

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

HON. CARL A. BRITSCHGI

California State Assemblyman, 1957 - 1970

March 22, April 5, and September 3, 1988
Sacramento, California

By Carole Hicke
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

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Carl A. Britschgi, Oral History Interview, Conducted 1988 by
Carole Hicke, Regional Oral History Office, University of
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March Fong Eu
Secretary of State

California State Archives
1020 O Street, Room 130
Sacramento, CA 95814

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

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The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor

Carole Hicke
Interviewer/Editor, State Government Oral History Program
Director, Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro History Project
Director, Morrison & Foerster History Project
M.A. San Francisco State University (history)
B.A. University of Iowa (economics)

Interview Time and Place:

March 22, 1988: Home of Carl A. Britschgi, Sacramento,
California; session of two hours.
April 5, 1988: Home of Carl A. Britschgi, Sacramento,
California; session of two hours.
September 3, 1988: Taped telephone conversation

Editing:

Hicke checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the introductory materials.

Mr. Britschgi reviewed the transcript and approved it with minor corrections.

Papers

No papers are available for deposit in the State Archives.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interviews are in the university archives at the University of California at Berkeley along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives in Sacramento.

Biographical Summary

Carl A. Britschgi was born on January 24, 1912, in Menlo Park, California. He attended St. Joseph's in Menlo Park, Redwood City Elementary School, Sequoia High School, and the University of Santa Clara, where he received a degree in business administration. He was the manager of a creamery in Redwood City, where he also served on the city Parks and Recreation Department and as a city councilman from 1942-1956.

A member of the Republican party, Mr. Britschgi served as state assemblyman from 1956-1970 and was on the state Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board from 1970-1978. He has been president of the Redwood City Lion's Club, and a member of Native Sons of the Golden West, Elks Club, Foresters of America, and the Cancer Society.

[Session 1, March 22, 1988]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

I. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Schools in Menlo Park and Redwood City; University of Santa Clara

HICKE: Well, maybe we can just start this morning, Mr. Britschgi, with a little bit of your background. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your parents, please?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. I was born in Menlo Park, January 24, 1912. My father and mother were dairying, ranching down the peninsula in those days. They ended up with five children. I was the last. My schooling consisted of attending St. Joseph's Grammar School in Menlo Park, a Catholic school, for four years. Then the Redwood City School System started a bus pickup for youngsters in Redwood City schools, and it came right by the ranch. So instead of walking two miles to school every day, my brother and I transferred. We were the last ones in grammar school. We transferred to the Redwood City School District, and I graduated from Redwood City. At that time [it] was called the Intermediate School in Redwood City.

Then, I attended Sequoia High School. I took up athletics as a hobby, and did very well with it.

HICKE: Track, was it?

BRITSCHGI: Football, basketball, and baseball. I received a scholarship to Santa Clara University, where I participated in all three of the sports. I graduated from the university with a bachelor's [degree] in business.

HICKE: You were interested in going into your family business?

BRITSCHGI: Well, not particularly. I majored in importing and exporting, and I was going to be a great importer. I thought that was great. And I took accounting as my secondary measure.

After graduating, I played football for the Olympic Club in San Francisco. The purpose of that was to get a job in San Francisco with all the big businessmen; they knew how to do all this. All the good football players played football for a year or two for the Olympic Club in San Francisco. And we played Stanford [University] and Cal [University of California, Berkeley], and it was a first-class football league. The only problem I ran into was I had a job with a company called the California Importing and Exporting Company. I was to go to work on Monday, but on Friday, there was a dock upheaval and a dock shooting, and three dock workers were killed.

HICKE: Was this the big waterfront strike?

BRITSCHGI: This was the big waterfront strike.
[Interruption]

BRITSCHGI: As a consequence of the shooting. . . . Harry Bridges was the head man of the waterfront all along the Pacific coast. He called a strike, and it started that following Monday. Not a ship left any port on the West Coast for two years, in or out of San Francisco.

HICKE: So much for the importing-exporting business.

