other obligations that you get into in leadership positions, other commissions and ad hoc committees and all that good stuff is very . . . speaking engagements and I just felt that I had had enough. And my practice was suffering. I finally, you know, I finally determined that most of the guys that I graduated with from law school were making three and four times as much money as I was and it was time for me to start worrying about my future and my kids. So, I got out. I never had any great political ambitions to just hang in there. So, I got out.

W.V.D.: We are trying to clarify our position that a whole lot of people that came in about the same time that you did are doing the same thing, like ~~(inaudible)~~, and ~~(inaudible)~~ in a ~~sense~~, ^{you} ^{are} is pulling out of the legislature.

Reed: Well, Fred Schulz, the speaker, who was elected the same time that we were. They were really very, they were good years, but really, there was a lot of work that was done. For instance, in 1967, I guess that we were in session for close to seven months, total. And unless you are just plain independently wealthy, it's hard to justify leaving your business for that kind

of time. And with annual sessions, which I support. I did and I do. With intermin committee work, which we had pushed to get accomplished, it's not any longer just a part time job. I think that at least the last four years I was in, if not the last five, I spent anywhere from 70% to 90% of every productive working day on some legislative related matter. It precluded me from effectively practicing law. And for the compensation, it just didn't wash right.

W.D.V.: Did you ever have the opinion that after that intensive period of reform and so on, you may be in for five or ten years of consolidating what you did during the last six years, what the legislature did?

Reed: I don't follow that question. Give it to me again.

W.D.V.: You go through this whole period of reform

Reed: Yes, from about '67 until '70

W.D.V.: And all the leaders involved in that, or many of them, are leaving.

Reed: Right.

W.D.V.: So, it seems to me that you might be entering a period of consolidation, as you say, mopping up for the next five or six years.

Reed: Yeah, I think that's true. I think that a lot of the guys felt that the major work was done and their contributions would be almost anti-climatic compared to what we had done when it was really fun. I think that it's the same thing, that people like Fred Schulz and Terrell and the rest of them who were deeply involved, to some extent, just sort of burned themselves out. Looking back on it, it wasn't just that easy to get my Republicans and to get enough Democrats together on some of these issues to make them fly. Judicial reform took us a hell of a lot longer. We never got

around to that until

J.B.: The major aspects of judicial reform were what?

Reed: Well, we

J.B.: Took the judges into non-partisan elections?

Reed: Oh, no. Well, yeah, but that really wasn't the thrust of it. We completely restructured the court system. We had such a proliferation of judges, based on the old constitution on population constraints, that new kinds of judges were created. We have, for instance, small claims courts judges in Broward County whose jurisdiction went up to a thousand dollars and then went from there to the circuit courts. And in Palm Beach County, the jurisdiction of the small claims court judge , I'm sorry . . . in Broward it went from there to the civil court of records, from a thousand, I believe it was, to ten thousand, then to the circuit court. In Palm Beach County, they had a small claims court judge whose jurisdiction was four hundred dollars, three hundred and fifty or four hundred dollars and then from there it went directly to the circuit court. There were criminal courts of record in some counties, or rather civil courts of record in some counties and no civil courts of record in others. County court judges, justices of the peace, just a mish-mash of judges, their jurisdictions being constructed to allievate the burden on the circuit courts. And the major thrust of the judicial reorganization was to abolish all those courts. Now, essentially, we have county judges, circuit judges, district courts of appeal judges and supreme court judges. Period. A two-tier system, really. Compared to a multi-tiered system prior to that. And that's the reason that it was so damn hard to get through, because a lot of these judges in some of these inferior courts, special courts, were fighting the hell out of it.

J.B.: They came up with a uniform system. Is it also a unified system?

Reed: Unified?

W.D.V.: A single court administration?

Reed: Well, each circuit has its own administration. The supreme court has tight control over the entire court system. There are charged with promulgating the rules for not only the court but also the rules of procedure for example.

J.B.: Can they assign judges from one area to another if they have an overloaded docket, this sort of thing?

