

Interview with Cal Ledbetter, State Representative and Political Science Professor at University of Arkansas at Little Rock, June 17, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: When did you get elected to the legislature?

Ledbetter: '66. Started serving January 1, 1967.

J.B.: Tell us about this Eagleton survey. What happened?

Ledbetter: Friend of mine named John Beard, who was state senator, he and I went to Eagleton I guess in 1970. You know, the Eagleton seminar they have every year where they have two legislators from 25 states and they alternate it. We were both excited about what we saw in Eagleton and what other states were doing so we came back in 1970. We asked the council to go on record to see if a study of Arkansas legislation would be feasible. Rosenthal came down and testified from Eagleton. We got an appropriation through in '71. \$40,000. We didn't have to hire a consulting firm. We could use committee expenses. And to hire an outside firm if we wanted to. The 1971 bill set up something called the committee on legislative organization, which was supposed to be half public men and half legislators. And this was the group that finally decided to hire Eagleton. Actually we had<sup>comparative</sup> bids from four or five outfits and decided to go with Eagleton. Eagleton came down and make a survey. I gather staying here on the premises for about nine months. It worked very well, too. What he would do is . . . . We sent out questionnaires to all legislators which is a typical, you know, Eagleton approach. Of course they geared this study to what the recommendations show. What he would do basically, he would write a

chapter and then kind of bounce the chapter off the committee in terms of what the committee thought about the chapter. And make reservations along those lines. And then of course the committee studied the thing before deciding which parts to drop and then of course in '73 is when we put most of these Eagleton recommendations into effect. In the 1973 general assembly. It just worked really well. I'd say we got about 90% of the Eagleton stuff through.

J.B.: What were the major things that did not get through?

Ledbetter: The major thing that did not get through was the legislative membership council is constituted as of legislative districts in 1950. And Eagleton recommended and certainly I supported the legislative council should be constituted as on the basis of 1970 districts. And that was defeated because of so much status quo involved. See in 1950 we had seven Congressional districts. And of course now we've got four. And the council is set up that two people come from each Congressional district.

Walter De Vries: What else was there that you wanted that you didn't get?

Ledbetter: Eagleton came up, I thought, with one very wild recommendation. Not that wild, I guess it makes good sense academically but in legislative perspective it didn't make much sense. They had recommended that the auditing committee be appointed in effect by the speaker from people who were interested in auditing and accounting and book-keeping, rather than being elected as it is now. The Joint Auditing Committee is a high prestige committee and just no way on earth we could have gotten something like that through.

W.D.V.: How about salaries? Did they make any recommendation on salaries?

Ledbetter: Oh yes. We got. . . . It will be on the ballot now in November to set up a executive-legislative compensation commission which will recommend to the legislature, you know, salaries. Legislature, you know, could not exceed what they recommend, but they could recommend to the legislature,

J.B.: Be a constitutional amendment?

Ledbetter: Yes, right.

J.B.: Recommend annual sessions?

Ledbetter: Yes. Two constitutional amendments. One will be annual sessions, the other the salary compensation .

J.B.: They both on there this year?

Ledbetter: No, annual session isn't. Now Eagleton also pointed out we could do annual sessions indirectly. But I'm not sure we should because of public outcry of doing work. You could actually, instead of adjourning in March, simply recess, until next January.

W.D.V.: Haven't you done that?

Ledbetter: Yeah, but not so it comes in annual sessions. Yeah, we did that, and it's possible to do. But I think if we did it by subtrafuge the public wouldn't be too enthusiastic about it.

What I see as the defense of the whole Eagleton study

I think worked well is the fact that we'd had in both houses, in the senate I think with 26 committees and the house 24. You served on four committees. Some senators served on six committees. And there was no coordination of agendas or timing. You had committees meeting at conflicting times and so on and so forth. Eagleton recommendation was that these committees be consolidated down into ten and more than that that the committees in the house and senate be parallel in subject matter and jurisdictions so that when the comes around we can meet as ~~interim~~ <sup>general</sup> committees. We never had ~~general~~ <sup>interim</sup> committees

you see in the legislature except for the legislative council and

committee. It's given the average guy in the legislature a chance to participate more:

J.B.: And that has been implemented?

Ledbetter: Oh yes, that's implemented now.

J.B.: And the interim committees are working?

Ledbetter: Yes. Right.

J.B.: Is there a joint interimcommittee?

Ledbetter: A joint interim committee. In other words, what you do, you take for example education. You take the regular house education committee, members on that, and then your senate education committee. Put them together when the session ends and a joint committee on education. Twenty-seven people.

W.D.V.: Did you have proxy voting before this? You said some of the senators had to serve on six committees. Did they have a system of proxy voting?

Ledbetter: I don't know about the senate. We couldn't proxy vote in the house. You know, we can pair vote but we can't proxy vote in the house. I don't know about the senate, whether they can proxy vote or not.

J.B.: How was the committee selected?

Ledbetter: Committees are selected by the speaker with, not the understanding but in the rules, that once you're on a committee that you can't be removed from it. But initially you're put on there by the speaker. You see in a interim committee system you go on two committees. They're called A and B committees. 5A and 5B go on 1A and 1B. Rather than four or five like there used to be in the past.

J.B.: And the speaker is elected by membership.



Ledbetter: Right.

J.B.: Does it rotate?

Ledbetter: No. Yes it does, yes it does. As a matter of fact a very iron clad tradition in Arkansas that the speaker is never re-elected.

W.D.V.: By tradition, not rules.

Ledbetter: Yes. Matter of fact the Eagleton questionnaire showed I think 87-92% approval rate on that in terms of the members of the house and senate who approved of that.

J.B.: Does the governor ever attempt to buck that tradition?

Ledbetter: Occasionally. We had a speaker four years ago. Very good speaker by the way. And being succeeded by a guy who wasn't nearly as good. He kind of hinted, made tentative overtures, you know, but just got down.

J.B.: When is the speaker elected? Is he elected when you start the new session or is it the old session?

Ledbetter: Well, theoretically he's elected when the new session convenes but actually, prior to that time, you know, pledges are lined up and prior to that time you know who it's going to be. As a matter of fact I've been in eight years and I've never seen a contested speaker's race.

W.D.V.: Is that done by--

Ledbetter: Contested, you know, contested in January.

W.D.V.: Is that done by caucus?

Ledbetter: No. It's done simply a guy decides he wants to run for speaker and he will write to all members of the legislature and say, you know, he would appreciate their support and their pledge, it's called. See obviously, with no Republicans we have a caucus. . . .

J.B.: Then he collects these written pledges.