BRITSCHGI: That's right, because there were no airplanes in those days in existence, and there was no way to import anything.

I was scheduled to take a boatload of cattle to Singapore. That was to be my first assignment. And it never left.

HICKE: That must have been a big disappointment.

BRITSCHGI: It sure was. Being in the dairy business, it would have been right up my alley, in a way, to handle the cattle aboard ship. Although I was never a seaman, nevertheless, I had that experience. So then I had to go back and work on the dairy ranch with my brothers. In the meantime, I had gotten married.

I have to tell you a funny little story. This is kind of cute. I graduated in June, then got married in August.

HICKE: This is 1934?

BRITSCHGI: Nineteen thirty-four. I got married in August. They said, "Well, there's a possibility that you might be able to go to work for a Fireman's Fund Insurance Company." So I applied at the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. Now you can imagine how times have changed when I tell you this little story. I go to the personnel department, and there was a rather elderly lady in there as the head of the personnel. She gave me a form to fill out, and of course, I signed on there, "married." Now at this date, I'm twenty-two years old, see.

She takes a look at me and she says, "Is this correct, you're married?" I said, "Yes, I am." She said, "We won't take anybody that's married twenty-two years young. No way." She tore the thing up and that was the end of my interview, but I'll tell you a little bit later about how I got even with Fireman's Fund. [Laughter] This will be kind of cute.

Family Dairy Business

BRITSCHGI: So I went back and worked at the ranch. We developed the milk business from there on. We made it larger. Because my dad had passed away in '35, and then we--I had three other brothers--we developed a pretty good business.

HICKE: Was it in the western part of the county?

BRITSCHGI: Well, we had a No, it was right in Menlo Park. Believe it or not, right next to the Flood Estate, where we developed it. Then we transferred our herd down to St. Joseph's College in Los Altos, in the hills there.

From there, we transferred it over to Manteca, where we built a huge herd. We were milking 400 head of cattle. So we had a very big operation, and we hauled our milk back and forth in tank trucks.

So much for that part of it, and my education. While I was back in Redwood City working for the family, they needed some help at Sequoia High School. In fact, I coached one year at Sequoia High School, because everybody went into the war. The soph-frosh football team didn't have any coach, so I donated my time for a year as a football coach with these youngsters. I gave that up afterwards; they finally got a coach the next year. I didn't have the credentials as a teacher, so I couldn't stay there.

II. EARLY POLITICAL CAREER

Redwood City Park and Recreation Commission, 1940

BRITSCHGI: Then after that, I was appointed to the Park and Recreation Commission in Redwood City.

HICKE: This was 1940, I have.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, around in there. I served on there for about a year and a half. Then, a funny incident about how things happen: one of the city councilmen didn't like a fellow member he had on there who was from Texas. This Texan was quite a character. So they wanted me to run to beat this Texan on the city council.

Well, I knew everybody in Redwood City, and [those] whom I didn't know took milk from us and owed us money for milk, so [Laughter] we were friendly with everybody. So when the vote was tallied, I came in second high out of the four who were to be elected. I beat one of the former mayors who was running. The guy from Texas won; he came in fourth. [Laughter] So that got me started on the city council.

HICKE: Well, let me back up just a minute. How did you get interested in the Park and Rec?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I was an athlete, so it was hand in glove.
 HICKE: And somebody just knew you . . .
 BRITSCHGI: And asked me if I'd be interested in serving on there.
 So I was appointed by the city council.

City Council, 1942

HICKE: So then you were drafted to run for the city council.
 BRITSCHGI: Yes, basically that's what happened. But the trouble
 was, I beat the wrong guy. [Laughter]

After that, why, I was elected to serve sixteen
 years on there. I only served fourteen, because at the
 end I ran for the assembly, and picked that up. So I
 really served fourteen out of the sixteen years on there,
 on the city council. I got to know a lot of people. I
 was involved in everything; you joined the Elks Club and
 you joined the Lions Club and you joined the Native Sons
 and you joined this and you joined that. I just got
 around, got to know everybody. I was involved in a lot
 of things.