Reed: Within some limited constraints, yes.

J.B.: Is that a new feature?

Reed: Well, it's . . . yeah, it is to the extent that they have always been able to move circuit judges from circuit to another, for example. Because their jurisdictions are . . . horizontally, you know, they are the same. With the exception, because we had some judges in some rural areas, for instance, who weren't attorneys, mainly because there are some counties in this state where there is no attorney practicing. There are two types of county judges and one the constitution still permits, county judges in a county with population of less than 50,000, they don't have to, they are not required to be attorneys. So, that kind of county judge cannot be assigned, for instance, by the chief judge of a circuit to sit on a circuit court bench. The county judge who is an attorney can be. So, with that exception, yeah, the ability to assign within particular circuits, or even outside the circuit, is readily available to either the supreme court or the presiding judge of the circuit.

W.D.V.: Are there two wings of the Republican party in this state, a

conservative wing and a moderate wing? Philosophically?

Reed: No, I don't think so.

W.D.V.: Some of the Republicans that we have talked to think that the way to determine the strategy for the future, the way to get more Republicans, is to ~~dis~~attract disaffected, conservative, white Democrats to come into the Republican party. And the second part of that is to also convince disaffected conservative, white Democratic office holders to switch parties. Do you agree with that strategy?

Reed: Well, that has been the strategy in the past. To attempt switch, elected officials in particular. No, I don't think that strategy is going to mean that much anymore. In fact, I'm not too sure that the old . . . the more, I guess, provincial concepts of what political parties are, really matter so much anymore. I think that more and more people are looking at the individual candidates and more and more at the issues and how that candidate addresses himself to the issues rather than what party he belongs to. Of course, historically in Florida, at least for the last ten years or so, that's proven true by the fact that we were able to elect Republicans in strongly, highly registered Democratic districts.

W.D.V.: Do you think that the way to build the party is to field strong candidates?

Reed: Oh yeah. I think that's the only way to do it.

W.D.V.: Not spend your energy trying to get registered Democrats to switch?

Reed: Well, I think that if you field strong candidates and elect some, I think there's a certain segment of the Democratic electors who will switch on their own.

J.B.: From where do you think that these candidates should be recruited?

Reed: Do you mean from what walk of life, or what geographical area?

J.B.: Well, do you aim to try to get Democratic officeholders or people affiliated with the Democrats or people that have no previous political experience or people moving into the state? Let me put it this way, if you suddenly became Republican state chairman, what would be your approach on developing the party?

Reed: By fielding strong candidates, who could articulate the issues. And I don't think that you necessarily have to have political experience in order to do that. I would do everything I could to re-elect my incumbents, and to attempt to use them as examples for recruitment purposes and I would get them involved in recruiting. I think I would encourage a diversity of view even within my party, as far as philosophy is concerned. I think that I would work very diligently toward trying to attract the not just white Democrats

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Reed: a fairly heavy Cuban population, whatever. You know, I think that we missed the boat by not trying harder. I don't think that the Democrats have a lock on the black vote. I think that if the party is going to be a viable force in a state, I think that there ought to be something there for anybody that wants to try it. That's the way the Democrats they haven't made an exclusive club. I think that we tend to do that.

W.D.V.: Do you think that the present party organization leadership is moving in that direction?

Reed: I don't know what they have done in the last couple of . . . I'm really not . . . I haven't paid that much attention in the last couple of years.

I don't think that they object to that. I don't see any overt movement in that direction. In fact, I don't see any overt movement period.

J.B.: We are told by the party leadership that first of all, the candidate that the party chairman is already supporting for governor is a former Democrat.

Reed: Right. Jerry Thomas.

J.B.: And we haven't talked to him, but we've talked to other party officials and they all felt that one of the main issues in the campaign, you know, as they see it, is going to be busing and Askew's attitude toward busing.