Ledbetter: That's right.

J.B.: Is this done after the primary or before?

Ledbetter: It's done after the primary. But you see technically the election. . . . The new speaker for example won't really take office until January. Now I suppose if somebody wanted to contest it they could go in there and fight against him, but he's got enough pledges, you know, to make it.

J.B.: When did he get his pledges? Before the election or after?

Ledbetter: Yeah, see after the pri-- . . . Say a guy wants to be speaker. Okay, after the primary is over you know who's going to be in and who's not. He will start writing whoever his competitor--two or three--might be will also start writing and trying to get pledges.

J.B.: As a practical matter does he wait that long or start lining up support a little bit earlier?

Ledbetter: A little bit earlier, that's right.

J.B.: So they start with incumbents who they think are going to get re-elected.

Ledbetter: That's right, that's right. Usually though it is customary to wait until after the [real? run off] primary to start your campaign.

W.D.V.: Then does he actually move in in an interim capacity?

Ledbetter: No, no, no, no.

W.D.V.: In the speaker's office. Does he start working or anything like that?

Ledbetter: No. The new speaker for example is a guy named Cecil Alexander. Now he obviously is speaker. He's gotten all the pledges, nobody contested. But he will not officially be speaker until the session begins in January. Until he's elected formally.

J.B.: And then he will appoint the committees?

Ledbetter: That's right. Well, he'll do them anyhow, but I mean. . . .

W.D.V.: Those deals aren't cut right now?

Ledbetter: They were cut when he was elected, yeah, right, sure.

J.B.: But he can only appoint people to vacancies on committees.

Ledbetter: That's right. Once you're on a committee, you're there. And he can't remove you.

J.B.: Now, once you're on the committee, how's the chairman selected?

Ledbetter: It goes by seniority. But really in Arkansas the seniority system is minimal. The committee chairman, in effect, can be overruled by the committee and he can't pull secret meetings on you, and so seniority doesn't amount to a hell of a lot in Arkansas. In fact I think in Arkansas you have the best aspects of seniority and none of the worst aspects.

W.D.V.: A speaker in one session, by appointing someone, can bind the next session of the legislator. A new speaker cannot remove. . . . Is that by rule?

Ledbetter: Yeah, it's by rule. You can always suspend the rules. You can always suspend by two-thirds vote. But it's unlikely he can do that.

J.B.: One legislature in effect is binding another.

Ledbetter: In terms of committee composition, yeah, that's right.

J.B.: Can you do that?

Ledbetter: Yeah, you can continue the rules, you know.

J.B.: Does the governor have any role in electing the speaker?

Ledbetter: Now I haven't seen it. They say that Orval Faubus did. Now the years when I was in there. . . . I started with Winthrop Rockefeller and came through Bumpers, in those years, no. I understand Faubus did, sure.

J.B.: How about in the senate? Who appoints the committees? The lieutenant governor or the president pro tem?

Ledbetter: No, they have a five person rules committee that appoints

the members of the committees in the senate.

J.B.: Five senior members.

Ledbetter: Yeah.

J.B.: And then it's seniority on the committees.

Ledbetter: Yeah. As I say in Arkansas seniority doesn't amount to a damn. A guy's committee chairman but he can be easily overruled and [under] the new rules every bill comes to committee has to be heard if the author wants it heard. Some action has to be taken within ten days on every bill.

W.D.V.: Are all the votes on bills open?

Ledbetter: Oh yes, yes, yes.

W.D.V.: For the record?

Ledbetter: You bet.

W.D.V.: Is that new?

Ledbetter: It's new in the rules. Always traditional way we had operated. Only exception was the senate occasionally would go into executive session, you know, for gubernatorial nominations, the various state offices and so on and so forth.

J.B.: They still do that?

Ledbetter: Yeah, they still do that. As a matter of fact it's in the constitution. Arkansas constitution.

J.B.: But they still do it as a matter of practice?

Ledbetter: Yes. If they're talking about governor's nominees to various offices, they have to confirm.

J.B.: Is there any provision for the house to do that?

Ledbetter: No. The house cannot do that.

J.B.: Is there any indication that they sometimes discuss other things in those executive sessions?

Ledbetter: I don't really know. I assume it would be possible. I don't

really know. It doesn't happen very often. It doesn't happen very often at all. What's the incredible thing is, if you all can visualize, before the Eagleton thing, you go into a committee. You know, this was when you had four or five. There's no committee staff. Absolutely no committee staff. And the only person there is a secretary who simply reads the roll. And again, somebody testifies there's no record in terms of who the person was or what they said. The only record kept of any kind prior to the Eagleton situation was simply the record of who voted yes or no on particular bill, whether the bill came out do pass or do not pass, do pass as amended. And that's all we ever had.

J.B.: Has there been any change in staffing?

Ledbetter: Yeah, we. . . . For example, we have one staff member who next time will rotate between. . . . One staff member will probably handle two committees. Is there for research. And of course the whole. . . . You see we never had any written reports on bills. I don't know how in hell the courts in Arkansas try to figure out what the legislature wants to do because there's no record of what the legislative intent was. And this year's the first time we started written committee reports on bills, too. [In a formal use?] which we never had before.

J.B.: All of it's open?

Ledbetter: Oh yeah, certainly, certainly. I think they had a procedure in the old days, before I came here, I don't know, where they said sometimes that everything would be open except the vote itself when they go into, you know, closed committee session. But that can't be done now under the rules. Now bear in mind you can always suspend the rules by two-thirds vote and do anything you want to. But it's rare that that occurs.

J.B.: If the states were rated again on the basis of the sometime government report, in those five categories, how much change do you think there's

been in Arkansas legislature since that report

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Ledbetter: particularly the committee structure. Now there hasn't been any change in money, that's the only problem. I mean we're still. . . . I think one of the most incredible things is our staff increase from 21 to 35 last year which by Arkansas standards is a big increase. More budgetary people so we're not limited strictly to the executive branch in terms of what kind of advice we get on budget. We're getting committee staff for the first time.

but we also got an appropriation of almost \$1 million--about \$950,000 for in effect legislative facilities. This is going to mean two new committee rooms for the house and two new committee rooms for the senate. And these have to be big committee rooms, to handle 27 people on the interim committee--20 from the house and 7 from the senate. And there are only one or two buildings in the whole state capital that would handle that. So I think our preparation is going to be a lot better because we have the interim committees meeting, we have [pre-final?] bills now. I'd say we've improved. . . with the exception of salaries, we've improved almost every category. I guess we'd probably be someplace in the middle now. I mean we're not a wealthy state.