I played softball around the area there in a semi-
 professional baseball league. So I was well known on the
 peninsula for playing football and everything else. I
 did very well in playing football down at Santa Clara. I
 was real happy with that. I was kind of a country boy,
 hometown-kid-makes-good type, you know? So that's how I
 really got started in politics.

HICKE: Well, how many people were on the city council?
 BRITSCHGI: Seven.
 HICKE: Did you sort of hone your political skills at that point,
 negotiating? Was there any big issue?
 BRITSCHGI: The biggest mistake ever made in my life. I was on the
 city council, and Earl Warren was the governor at that
 point. I get a phone call from him. My nickname is Ike,
 incidentally. I was known by Ike more than I was ever
 known by Carl.

So he called me up on the phone and he said. . . .
 our supervisor from the district had passed away, and the
 governor had to make an appointment. He called me up and

wanted to know if I wanted to be supervisor. I said, "Oh, heck, I've only been on the city council two years and I don't know enough about all this stuff. Why don't you appoint [William] Bill Werder? He's been on there two more years prior to my being on there, and he would probably be better qualified." So he appoints Bill Werder to the board of supervisors instead of myself. [Laughter] Which was perfectly fine.

So that's how Bill got on the board of supervisors, and I stayed on the city council.

Election to State Assembly

BRITSCHGI: [Richard] Dolwig was the assemblyman, at that point. We had a senator--I'm trying to think; I forget what his name was--he had been on there for twenty-eight years or so as a senator from the San Mateo County.

HICKE: I can look that up.¹

BRITSCHGI: I've forgotten what his name was. Well, Dolwig got tired of being an assemblyman, because he was on there about fourteen years also before I came around. So he challenged this fellow. in the election. The other fellow withdrew, because he said he'd been on there long enough, and he wasn't interested in it any more. Dolwig got that job, and that left the assembly open.

A lot of the city councilmen put their names in for the candidate for assembly. Well, I was a Republican at that point. So we had to go before the Republican [County] Central Committee, and they finally endorsed me above the other city council people who were interested in it.

HICKE: Who was on the Central Committee, do you recall?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, they had a whole lot of them. They were a large group. It was for the whole county; it was countywide. The most important one that was on that was Lucile

1. State Senator Harry L. Parkman, Twenty-First District.

Hosmer, but she's now dead. She was from San Carlos. Lucile Hosmer, she was Miss Republican. Whatever Lucile said was it. And she kind of liked me, so I won the endorsement from them. After that, it was a cinch, because it was such a Republican district it wasn't even funny. You only had to have "Republican" after your name. But I sure was surprised when I ran for that job, because I had a tremendous amount of good friends in Redwood City who I didn't even know were Democrats, and they just turned away from me like I was ice water. [Laughter] It's amazing. Politics is a funny game; it's a funny game. Some of my best friends turned away and went for the opponent. And he didn't have a chance of winning.

HICKE: Who was your opponent?

BRITSCHGI: The first man was a fellow by the name of Alan Baldwin, and he was a schoolteacher in the Redwood City school system. I'll give you a little hint about him. I'll tell you why he didn't win: because he had a slogan, "Baldwin is a Pippin." Baldwin was an apple, and a Pippin apple is not a Baldwin apple. A Baldwin apple is altogether different from a Pippin apple. [Laughter] I think if you just stop to think about it, it shows you what a candidate And he was far out, really an out-in-left-field kind of a schoolteacher. It was just a cinch to get elected, I couldn't miss.

Golly sakes, I had Hillsborough, part of Burlingame, all of San Mateo, all of Belmont, all of San Carlos, Redwood City, Atherton, Woodside, Portola Valley, how could I lose? Menlo Park, and of course I had East Palo Alto, too. Then I had Half Moon Bay and Pescadero and San Gregorio over on the other side of the mountains. That was my district. It was probably 80 percent Republican, I'd assume, at that time. I still had some good Democrat friends that always voted for me.

HICKE: But there was cross-filing at that time, wasn't there?