Reed: Right. Well, obviously, you know, in any smart political campaign, the candidate is going to use the issues that he feels are emotionally charged enough to get people interested in his candidacy. And one of the things which is still on the minds of a lot of people down here is the . . . not so much desegregation or integration, whichever term you might like to use, but it is a question of moving children around within a district. For instance, in this city, we have families who can look out their kitchen windows at a brand new elementary school and watch their first and second and third grade aged children walk about two or three blocks to a bus stop and ride thirteen or fourteen miles to Del Ray Beach, a city to our north, to attend a school that was formerly all black. The question isn't what the school formerly was, because there isn't, you know, identifiable black school within the school district. But they don't like their kids riding that damn bus. And going to another city to be educated when they moved into this city. And they can watch other children from Del Ray Beach being bused right past their door to fill up a school they can see while Mama is washing the breakfast dishes while their kids are on the bus going to another city's schools.

W.D.V.: Well, the party leaders have explained it this way, "Look, we know that the candidate for governor or the governor can't do a damn thing about it. But, we know that his attitude toward it, that he is in favor of it and so we are going to cream him on his attitude." That's going to be the campaign.

Reed: Well, how many issues that are emotionally enough charged to get people's attention are genuine issues that the governor can do anything about? You watch him run on what the president is going to do or in support of the president or their non-support of the president, whether they are for the war in Vietnam or against the war in Vietnam or what they think about the Far East situation and all this stuff. And they have nothing whatsoever about it.

W.D.V.: Do you think that that issue could beat Askew?

Reed: Not that issue alone. I think that will get some Democratic votes, yes.

W.D.V.: How do you assess Askew?

Reed: He's going to be re-elected.

W.D.V.: How do you assess him as a governor, say compared to Kirk?

Reed: Well, I liked Kirk. You know, I liked the turmoil that he kept going, because I think that it's good for state government. On the other hand, every once inawhile you need to sit back and take a breather and Reubin is the perfect guy to take a breather with. Because he ain't going to make any waves. He doesn't do any more than he has to do controversial and he tends to his knitting. But the governor in this state is not that powerful. The cabinet system, really, is what is . . . is what runs state government. The governor can say all he wants about public school education. He doesn't

have that much to say about it. The Commissioner of Education administers the educational system of the state. The governor is just one of seven members of the state board of education. The board of regents handles our institutions of higher learning. The governor has some input, sure, he can appoint them, but they have nine year terms on a staggered basis. What can the governor do as far as banking laws in the state are concerned. We have a cabinet officer who is also the chief banking officer of the state. In agriculture, we have a Commissioner of Agriculture, that's his bag. And the governor sits as one of seven members of the cabinet that maybe makes some of these decisions, but he is one vote. If he is popular enough that he can generate legislative input for statutory change, fine. But what he can do as the chief executive within the executive branch within the administration of the laws of the state in that office, he doesn't have anything more to say about what is going to happen to public school education in this state than the Commissioner of Agriculture, who also is on the board of education, the state board of education. So, you know, they are going to get the best hold they can, they are going to use whatever issue they can whether they can do anything about it or not. I don't think that is peculiar to the gubernatorial race. The guys hang their hats on whatever the emotional issues are whether they can do anything about it or not. Well, "I don't know if I can, but I am sure going to try and this is the way that I feel."

W.D.V.: Are you going to run again?

Reed: No.

W.D.V.: Not for anything?

Reed: No.

W.D.V.: Are you going to stay active in the party?

Reed: I don't know . . . yeah, I'd like to, but I was, I had consented

to be chairman for our little candidate selection committee for this county in the coming, prior to the primaries, but of course, my endorsement of Pettigrew suggested to my local county chairmen that I should tender my resignation, which I did and which I think is correct. I'm not nearly so interested in party politics as I am in other things which are going on in the state. Which as a private citizen . . . there are some opportunities for lay service on advisory commissions and this kind of stuff, I'm having fun doing that.

W.D.V.: Any regrets about the ten years that you spent in the legislature?

Reed: None. It was the greatest experience that I've ever had.