California and states like that. But we sure, you know, would be better than 46.

W.D.V.: Do the recommendations include anything about lobbyists?

Ledbetter: No, they really didn't. We have a very mild lobbying bill but Eagleton didn't pick that up at all.

J.B.: How about ethics legislation?

Ledbetter: We have an ethics bill that was passed in 1971. Very mild bill. It requires you to list any interest in excess of \$5,000 that you

have. And also, let's see, any stock or interest you own in any outfit regulated by the state. You know, telephone company, or if you're a lawyer requires you also to list the period of time and that sort of thing. But it doesn't require you to disclose your net worth or anything like that.

W.D.V.: Is there a standard report?

Ledbetter: Yeah, you get a form to fill in for it. It's very mild. lobbyist  
I don't think it's. . . . Our ~~interest~~ laws should be much tougher too. All it requires you to do is register. And I'm not sure that anybody ever checks that. And the ethics bill should be a little bit stronger, too.

J.B.: There's no reporting by lobbyist?

Ledbetter: No.

J.B.: No expenses.

Ledbetter: Only thing you see is somebody has signed up as representative of United Automobile Workers whatever it might be. And it's very, very mild type bill.

J.B.: How about campaign disclosure? Contributions. Campaign contributions?

Ledbetter: Yeah, that. . . . You're supposed to disclose any expenditure over \$25. And I'd say that's been pretty well adhered to, at least in the. . . .

J.B.: How about campaign contributions, though?

Ledbetter: No.

J.B.: No reporting on that?

Ledbetter: No. But you have to report, you know, how much you spend for what categories and so on and so forth. Also the law in terms of who can contribute what is very loose. There's no prohibition, for example in Arkansas, against a corporation contributing to you if they

want to, directly, as a corporation.

J.B.: And there's no reporting on who contributes to who.

Ledbetter: No. But there is reporting on how much you spend and what for. Gov Bumpers. . . . One of the bills that failed. . . . Gov Bumpers had a bill, I guess it was two years ago, limit basically the campaign expenditures for the media. And I guess they figured it was just too tough and didn't push it very hard. But we don't have much of that.

J.B.: Did you run into any problem at all being a state employee running for legislature?

Ledbetter: Well see, when I ran initially I wasn't. You see this was a private university and converted while I was in the legislature. Yeah, it is a problem and I wrote the attorney general to ask, you know, for an opinion on it. See there's been a long tradition in Arkansas that school teachers of course do serve [in?] the legislature. As a matter of fact that's specified in the constitution. They can serve in the legislature. And I wrote the attorney general and he gave me an opinion that's kind of complicated in terms of Arkansas law but I was not holding two public offices. I held an office in the legislature but in my position here I'm simply an employee. And his ruling was that the constitution only prohibited you from holding two state offices at one time. What I have here is not an office. The legislature is an office. I can hold one, but not two. And the analogy they use is the public school teachers who are permitted and have always been permitted to hold office or to serve in the legislature.

J.B.: Is there anybody in state government who plays sort of a publicly invisible role but who is very powerful?

Ledbetter: Lobbyist or what?



J.B.: No, well. . . . I'll give you an example. In South Carolina the state auditor because just certain ways he functions is an extremely powerful figure. Primarily because he plays the key role in preparing the state budget and following it all the way through.

Ledbetter: Now of course you obviously have some state employees who are very influential, particularly budgetary people. But I would say nobody's kind of a, you know, kind of imperial wisdom to whom you come. He knows what needs to be done . I don't think there's anybody like that. Maybe prior to my time, but not to my knowledge now. You have a lot of people who [have developed?] a lot of expertise. But there's no one person that, extremely talented person to which everybody would go.

J.B.: To what degree does home rule exist? County. Municipal.

Ledbetter: Well, you know, really it doesn't exist. I mean the legislature could take it away. One of the first constitutional amendments they put in was a home rule amendment, but it didn't make it through committee. In the new constitution which was defeated, you know, home rule was stressed very heavily. Legislature, you know, classifies cities in terms of cities are first and second class. And they can have city manager forms or city council forms as they want them. But home rule is strictly what the legislature gives you. Now Bumpers passed a bill about two years ago and that came out in the new constitution. Granted a lot more local home rule rights with provisos the legislature could reverse these rights by a two-thirds vote. So that was a substantial improvement I'd say .

J.B.: How much local legislation is there in the legislature?

Ledbetter: Oh hell, it's. . . . The way you get around it you simply introduce a bill and say that the bill applies to a county in Arkansas

with a population of 25,000 to 25,500. There's only one county with that population. So there's an awful lot of that. Again, salaries for sheriffs. And again the court house people in terms of expenses and loans and all these things. Our local legislation .

J.B.: Who writes the county budget? Is the legislature involved in that at all?

Ledbetter: No, not really. See the quorum court. The county has it's own source of revenue and the quorum court. . . . What the legislature does basically, the legislature sets limits beyond which county people cannot be paid. But the legislature doesn't pay them. They're paid out of the quorum court appropriation which comes from the tax and things like that. County road tax, etc.

J.B.: Does the county judge in effect serve in both executive and administrative roles?

Ledbetter or W.D.V.: Serves all three in Arkansas.

Ledbetter: Yeah, he got the whole damn ball. See, basically what the guy is, he is a road builder, you know, administrator. But now, in effect, because of a proviso in the Arkansas constitution that provides for every 200 registered voters you have one person on the quorum court. In Polaski county that means we've got 467 people on the quorum court. So the quorum court, you know, is just a big, mammoth, you know, body that sits there and does whatever the county judge normally wants to do. The county judge appoints a budget committee and the budget committee, their recommendation is normally adopted by the quorum court. So in effect, you know, I'd say he's administrator, he's legislator, and also in Arkansas the county judge sits in on paternity cases. And he also sits in on, he determines annexation proceedings and custody cases going back to the old days. So he performs judicial, executive and legislative functions.

J.B.: Is that a unique office in America?

Ledbetter: I suppose it is.

J.B.: I presume since he appoints the budget committee that he in effect writes the budget.

Ledbetter: Yes he does. And the quorum court in our county are just too big for anybody to make any eminable difference in it.

J.B.: Are they elected?

Ledbetter: Yeah, they're elected. 467.

J.B.: That's bigger than the house of representatives, isn't it?

Ledbetter: That's true, and, you see, it keeps on growing.

J.B.: Is there any move to replace this with a different form . . . ?

Ledbetter: Yeah, but you see it's in the constitution. That for every 200 voters you have one member of the quorum court.

J.B.: So it will take a new constitution, or an amendment.