BRITSCHGI: Started, first time, yes. I almost won on the Democrat side, too, because I cross-filed on that first time up. Then after that, we had a big fight in the legislature,

and they took it out two years later. I guess it was the second year. The second election I had.

HICKE: Fifty-nine.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. I think that was it. I think it was '61. It was during that time we took it out. The reason they took it out is, when I first went to the legislature, we had fifty-six Republicans, out of the eighty. So the Republicans did as they darned pleased. But when [Governor Edmund G.] Pat Brown [Sr.] came in with the landslide, one man, one vote deal, why, things kind of changed. We were the minority; we had about twenty-five. I think we were down as low as twenty-three at one point, Republicans. The rest of them were all Democrats. And then they changed all these various laws.

HICKE: Reapportionment.

BRITSCHGI: The whole works, everything. Nothing you can do about it. You can sit there and twiddle your thumbs, and that was the extent of it. We used to scream and holler and stomp around; it didn't do you a bit of good. No way.

Mayor of Redwood City, 1950-52; Formation of Sequoia Hospital District

HICKE: Well, let me just back up to one thing that we missed. You were mayor of Redwood City in 1950 to '52.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, one term.

HICKE: Was there anything significant? I know you were instrumental in founding the Sequoia Hospital.

BRITSCHGI: Sequoia Hospital, I worked on that. They appointed me as a council member on that. I'm really proud; I think we did a marvelous job. We met every Tuesday night for almost two years before we laid that out before the public to vote on it. It encompassed more than Redwood City; it took in the entire Sequoia High School boundary districts, which included East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Woodside, and part of San Carlos and Belmont. And Redwood City, of course. Atherton. We put that up for election. It was such a good thing that we won that election 11 to 1. That was the opposition.

HICKE: Was it bonds? Is that what you're talking about, bonds?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. We had to have the bond approval. When we built that hospital, we built it for \$2,500 per room, when we put the original hospital up.

HICKE: That's probably what it costs to stay there per night now. [Laughter]

BRITSCHGI: That's just about right, absolutely scary. I've always been proud of that hospital. I kind of watch it every once in a while, but I think what has happened to Sequoia Hospital at the present time is that it's sort of an offshoot now to Stanford. They use Sequoia as sort of a prep ground for what happens to you when you go into Stanford Hospital. All the doctors that work out of Stanford work out of Sequoia. They're basically involved, I think, mostly in heart-specialist types.

Too many specialists came in. You know, the reason that we got interested in the hospital in the first place was because everybody went in to the service. We had three doctors in Redwood City. Right down to nothing. Doctors just weren't around. There were none.

So we started the hospital up, and before we knew it, I think there's over 400 doctors operating out of Sequoia Hospital now at the present time. It's quite a difference. Yes, they've done some wonderful things at Sequoia. I'm not a bit ashamed of Sequoia Hospital. But now it's being operated by doctors. We did not allow a doctor to be on the board of directors. But now the doctors have infiltrated onto that. I think they have too many doctors on there.

Last night, they were arguing about putting up, I don't know whether it was an outpatient or whether it was some parking or some darn thing down there, and Dr. [Herman] Pepper was the only one who seems to be putting any of the opposition to what the new doctors are wanting to do there. It's mostly a doctors-oriented place right now, and I think that's where some people kind of resent it just a little bit. Our original board of directors were all lay people. Then we had a good board, a good director running the hospital, Max Greffin. He was tops.

I believe he's dead at the present time. He was an excellent operator, in my opinion. A marvelous job there, a marvelous job. So I'm happy.

And then Burlingame was so interested in what we did; their Burlingame Peninsula Hospital is a carbon copy of ours, down to the same district-procedure type. We were the second hospital in the state of California under this district plan. It was a new law enacted by the legislature, and it allowed us to encompass this district into the school boundary. We had to make our base broader for tax purposes.

HICKE: It was called a hospital district, or something like that?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. That's how it started.