J.B.: If Askew gets re-elected . . . let's presume for the moment that he will. . . how do you think that he would do in a Democratic presidential primary head to head against George Wallace in Florida?

Reed: I think that Wallace would clean him up.

W.D.V.: Why?

Reed: Well, let me modify that a little bit. I don't know what kind of an image that Askew has developed outside the state. And I think that would have an effect even in a presidential primary just in this state. Wallace is on that national tube all the time. He's got all kinds of national type PR and I think that even the Florida resident pays attention to that. I didn't seriously consider Reubin Askew to have much of a chance to be governor, so I'm not a particularly good judge of his potential, but I don't think that he has much of a chance as a presidential candidate either, but I could be wrong. I don't think that he's that strong, I don't think that he's that personally strong a person. I can remember Reubin back when he was in the senate. I think that we are good friends, but I don't think that he's got

I don't think that he's that heavy. But I don't know, the Democrats, they've got their problems, too.

W.D.V.: Is he really as straight as everybody alleges?

Reed: As far as I know he is.

W.D.V.: What are his weaknesses?

Reed: I don't think that he's consistently decisive. I think there are a lot of other people who make decisions for him. I think he is I think he is more . . . well, I think that his positions tend to relate directly to what he thinks the general public wants. I think that he has a tendency to be what I call a "front-running follower." I think that he tries to find out where people are going and then gets out in front and tries to lead them there, rather than being willing to fairly regularly take positions to which he might be philosophically committed, regardless of where the end brings him out.

J.B.: Do you think that his tax proposals are a reflection of that?
The current ones.

Reed: Well, you mean like his corporate income tax?

J.B.: No, I was thinking about the ad valorem tax and the relief of profits, ten mil to eight mil?

Reed: Oh, how can anybody be against a reduction of **taxes**? My opinion is that if he is going to play that kind of a game, he ought to get really to the heart of it and advocate a repeal of the homestead exemptions and put forward a strong program for support of public school education without using ad valorem taxes as a base. Just wipe it out as it pertains to education. All he has done . . . that's the old carrot routine as far as I'm concerned. We played that ~~in~~ game in '67, where we Republicans advocated a maximum local participation in public schools of seven mils and that the

difference in what that support would generate within the school system and what the national average was, would be contributed by the state, however disproportionate it might be from district to district, with an option for a five mil referendum from the local school district if they wanted to generate additional dollars. They are not particularly new proposals. I don't think that he is too innovative, frankly.

J.B.: The majority of that relief, though, goes to commercial . . .
(inaudible) . . .

Reed: Well, if you limit the amount of mills that a person is going to pay on his real property, I suppose comparatively speaking, there is just as much relief to the individual property owner . . . I don't know if there is or not. He might very well be doing this to offset the impact of the corporate income tax. Which I opposed. I thought it was a super, I thought that he really hopped on a super issue, but there again, you know, industry, business, the land developer, they are all bad guys. They are super good whipping boys. I think that it takes more guts to defend them sometimes than it does to condemn them.

W.D.V.: This may not be a fair question to ask, anyway, but how do you assess Representative Tillman as the minority leader?

Reed: That's not a very fair question.

W.D.V.: Could you answer it anyway?

Reed: Yeah, he's certainly very different than I was, but I was minority leader for nine years.

W.D.V.: How is he different? Is he different philosophically?

Reed: I don't think . . . I think that once when he starts to understand in a little bit more depth some of the, you know, some of the issues and some

of the alternative solutions, I don't think that he will be substantially different. I think that I was

W.D.V.: Does he get the minority to work together as a group?

Reed: No, they are not doing that and I don't know if he can do it. I don't know that anyone could

W.D.V.: Didn't you do it?