Ledbetter: There's an amendment this time that will cut the quorum court down from 9 to 15. Each county would have no less than 9 and no more than 15.

W.D.V.: Do they meet once a year on the budget?

Ledbetter: Twice a year. And it's a farce, you know. They meet in the Rosslyn [?] auditorium which is the biggest area in Little Rock. You know, if you have a gigantic rally or something then you get Rosslyn auditorium. That's where the quorum court usually meets.

J.B.: So what do they do besides approve the budget?

Ledbetter: That's all. They have the right to, you know, they can notarize things and they can marry people and so on so forth. The j.p.s can. Basically that's all the quorum court does. They meet for about three or four hours twice a year.

W.D.V.: How would you characterize the relationships between Gov Rockefeller and the legislature and between Gov Bumpers and the legislature?

Ledbetter: [Relationship? Senate relationship] was very poor. It was a very tragic situation because Rockefeller, of course, had, in terms of ideas, I think his ideas and ideals for Arkansas were just fabulous. But he had absolutely no talent with people. Couldn't remember anybody's name. His whole approach to legislation was the idea if I have a bill that's meritorious I'm going to introduce it, put it in and it will pass on its merits and I don't need to lift a figure because it's good in and of itself. And it just doesn't work that way. And he wasn't really conversant with the nitty gritty didn't know what to do to get his legislation passed. He had a lot of personal failings. As I say, he couldn't remember. . . . He'd meet you when you came in the room and forget your name when you left. That type of thing. Which I suppose long term range thing is not important but the legislators are offended that he couldn't remember their. . . . And he also had this type situation. . . . When Rockefeller first came in about one-third to 40% of the legislators had Republican opposition. And rightly or wrongly they figured Rockefeller was personally responsible for it. Rockefeller did pretty largely finance a lot of Republican campaigns. So he had a built in animosity, party animosity. And a personal animosity because they felt, rightly or wrongly, that he in many cases had financed personally a person against them. So you had that. Bumpers, you know, comes in. Democrat, sweeps out Rockefeller. Bumpers, you know, very articulate, very good with people, good personality, good memory. Knows how to deal in the sense of getting votes, this type thing. Did a perfect job with the legislature.

W.D.V.: In a sense did Rockefeller set it up for Bumpers?

Ledbetter: In a way. I think they were the same mold, the same tradition in terms of what they wanted. And I suppose you could say that, but that's a little bit misleading. Because you know Rockefeller

comes in with \$130 million tax increase which obviously nobody's going to buy. On that kind of basis you can say he set it up for Bumpers. Well, I don't know anybody on earth, besides Dale Bumpers, who could have gotten an income tax increase through in Arkansas. And remember, to get the income tax increase through in Arkansas, because of the constitution, it takes three-fourths vote. You had to get 76 votes in the house of representatives to get the income tax increase through. 76 out of 100.

J.B.: How did Bumpers do it?

Ledbetter: He wrote just a. . . . You know, the state was short of money and he made every argument. But he's just damn effective in doing it. There were a lot of interests that want tax increases. The teachers and the cities and the counties and so on so forth.

J.B.: How much truth is there in what is heard fairly frequently that when they say disparagingly, as you just did, that all Bumpers really did was come in and implement Rockefeller's program?

Ledbetter: I don't think it's true. I don't think it's true at all. I don't know. Rockefeller maybe pushed for the Kennedy Garden Program. I mean he supported it but I didn't see any big push in terms of text books. I would say. . . . The argument where that holds a lot of credibility would be in terms of government organization. I mean this was drawn up by a person who had worked for Rockefeller and who came and worked for a year for Bumpers. Rockefeller put a lot of stress on this throughout the campaign and say that's true. But, the tax increase. . . . I mean a man like Rockefeller just simply couldn't get a tax increase through and Bumpers could. And Bumpers had all kinds of things, too, that I'm not sure Rockefeller even thought about, like the Wilderness Bill, <sup>free</sup> ~~free~~ text books.

J.B.: Free text books for high school students, right?

Ledbetter: Yes.

J.B.: Already had them in elementary.

Ledbetter: Right. But in Arkansas it has never extended beyond the eighth grade. And of course when your text books get expensive it's 9, 10th and 11th grades. And kindergartens. My god, that's a marvelous step in Arkansas. And you know, Bumpers got this thing through without problems on it.

W.D.V.: How do you think Pryor will do with the legislature?

Ledbetter: This is somewhat off the record, isn't it. You're not going to. . .

J.B.: Yeah.

Ledbetter: Not as well as Bumpers. He's not as talented as Bumpers and he's probably not as good with people as Bumpers is. Even though he has served in the legislature and has that kind of advantage. But just don't think he'll be that good.

J.B.: How do you think Bumpers will function in the US Senate?

Ledbetter: I think very effective. He'll be a more effective legislator than Fulbright, if by effective you mean in terms of passing bills. I'm sure he can pass a bill better than Bill Fulbright. Now, I think Fulbright's great genius. . . . And what we're really grateful to Fulbright for in Arkansas is his educative capacity. The fact that he saw I think the foreign relations committee, among other things, as a vehicle to educate people. Bumpers probably won't do that as well as Fulbright. But in terms of passing legislation I'd say Bumpers is going to be more effective than Fulbright.

W.D.V.: You notice any change in the legislators themselves in terms of their capabilities or qualities since you got in in '66?

Ledbetter: I'm not the one to judge that, see, because I came in with reapportionment. And with reapportionment, you know, you got a lot more

J.B.: What, in your opinion, has been the effect of reapportionment?

Ledbetter: Well, I think, it's meant in Arkansas anyhow, I think a lot of the urban issues that are extremely important in urban areas have come to the front. Like I say for example kindergarten text books. Not that it doesn't help rural people, too, but to me these are classified as two real urban issues.

I think issues like that are. . . . Well, I think reapportionment has made a difference in that. Now it doesn't mean that the urban districts are monolithic. They probably aren't. In essence Arkansas is on a single member district which means you get elected wherever your area is. But I think in general, you know, bills which urban people can support have a much better chance of, have passed now that wouldn't have passed let's say six or seven years ago.

W.D.V.: Is the relative strength of the legislature in relationship to the governor, the executive, increased or decreased in the last eight years?

Ledbetter; Well I think it's decreased because of basically, I mean increased because of Eagleton. And I'd say, you know, among other things, one area we stress in the article is the idea of legislative oversight. Which we've never exercised effectively. And the joint committees, I think, will be able to do this. And secondly, we've beefed up greatly the budgetary review section of the legislative council, which is kind of the legislative counterpoint of the governor's staff. So I think, you know, it certainly hasn't equalized it, but the legislature is in a better situation than it was say four or five years ago.