Reed: Well, I was fortunate enough to be able to keep them whipped into pretty good shape, but I think that the times had something to do with that, too. I think that the issues are becoming more important than solid party positions. One of the things that happened to us, I believe, and really the decisive legislative session from our standpoint was 1967. We had the governor in a posture where we could recommend to him that he veto certain measures and then we could support him. In that particular year, I had thirty-nine guys and only about six members that had any prior legislative experience, so they were easy to wield together, because they didn't know any better. It's a hell of a lot easier, you know, to run a bunch of sheep, in my opinion, than it is to with a bunch of bulls. But that session and the confrontations that we had continually when Ralph Turlington was speaker on issues that were related to the governor and on issues that were just there anyhow, I think gave Fred Schulz, then the next speaker, and Dick Pettigrew, the following speaker, the opportunity to see that if we were able to reasonably coalesce, we could solve a lot of the problems that were really excercises in debate on the floor and were a lot of fun, but weren't really helping the state too much. The coalescing of those issues and the compromises if necessary, either in conferences between the Republican and Democratic leadership or in working committee, where to a great degree, some

of our more responsible Republicans were able to articulate our position as opposed to theirs on particular pieces of legislation, so a tremendous amount of the issues were resolved before the legislation got to the floor. There really wasn't that much to fight about by the time the stuff got to the floor. I think that both Schulz and Pettigrew learned that that method of operation was a hell of a lot better than ramroding a piece of legislation out in full public view and then have us just chop them into pieces, even though they might pass it by the time that they got through with it, a lot of the people weren't too sure whether it was good or bad. So, Tillman is operating in a little bit different environment now, because of that ability to . . . well, because of the bargaining power that is available to him by virtue of all the other stuff that was done, the staffing and the more representative representation on committees and all that stuff. But I don't think that Jim has been too red hot as minority leader so far, but I certainly wasn't either in '64 or '65 or '66. I think that it takes a few years. In fact, that's one of the reasons that I support re-electability of leadership.

W.D.V.: Is it true that there was more leadership and energy and everything in both parties in the house rather than in the senate in those early years ~~that~~ *than now?* ~~(inaudible)~~ . . .

Reed: Yeah. The senate's a club and it's still pretty much , the leadership in that senate still pretty much cuts and dries the issues by the time they get to the floor. There aren't many votes, there aren't many outcomes materially altered once a piece of legislation gets to the floor in the senate. That possibility still exists as a constant threat in the house. The house is a more viable, it's really more, you know, they are more rowdy, they

J.B.: Is that essentially because there is a difference in size?

Reed: I think that size has . . . well, it's easier to run forty guys than 120. And the hammer that you can hold over the heads of forty, well, you've only got to have twenty-one. You don't have to have sixty-one. And so I think that the leadership is in a position to better control the smaller group. By the same token, the larger the group, the more difficult it is to satisfy that number. I don't think that Tillman is necessarily a bad minority leader, I think that some of his troops are letting him down because what I had organized over a period of time was what we called a little policy committee, where we actually had about seven or eight guys who were fairly representative from different districts and we would meet every morning, if there were any issues to be considered. I still don't believe in caucusing any more than you have to, because you always open a can of worms if you give everybody a chance to throw his input into the caucus and so I used the means of a policy committee, where that committee, for the most part, was elected to that committee by their several delegations, decisions could be made quickly and the word be gotten out without having to go through the full democratic process. If you spend a lot of time letting all the troops decide what should be done with a particular piece of legislation, you've just got another committee process. So, I think that we were pretty effective at getting broad policy considerations adopted and we would get ourselves to hold together. And I think, to that extent, I think that Tillman has not been successful in developing a sensitive policy committee or liaison between the delegations and the minority positions. But I think he will. You know, this is only his second year as minority leader, well, third, I guess. What is really a second, '73 to '74. I just don't think that you become a particularly good leader overnight. I would prefer to give him the benefit of the doubt and see if he can't learn the job.

I don't think that Terrell Sessums has been a particularly strong leader either. But I like Terrell.

W.D.V.: Is there anything that we should have asked you that we didn't ask you?

Reed: I don't know. You are going to have to probably get on the road by 9:30, I would guess, if you are going to hit Miami at 10:30.

J.B.: Probably a little earlier than that, yeah, by . . . (inaudible)

Reed: Would you like to run by the office and have a cup of coffee and just(tape turned off)

Reed:it's horrible. I . . . well, with that process, the speaker pretty much, obviously, controls the rules and the rules set the designation of committees and the speaker is solely responsible for the appointment of committee members. I'd rather see a continuity in that leadership and a diffusion of his power. Traveling down a little bit more of the federal road approach, where you can . . . committees on committees, something like that, to select committee chairmen and . . . (tape turned off) . . . internal administration and that's really where my bag is, or where it has sort of developed over the last few years. I'm more committed to seeing the process work than I am to what issue prevails. I mean, you know, in a given day. That's, I think, that's where the fun is.

J.B.: Do you have an open-ended speakership, or is there still a limitation on terms, or more than one term?

Reed: Traditionally, the speaker serves for two years.

J.B.: Right.

Reed: One term. And traditionally, the president of the senate serves for two years. (interruption on tape. Tape turned off)

J.B.: . . . change to making it an open-ended and unlimited term,
or . . .

Reed: In fact, I would propose to make it very easy for the speaker to be re-elected and also I would take some of his powers away from him and invest them in a committee of some type, even though he might be building in, you know, certain restraints as far as percentage or adequate representation of both parties is concerned. And even to the election of a committee on committees, if you want to call it that, on a representative basis by the Democratic caucus and the Republican caucus, who actually could appoint members to those committees. I don't like the seniority concept for committee chairmanships, but I don't like the idea that the speaker can from year to year, almost willy-nilly, change the number of committees, he can designate whatever committees he wants as a practical matter and with that kind of power, it is always easy to build yourself a couple of key committees, care committees, or whatever, and rather than a bill going to a committee of substance just as a matter of recourse, with the power that the speaker has, or the president of the senate really, he can put that bill wherever he wants it. I think that's too much power for any one man, even thought it's only for one term. And I think that's what makes it even worse, when he knows that he's only got two years to play that game. He tends also to feather his nest for the future, I don't mean dishonestly, but by obtaining commitments from the next speaker that he, the former speaker, will be chairman of the rules committee or you know, something like that.

J.B.: Well, have you found that that power has been abused?

Reed: Well . . . yeah, I think that it has been abused by every speaker. Insofar as they haven't necessarily been any more fair to the minority than they

have had to be under the circumstances. The key committee, for instance, in the house of representatives is the rules committee. We've never had proportional representation on that rules committee, even under Pettigrew or Fred Schulz. So, to that extent, yeah, I think that a member elected to that legislature, regardless of political party, should be in the position to serve in that office and with the power that the speaker has, he can effectively constrain the effectiveness of your service by what he does to you. The committees that he puts you on or doesn't put you on and you know, I don't think that's fair to the system or to the state. But I think that we will get the re-electable speaker concept and for the president, but he's not in a position to do much about it now.

W.D.V.: You say that you are very concerned about the press itself. Were you instrumental, along with the rest of them, in reforming that legislative press?

Reed: Oh yeah.

W.D.V.: Did you work on the staffing and all that?

Reed: Oh yeah. Just tremendously. There again, for perfectly different reasons. Republicans never have, in fact, until we were able to move toward staffing on a more rational basis, the only staff that was available was committee staff. And that committee staff owed its job to the majority party, so any member of the majority party on that committee or the speaker or whoever, could obtain whatever information he wanted at whatever time he wanted it on any subject that he might care to inquire into. And the Republicans just sat on that committee. You could ask for comparative analysis of the appropriations of a gifted child program for the last ten years of that committee staff and sometime after the session they might send you a little memo that they are working on it. They weren't at all obligated, you know, to give us