W.D.V.: How about in the post-audit function?

Ledbetter: A little bit better, too. For example, we want this year to

urban people in there. And of course somebody would probably make a better judgment who'd been there in the days when it was not reapportioned. See I haven't served in the malapportioned legislature.

W.D.V.: But has there been any change in the last eight years?

Ledbetter: I don't think. . . . I wouldn't say any sizeable change in terms of competence, quality and so on so forth.

W.D.V.: And the kind of people.

Ledbetter: Yeah. The only change I see is that seeming people from the more conservative areas of Arkansas, particularly the delta area, tend, seem to be more open-minded I think than they were maybe five or six years ago.

J.B.: The same people changing, or is it different type person coming?

Ledbetter: Little bit different type person. Little bit younger and it's a little bit more. . . you know, I couldn't pin it down scientifically. Just a hunch.

J.B.: In your opinion is that a reflection on the                      of black participation in the electorate there?

Ledbetter: I think it's a reflection of a change of attitude. No, because seemingly, I think any legislator is probably conscious of the fact that unless he lives in a predominantly black district he can always, you know, defeat a black. And the black vote, I don't think has been that important in Arkansas.

J.B.: Has it made any difference, though, in the question of which whitey gets elected? If you have a moderate and a conservative.

Ledbetter: I suppose it could, but I don't think really, you know, that accounts for the change. Because I think, you know, the change is just a kind of shifting of attitudes, general public acceptance that, you know, blacks should be treated like everybody else and so on so forth. I would think, anyhow.



program budgeting for the first time. And I think the audit committee has also vetoed the staff [?] and the budget review session works real closely with the audit review committee. So that should help, I would think.

W.D.V.: But don't you have a situation where both branches have increased because--

Ledbetter: Yeah, right.

W.D.V.: The reorganization and the beefing up of . . . .

Ledbetter: Yeah, because I think what you have in Arkansas basically is a weak chief executive and a weak legislative branch. And deliberately so. Ours, as you probably know, ours was a typical post Reconstruction constitution where you want to keep everybody under control and under very severe restraints. All three branches. So I think both branches, executive and legislative, both of them are weak. But I'd say probably the legislative branch is much weaker than the executive branch.

J.B.: So it's a relatively strong executive from the standpoint of the governor has. . . .

Ledbetter: I'd say vis-a-vis the legislature, he is. You know, this is the classical political science type thing. He's just simply more effective. He's got a bill, you understand, of course he can bring in his witnesses. He's got his bill drafting service to get it done. So on and so forth, you know. And we can't fight with that.

J.B.: Is it strictly an executive budget?

Ledbetter: No, not necessarily. It's executive in the sense, you know, that he submits it but the legislative council holds pre-budget hearings in effect to determine the budget. And then when the session begins, the legislative council doesn't exist and the joint budget then come into play. So its an executive budget in the sense that the governor submits

it but there's a lot of legislative input into it and influence on it before it actually is introduced.

J.B.: He submits it to the legislative council?

Ledbetter: Legislative council, right. In October. See, in October, November and December--

J.B.: And the council just staff people.

Ledbetter: No, no. The legislative council, these are people from the legislature.

J.B.: They are legislators?

Ledbetter: That's right. They have a staff, of course, but they are legislators. Now there's always confusion.

W.D.V.: After it goes through that process, then does it go back to the governor?

Ledbetter: Well, no, when it goes through that process, we made a recommendation on what the governor's proposed.

W.D.V.: To the legislature?

Ledbetter: Excuse me?

W.D.V.: I don't understand this. The governor submits to the legislative council.

Ledbetter: Right.

W.D.V.: His recommendations.

Ledbetter: Right.

W.D.V.: And they look at it and hold hearings and so on and they make recommendations on that to whom?

Ledbetter: Well, they don't make recommendations on that [?]. They'll put their own recommendations and their <sup>will</sup> down. And they'll make recommendations eventually to the legislature.

J.B.: So it goes from the legislative council, which represents both house and senate?

Ledbetter: House and senate, right.

W.D.V.: Is the budget that he submits in January the same one that he submitted to the council in October? The governor?

Ledbetter: It could be. Now it depends on how he wants to ~~change~~ it.

But the thing is--

W.D.V.: He has the recommendations before he actually submits it to the legislature?

Ledbetter: That's right. Plus you have this. Now what takes place in January is something called the joint budget committee comes into effect. This consists of seven members of the house and five members of the senate who are members of the legislative council. Now the rule of joint budget is that if the legislative council has recommended a appropriation bill then joint budget cannot reopen that bill or change that bill except by two-thirds vote. Now they do have a proviso whereby the new governor comes in. This proviso doesn't apply to him. So in effect the legislative council is enormously influential there.

J.B.: How many people on the legislative council?

Ledbetter: 27-28.

J.B.: And how are they selected?

[Confusion of voices.]

Ledbetter: some at large. One's appointed by the governor. 27-28 people on the council.

W.D.V.: Is it the practice for the governor to take those recommendations and include them in his budget when he submits it?

Ledbetter: Yes.

W.D.V.: Verbatim?

Ledbetter: Well, basically. Unless there's some big hassle, you know. And usually the legislative council is pretty deferential in terms of what he wants. Not always.

W.D.V.: Is there that much difference between what he recommends and what the council recommends?

Ledbetter: No, not that much, really. But again, you know, the council can assert itself if it wants to.

J.B.: Let me go back just a minute on procedure. He submits a budget to the legislative council, which reviews it, makes recommendations then it goes to the joint budget committee. . . .

Ledbetter: Wait a minute. No. When the session begins the legislative council ceases. The legislative council doesn't exist any more when the session begins. But in effect the successor agency is the joint budget committee who are twelve people but all of whom are members of the legislative council.

J.B.: And by two-thirds majority they can change the legislative council--

Ledbetter: Recommendation, right.

J.B.: Then it goes from them back to the governor or the house?

Ledbetter: Then it comes from the joint budget, the joint budget reports it out to the floor.

J.B.: To the floor?

Ledbetter: To the floor.

W.D.V.: All that is Jack is a prehearing. The governor doesn't have to pay a damn bit of attention to what the council does. He can do anything he wants to. What they're doing is having hearings on his pre-budget proposal. That's all.

Ledbetter: Well, you see, what the council decides is important because the <sup>joint</sup> budget, in effect, is bound by what the council has decided. Not actually, but it does. . . .

W.D.V.: But you see it binds the legislature more than it binds the governor. In effect.