information. It's still that way on committees to some extent. But the committee staff is more sensitive, I think, to members now than it used to be. But the minority office, we have beefed that up to the point where, you know, I was able with Pettigrew to obtain the kind of staffing to give me some professional staff at the minority office level. But I think that there should be some minority and majority staffing on major committees. Appropriations in particular. They haven't gone that far yet. But in the old days, where we tried to put appropriations acts together to counter whatever appropriation act the Democrats might have been pushing, or even portions of that act, we were constrained really, to our own catch-as-catch-can abilities to try to figure out what the numbers ought to be. We really didn't have the basic data that we needed and it was impossible to get. Well, I shouldn't say impossible, their position always was, you know, "you just asked the wrong question. If you had asked the right question . . . " We just never quite did it the right way. And that's part of the game, I suppose, but that kind of a thing directly affects the ability, I think, of a legislature to respond. I think that type of information should be readily available to any member, regardless of the political party.

J.B.: What effect is Watergate going to have on the Republican party in Florida?

Reed: I don't think that it is going to be too significant in Florida. Because I think that there is a substantial set-off by what is happening to Democratic candidates. We have one under indictment that has resigned, you have another one that is . . . you can read a lot in the papers about what the grand jury is inquiring into in his regard, and another that is now up. So, there are three out of the six Democratic cabinet members that have their own

problems. So, I don't think that Watergate is going to be too significant in Florida. The Republican voter in Florida is still, I think, pretty much committed to voting the Republican ticket, period. Obviously we will probably see some flake-offs in Democrats that generally vote for Republicans. But I don't think that it is going to be that significant, at least in local elections, legislative and this kind. What's going to happen in Congressional elections, I don't know. But we have . . . the pockets of Republican support are very loyalist, I think.

J.B.: When do you think that Republicans in Florida will wage a really serious run for cabinet offices?

Reed: I think that as soon as we can develop some potentially good candidates who are willing to go the statewide route. Paula Hawkins, I think, is an example of someone who would be able, who was able to bust the statewide election situation. And I think that just like anything in politics, it's going to depend a lot on the circumstances. You know, if the Democrat candidate is right and the Republican candidate is right and the circumstances are right, he can win. But just odds on day in and day out, the Republican has just got to be considered the underdog. I think that we are starting to generate from within the legislature some potential for good statewide candidates in the next few years.

W.D.V.: Who are they?

Reed: Kurt Kaiser is a young house member from Pinellas County that I think has a tremendous amount of potential. Now, in the senate, there are really several down there that if they ever decide to go statewide . . . David McKean from Tampa, John Weare from Pinellas County. In the house, Bob Johnson from Sarasota, Ed Woodson from Pinellas, Tom Gallagher, who was just elected

from down here at Dade County. You know, I think that we have got enough, but I just don't know what . . . Bill James, for example, here in this county. We've got enough, if the guys will get out and do it. There again, most of them don't want to run unless they feel that they have a chance of winning. And the time that we should have done it, and the reason, I think, that we had a setback, was in '72.

J.B.: '70?

Reed: Well, yes, '70. Yeah. With the Kirk fiasco and the Kirk-Cramer-Carswell-Gurney . . . I think that hurt us.

J.B.: A unified party at that time. If the party had been unified at that time, you feel that there would have been a chance for people from the legislature running for statewide office . . . (inaudible) . . . did that deter people like you or people that you mentioned, from running for cabinet office? All that inner mess

Reed: Well, of course, in '70, by the time that all of that came out, filing was pretty much over. But

J.B.: In '72?

Reed: Oh, in '72? I think, yeah. Well, there weren't any statewide offices up in '72. But Tom Slade, for example, who ran for state treasurer and was beaten by Tom O'Malley, I think the political infighting within the Republican party hurt Tom's chances . . . he was a Democrat in 1963. He laid out for two years, came back as a Republican, ran in Duvall County, was elected to the state senate as a Republican, had a good statewide image. He all the . . . everything that I thought would make him a hell of a viable statewide candidate and he really got shot bad. And I think that one of the reasons for it was that the Gurney-Cramer thing was so hot that everybody was