Ledbetter: You see, in a lot of cases what you have, you have a bill

coming out and the bill will be listed as the governor's recommendation. Legislative council recommendation. In some cases, if they change the recommendation you may have a joint budget recommendation. There not many like that because usually the joint budget takes the legislative council recommendations.

W.D.V.: But                    you have those first two columns.

Ledbetter: That's right. And they're very similar.

J.B.: Then when he goes to the floor, then what?

Ledbetter: During the last 30 days the joint budget runs the whole thing. In effect the chairman of joint budget will get up and go through the appropriation bill one by one. It's very tedious because in Arkansas, again because of a screwed up constitutional amendment passed during the height of the depression, most appropriation bills have to have a three-fourths vote in both house and senate.

W.D.V.: They're also a line item, aren't they?

Ledbetter: [Unclear.]

J.B.: It's not a single appropriation bill. It's a series?

Ledbetter: That's right.

W.D.V.: You get the governor then you get the council then you get the action. That right?

Ledbetter: Yeah. Well, no, finally, when the bill--

J.B.: But there's not a finance committee. . .

Ledbetter: The thing is, though, that the joint budget is crucial. In other words, if the governor puts in a bill and the joint budget says no, then the governor might as well kiss it goodbye. He's not going to get it. So in that sense the joint budget is really

J.B.: But they aren't separate. . . finance committees in each house that go through it.

Ledbetter: No.

W.D.V.: Joint budget is joint.

Ledbetter: Seven house, five senatorial.

W.D.V.: See, it's a joint committee of the legislative council.

Ledbetter: That's right.

W.D.V.: It's a legislative group. It's not a house-senate thing.

Ledbetter: That's right.

J.B.: Right. But then when it goes to the floor, does it go to the floor of the house first and then to the senate?

Ledbetter: Either way. There's no big thing about that. But it's a joint budget bill, sponsored by the joint budget. Now again, if I as an individual want to have my own bill. Say I get something passed and I want appropriation for it. Of course, there've been no pre-budgetary hearings on my bill and the governor hasn't done anything about my bill. I've got to go before the joint budget and get the joint budget to approve my recommendation. One of the Eagleton thing was that the joint budget really was determining. . . . it's true, was determining too much of what the house and senate did. Because you obviously didn't have enough time to keep up with all the hundreds of appropriation bills that come in there and you simply rely on the judgment of the joint budget. And if you've got 12 good people, fine; if you don't, you're in trouble. So one Eagleton recommendation was that joint budget be expanded to include more than just the seven - five . It's expanded now to 15 people. Two, by the way, two from the joint auditing committee. Two of the new three people who are on the committee. But actually, during the last 30 days that's all you do is pass budget bills. It is a situation, you know, where you rely completely on what joint budget recommends.

J.B.: Who designates the members of the joint budget committee?

Ledbetter: Well, the seven members of the house are designated by the

speaker and the five members of the senate are designated by the president pro tem.

W.D.V.: From the membership of the council.

Ledbetter: from the membership of the council.

J.B.: As these other three will be designated how?

Ledbetter: Let me see, we had a different arrangement for those. We have one selected at large and one by the joint. . . . I've forgotten exactly how. It's a little bit different.

J.B.: The joint budget committee is really, then, the key in the legislature.

Ledbetter: Damn right.

J.B.: And is that like the other committees? Once you're on that another speaker can't take you off?

Ledbetter: No, no, that's not the same thing. Because the joint budget can rotate. For one thing, you've always got to be on the legislative council to be on the joint budget.

J.B.: Does that usually rotate, or once you get on the legislative council. . . .?

Ledbetter: No, once you get on it normally you stay. Except sometimes you're defeated. Sometimes there's a membership vote. . . legislative council. . . rotates. I mean sometimes you're defeated in election to the legislative council.

J.B.: Okay, elected to the legislative council from the house or from the senate.

Ledbetter: Right.

J.B.: The membership elects for that.

Ledbetter: That's right. And, well, not exactly. Two people are elected from each Congressional district. But then there are also some at large. So in effect the membership does it too.

J.B.: Elected by district caucus?

Ledbetter: That's right. And some at large, some at large. So I suppose it's an executive budget but there's a lot of legislative input into the thing.

J.B.: You see any basic changes in the legislative structure of operation in the next six years?

Ledbetter: I haven't given it much thought. Trying so much to get the Eagleton thing in. It's probably all we can absorb, I'd say, in the next two or three years. You know, it's just amazing we got as much through as we did. I just, you know, wouldn't have figured initially. Just one of these things that happens to come off right for some reason or another. Just hit the right historical time and it worked real well. I would never in my life have figured that the senate would dissolve itself down to ten committees because every senator, you know, in the old system, was chairman of one committee and maybe chairman of two committees. And I just never in my life figured they would do that. But there are so many bugs. I mean the joint budget committee is. . . . The joint committees aren't exactly working as we had anticipated. We thought they would do most of the studies in the interim. And they don't have studies and the council doesn't even have studies. We'll, you know, need to work these kind of things out. But I think we've got a real adjusting process in the next three or four years to adjust to the Eagleton recommendations, joint committees, staff people and so on so forth. Which we've never had to do before. You don't realize how bad the Arkansas situation was. Well, it still is bad in terms of salary. But you know you serve here for \$100 a month. You don't have any offices. You don't have any secretarial assistance except a pool there that's got about 10 or 12 girls. And maybe two or three are good and everybody learns who the two or three good ones are. And you don't



get any. . . . Well, they give you about five rolls of stamps. But that's about it. As I say, in the past you didn't have any committee staff so you didn't have any access to any type of impartial information. Only information you had on bills in the past was what the interest groups would give you or what you could pick up on your own. And we've come a long way from there. We've also put into effect interim expenses which we haven't had until 1971. A legislator can incur expenses up to \$250 per month. I almost had a deal with this guy from the state of Michigan. Their annual sessions and how he made \$20,000 a year and he had an AA and he had an office and he had personal secretary and he had, god, \$600 a month in terms of allowances and he was complaining because the state of Michigan wouldn't set up a branch office for him in his home town, you know. I said, well, you come down to Arkansas and see how the other half lives, I guess. Unfortunately we haven't been able to do anything about money. The public is terribly resistant to raising salaries, legislative salaries. Then in Arkansas this catches the state constitutional officers too, as you probably know. The governor makes \$10,000 a year and the attorney general \$6,000 a year.

J.B.: Does the press take any active interest in that one way or the other?

Ledbetter: You mean salaries? I don't know. Not so far. But you know these aren't going to be voted on til November so it's a little bit soon for the press to react yet. favorably inclined toward the Eagleton report. I don't think I saw anything negative on the Eagleton thing at all.

J.B.: Did they recommend anything specifically on salaries as far as amounts, or just procedure?

Ledbetter: They recommended. . . . It wasn't a very strong recommendation.

They recommended basically I think an annual salary of about \$4,500.

This was done about two or three years ago.

J.B.: Was that tied in with the idea of annual sessions?

Ledbetter: Yes. Right, right, right. I think Eagleton wanted to, couple both together wanted couple both together. Annual sessions with the salary increase. Figured that would make [unclear].

W.D.V.: Still nothing about the 60 days?

Ledbetter: No, no. They want annual session, too.

W.D.V.: With no limit.

Ledbetter: Well, what do we have on that? I think they recommended annual sessions, 90 day limit extended by two-thirds .

I'm not sure, I'd have to check about that. I think the committee insisted on putting a limit on it just for saleability purpose if nothing else.

J.B.: What would be the strongest, most powerful groups in the state?

Ledbetter: I'd say, you know, chamber of commerce, labor and teachers, probably. I'm probably not the best one to ask because you know I come from an urban area and the Farm Bureau is not strong in this county. Because this county is an urban county. I expect throughout the state the Farm Bureau is very influential.

J.B.: How about banks and utilities? Insurance?

Ledbetter: The utilities are really not terribly active. They patched up their fight with the co-ops about 10-12 years ago. No great division between co-ops and utilities. They're regulated by the public service commission. The utilities really aren't a factor. They used to be in the old days, but not so much any more. Bankers? Not terribly involved. I should take that back. They were terribly active about four or five years ago when we passed a bill allowing the state to collect interest on money, you know, deposited in banks. And banks were dividing the

state on a bank holding bill, but they're not. . . . I wouldn't classify them as real shakers and movers who are interested in what goes on in the legislature. They're interested only if their own interest is touched and I don't think that they go out and seek people because their interest is that important, seek people to run as in effect a bank candidate might be. Labor always has a list, you know, of bills they want. Teachers always got a list of bills. Farm Bureau not so much. Chamber of commerce usually have a kind of list, too.

J.B.: State chamber?

Ledbetter: State chamber, right. Now again, this is not true in my county but my county is not a typical county. But I'd say probably throughout the state that the county officers, or in effect county judges, county sheriffs, county clerks. Not in my county because my county's an urban county.

J.B.: How do you assess Bumpers' role in vetoing that bill that would have returned 7%. . . .

Ledbetter: 7%? I don't know really the maneuvering behind it.

J.B.: My question is this. Two versions we've heard. One is that [End of side of tape.]

took a lot of courage to do it because of that and the other was "Well, you know he said he wasn't going to do it. And it was sort of cut and dried and it didn't take a lot of courage at all because everybody knew he was going to veto it."

Ledbetter: Well, I don't think he left any doubt he was going to veto it. By the way, you say [see] those two groups. . . . The cities are badly represented in Arkansas. The city lobbying effort is very poor. So I wouldn't really count the cities as a terrible influential group. ~~of~~ Counties is a different matter. No I think it took courage. The

counties did lobby. They lobbied the hell out of that thing. And the counties are allowed under Arkansas law in effect to finance their lobbying group through quorum court funds as they want to. I don't think there was any doubt he was going to veto the thing. But it was-- well, they pushed the hell out of that thing. I would say that it took a little courage. This wasn't just a proforma cut and dried thing. And he almost lost it. [I don't think the cities were effective, no I agree with you there.]

J.B.: What's the explanation of why that bill passed overwhelmingly in the legislature. The governor vetoed it. And it only takes a simple majority to override the veto. And the veto was sustained.

Ledbetter: I think a lot of them thought it was a lousy bill but you needed credit with the folks back home, particularly your county officials you vote for it so ~~they'd vote for you~~. At the same time, you know, you make clear to the county officials, you know, you support them on that but you're not going to vote to override the governor's veto. Because that's a different thing. I think there was a lot of that probably. And also guys who were pushing it. John Beard, for example, very good friend of mine, who was very instrumental. Lot of times you'd give him one vote and at the same time not vote to override the governor's veto. I don't think they really wanted it actually. I think they understood the, you know, the fiscal straitjacket it would put the state into.

J.B.: The legislature didn't.

Ledbetter: Yeah, I think so. The counties wanted it. You can't blame them. And of course the counties and cities also got an enormous increase in funds even though the fact that the bill was vetoed. I would say, you know, that it took a lot of courage. I don't think he made any friends by that. I mean, good government

just at the beginning. That he was indecisive. I think what he does, and people confuse this, I think he has a great talent to defuse controversial issues. It's a real talent and he has it. And I think for this reason people think that he's indecisive. Some people don't like things indecisive and meek and so on. But for example this Lee county clinic. Did you all discuss this with anybody? I think it's a beautiful example of Bumpers' technique. The Lee county clinic obviously had to be there. I mean it was the only really medical facility that was really serving the black community. And yet there were probably some fiscal irregularities. Maybe they were abusing guidelines and so on. So he doesn't veto it. He allows it to stay, but he says he wants very tight standards put on it and so on and so forth. I guess he lost some white support in Lee county. But that's the best example of how he functions. Or again the 7%.  
 I'm not going to ~~approve~~ the 7% because

approve  
 irresponsible but I am going to ~~approve~~ an increase of the counties over what it was two years ago. And of course the increase howed .

I think he just has a talent to defuse controversial issues and people confuse this with indecisiveness and waivering and so on and so forth. Like I say, I think he's cautious like all politicians. In terms of not wanting to commit yourself until you see--

J.B.: As governor has he provided leadership and initiative or has he more sought consensus?

Ledbetter: I think he's tried to bring about consensus, let me put it that way. For example, the bills he introduced. . . . You know, you spoke of Rockefeller laying the ground work. Bills introduced, you know, like community colleges, free textbooks and the kindergartens. Five years ago that would have just been unheard of in Arkansas that people would do things like that. I think what he does is he reads

folks care about. Because it's fiscally irresponsible to do something like that. But that's not a terribly good constituency [argument?]. So if you have state wide ambitions, you know, vetoing a bill like that is going to take off every county official throughout the state. And in the nonurban areas they're very influential. To me it took a lot of guts to do that.

W.D.V.: Except Bumpers had none of that support in 1970 and 1974.