trying to get even with each other on that one, that Tom just happened to be somebody out there running. And I don't think that . . . I like Tommy Thomas, I guess that I generally preface my remarks by saying that I like them, but I don't think that he has been too strong a state committee leader. In fact, the last really strong one that we had was Bill Murphen. We have a guy sitting down here in Broward County that would make a really fantastic state chairman, by the name of Grey Boylston, but I doubt that he would ever do it. But I really, I'm to the point now where I really enjoy working on issues and as I call it, "the process", more than I am interested in partisan politics. And I think that's the feeling of the general public today. I think that most of them look at the individual and the issue a lot more closely than they do the candidate. And that could help the Republicans. The first time in Lord knows how long, we elected an Independent, Lorie Wilson, to the state senate from up Cocoa Beach way. She was a registered Republican, county commissioner up there. Changed to Independent, ran and was elected. From the standpoint of political clout, she's not in a position to do too much. She's one Independent, there are thirty-nine other members who are either Democrat or Republican. She has a rather small group to worry about, I guess, but I think that people are really getting turned off of both political parties.

(tape turned off)

J.B.: . . . because this is one thing that has impressed me, that you did have this very high degree of coalition toward modernization of the governmental process itself. Is that basically true?

Reed: I think that we all tried very hard to avoid mixing our attitudes toward each other on issues with our attitudes towards each other on modernization of the process.

J.B.: So, you were able to still have strong differences on issues

Reed: Oh, absolutely.

J.B.: But at the same time, a very high degree of cohesion on modernization.

Reed: Right.

J.B.: You were able to separate the two.

Reed: We really got rolling. We thought that we had done it with Turlington. I feel that I was singularly responsible for Turlington's election as speaker. A fellow by the name of Stone, who was the speaker designate in 1966, who would have taken the speakership in '67, was killed in an automobile accident. A fellow by the name of Bob Mann, who is now district court of appeals judge over in Tampa and Ralph Turlington were the two Democrats who were running to succeed Stone, and he had died shortly prior to the session, just a month or two before the session. And I was able to commit all my Republican votes, because the election of the speaker, although he is designated by a Democratic caucus, his election takes place on the floor of the house by an open vote by all members of the house. I committed all of the Republican votes to Turlington at a time when he did not have a majority of the Democrat votes, but he had enough votes when added to the Republican votes to give him a majority of the house. And then Bob Mann, the Democrat, conceded and then of course, Turlington went in. And Ralph and I just fought all the time. He, of course, Ralph has a thing about Claude Kirk and Ralph was a very suspicious person when he was speaker and very high strung and somewhat emotional. I drove him off the rostrum one day crying. I didn't mean to, but he was screwing us and we got into it pretty heavy. And that's one of the reasons that that session went so long. I think that Schulz, as I said earlier, I think that Schulz and Pettigrew learned from that experience that if we could get together, we could

a hell of a lot more done. Because that's all that preceeded with Turlington, you know. "We're the minority, we expect to be a minority, but we think that our minority voice is a voice that should be heard. And if you give us the tools to do that, on those things that we can work together, we will." And Fred Schulz is really the guy who implemented that and our agreement with Schulz from the beginning and subsequently with Pettigrew, was "wherever we can agree, we will agree. If we can't agree, instead of playing games with us, let's get it out on the floor and get it over with and get back to the important things." I just don't . . . and they are really super people. I don't know if you have talked to Fred yet or not, but they are really super people. And they were able to raise themselves above a specific issue and we'd hassle an issue and they would either win it or lose it or we would compromise. But as to the process, I was worried about my minority not having the tools that they needed to be an effective minority in this state and I think that at that point in time, the Democratic leadership, namely Schulz and Pettigrew, were concerned that with the way the Republicans were moving, it wouldn't be too long in the future until they would be in the minority. So, there was some incentive to try and construct a system that was fair to both parties. I think that's what really got us moving.

(tape turned off)

J.B.: Reed said that his real agreement with Pettigrew was in the way that conflict was resolved, how issues are resolved. Rather than the decision itself, it was how the decision was reached.

(end of tape)