Ledbetter: Well, I don't think you could do it because of him good governor and a good governor, god, doesn't allow a 7% you know straight jacket to take place. Yeah, but still, you know, a guy takes power. Then you know, you usually make your peace with the powers that be. And of course with something like that, you know, he's always going to be. . . . You know, the county judges and people like this are not going to be terribly enthusiastic about him. Course he's so damn good he doesn't need it. I mean I don't know what went on in his mind, he may have figured in his own mind that I don't need them, you know. Maybe the point you're making. I don't know about that. And he didn't need them. And he doesn't need them. Of course I would think that if you could plot it the influence, the county officials, that their influence is just directly proportional to how rural the county is. If the county's urban, the county officials just seem to me just kind of I won't say meaningless, but not nearly as influential as otherwise.

J.B.: Bumpers has a reputation of being. . . depending on who's making it, either one indecisive or two slow to reach a decision until he has all the facts.

Ledbetter: Well he's cautious, but I think all politicians are cautious. I never bought the argument. I know Rockefeller used this against him

public opinion very accurately . And when he sees his time to move, he moves. At the same time I don't think that he follows. . . . I don't mean that he waits until public opinion is known so that he can then move. I think he's probably got a feel for, you know, how far he can go and when it's good to move on an issue. I guess anyway. And then maybe this Rockefeller thing. Rockefeller kind of led, you know, the same argument you could make about Kennedy laying the ground work for Johnson. Or Teddy Roosevelt laying the ground work for Wilson and so on so forth. Maybe that type of thing. But Rockefeller just wasn't that effective, I don't think.

J.B.: Do you consider Bumpers to be presidential material?

Ledbetter: Yes, yes.

[Interruption on tape.]

J.B.: Then you compared his legislative record to the first hundred days? Of the New Deal.

Ledbetter: Yeah, right. Well, that's a little exaggerated but I thought he did enormously, incredibly well. And here's a guy with no legislative experience, no executive experience. And come in and do that. I was very impressed with it. Now he's no Fulbright. God knows Fulbrights [purple?] to him. I think my wife writes him off. I don't write him off at all.

national president, anyhow national possibility. He's charismatic, he's good on tv, intelligent. He's proved himself to the legislature. Can do a lot worse than Dale Bumpers.

J.B.: Why did he run against Fulbright?

Ledbetter: I have no idea. I don't know whether he knew he could win or I suppose. . . I don't know. I suppose that was it.

J.B.: In your opinion is there any truth, or how much truth to the story

that he ran for the senate because he was afraid Fulbright was so weak that if Faubus wanted it Faubus would win?

Ledbetter: I don't think so. I've never heard that. Where'd you pick that up? Don't give me the source, but where. . .

J.B.: Somewhere in Arkansas. I couldn't give you the source because I don't know where we heard it. We heard it a couple places.

W.D.V.: It was also suggested at the horse's mouth itself

[Interruption on tape.]

Ledbetter: Faubus and they could identify with Faubus but don't send him to Washington.

J.B.: That's what Faubus' poll showed?

Ledbetter: Yeah. I don't know why Bumpers ran. I assume Bumpers took a poll which showed he could win. I assume that's why he probably ran. I don't know. Fulbright did help him. I mean I'm a witness to that. It's not very admirable to run against a guy who's helped you. I'm not trying to rationalize Bumpers for that, but Bumpers is a very talented guy. No two ways about it. You know, pretty personally, but one thing that really impressed me about the guy. . . . I've helped him with some speech writing. I wrote part of his first inaugural talk, first inaugural speech he gave. And it came time for his second one. And [Browne] and I were over at the mansion and he said "Come on over here. Here's my second inaugural speech. See what you think about it?" I read through the thing and you know made a couple suggestions. But what he'd done, he'd written the second inaugural speech all on his own. By this time he has a stable of speech writers not just me. And I think he felt that once you're governor you get too powerful, you get too accustomed to the staff running things for you, you lose touch unless you occasionally do things like this for yourself. Now I was very impressed that he wrote the second inaugural speech. I'd say 98% he wrote himself. And despite



the fact that he had speech writers who could do it. I just think he should submit himself to the discipline of doing it every now and then or you lose touch. I mean he's that kind of guy.

. I just kind of like to write speeches. I just think that's a real impressive thing for a guy to do who is very busy to sit down and write his own, I'd say 98% he wrote himself. And he reads. I like the selection of books that he reads and this type thing. And he's got a damn good mind. He doesn't have a mind like Fulbright, but a good mind.

J.B.: What does he read?

Ledbetter: Oh he read Harpers, he read Atlantic, he read the Reporter before it folded, things like that. Unusual for a guy living in Charleston, Arkansas. Even if he did go to Northwestern, I guess.

[Interruption on tape.]

J.B.: ever really made you cry.

Ledbetter: Well, never really made you cry. But this was by , the state correction commissioner. Have anybody told you about that?

J.B.: No.

Ledbetter: Okay. Soloway is an impressive guy. He's out of West Virginia. He's a lawyer from West Virginia and he was in the West Virginia penal system. Was fired I think because some of the hard heads [hard hats?] had control there. And Rockefeller put him in here as correction commissioner. And a lot of good government support, legal and so on so forth. Now, many of the legislators didn't like him and wanted to get rid of him. And the question what was Bumpers going to do here. Fire Soloway or keep him on. Bear in mind too Soloway had no penal experience, no penal degrees. I mean his background as a lawyer although he was in the penal system in West Virginia.

And Bumpers kept him on for about, I'd say, six months over a lot of legislative pressure to get rid of him. And they finally replaced him with a guy from Texas who was in the Texas penal system . But I don't know if that qualifies or not.

J.B.: The Grant-Cooper thing. What's his involvement in that?

Ledbetter: I don't think much of anything. He handled the Grant-Cooper thing like everybody else. As a matter of fact I think he's had the most responsible position on Grant-Cooper. And he's also said that he approved the way the university'd handled the whole thing. Which nobody else, including Fulbright, has said. Grant-Cooper, you just can't touch. If you're a politician you've got to say fire that son of a bitch. In Arkansas there's no way you can live with a Grant-Cooper due process situation.

[Interruption on tape.]

J.B.: not been changed since '29?

Ledbetter: 1929.

J.B.: And it went from what to what? Maximum of. . . .?

Ledbetter: Oh what was it. I think maximum was. . . it went from. . . maximum was 5% I believe it went to 7% and brackets were raised all the way up the line. 1500, 2500 so on up the line. Yeah, that wasn't a very popular thing.

J.B.: It's now 7%?

Ledbetter: 7% is the highest rate now. But I think it was 5% and the brackets were raised, too. But as I say, it hadn't been increased since 1929. I'm trying to think, what else has he got through in terms of that?

[End of interview.]