HICKE: And that was where the vote was to be for the bonds, that's the purpose of it?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. Because Redwood City was too small, and couldn't support a hospital in itself and building it, you know. I've forgotten what our bond issue was, but it wasn't too much. I think we started with 200 beds. If it was \$500,000 I think it was big at that time. Of course, now it's nothing; \$500,000 isn't anything. I know that they just put in a radiation room down there that cost almost a million dollars, just for that lead room. Costs are just unbelievable in the hospitals; it's terrible. So I was happy to participate in that. That brings you back to where you were.

HICKE: Right. And I also have a note that you were awarded the Meritorious Citation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. I always got along real well with them, my veterans. Because I was never a veteran, and I always tried to do as best I could for them.

HICKE: That was for helping the veterans?

BRITSCHGI: Helping the veterans on their way along. It was nothing outstanding.

HICKE: And you were also interested in lower taxes; I think that was one of your issues.

BRITSCHGI: [Laughter] We all did that in those days. Everybody tried to cut down taxes. I was interested in your

article there.¹ San Mateo County was an unusual---it still is---an unusual area. San Mateo County doesn't have the problems that most of the other areas have. I guess it's because of the affluent nature of the people there.

Some of the minorities are now starting to come in there, but in prior years, in the fifties, we never had basically much in the way of minorities. East Palo Alto was a little bit, but then the minorities flocked into there, and they all seemed to congregate right there and stay there. But we never had any of these crazy problems that you hear about today.

III. STATE ASSEMBLYMAN: 1957-1970

Education Committee; Textbooks for the Blind

BRITSCHGI: And I always thought, well, what am I doing up here as a legislator? Really, what my big hue and cry was that I was going to go up there to help education.

HICKE: And you did, I think.

BRITSCHGI: Well, we tried, I'll tell you, we tried. And that was the most frustrating thing I ever tried to do in my life. I got myself appointed on the Education Committee, because you had to make requests for the various committees, and if you were in good stead with the speaker, you might get your committees and you might not. But I was fortunate enough. I was interested in agriculture; of course I got on that. And I was interested in tax, I got on the Rev [Revenue] and Tax Committee. I got good committees to start with. I got on this Education Committee, and out of the 2000 bills that came up before the legislature, 500 of them pertained to education.

HICKE: Is this your first session you're talking about?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, first session.

1. See following page.

HICKE: You certainly had your work cut out for you, didn't you?
 BRITSCHGI: Oh, it was just awful. You know, we used to meet at least five days a week. This is being recorded so I have to be careful. These very nice legislators of today, they didn't do the work that we did.
 HICKE: Well, that's because the staff has increased so much.
 BRITSCHGI: It's terrible. If you want to argue about staff, I can argue very much against staff.
 HICKE: Oh, is that right?
 BRITSCHGI: Very much so.

Anyhow, we had these 500 bills, and that took up most of my time. We met twice a week on that committee. We'd meet like three o'clock in the afternoon until six, and then come back at seven or eight and sit there until twelve o'clock at night. We always tried to quit at twelve, working on those bills, trying to handle the bills. And you know what was most irritating? It never did a thing for the kids.

HICKE: It was all for teachers, or whatever?
 BRITSCHGI: University of California was first. When I went to the legislature, the University of California was almighty. You don't cross them; you just did everything that they wanted. And they had the in to the legislators, how I don't know, but they had it. They got all their required money that they wanted. Then we had the state colleges, and they were little peons. The university would fight every dime that the state colleges wanted, because it should go to the university. Then we had the junior colleges, as they were called in those days. Now it's the community college, but then it was the junior college. They had to fight for theirs.

Then you came into the secondary educational group. Then you came into the elementary, and then you came into the districts. By the time you got through, then you got down to the PTA [Parent Teacher Association] and the CTA [California Teachers Association], and there were eight different groups all fighting for money, and nothing ever went to the kids. I tell you, I was so frustrated I finally gave it up. I threw up my hands and said, "To

heck with this. I don't want any more of it." I couldn't take it any more. I think I served on there six years, or something like that. Just could not accomplish what we wanted.

HICKE: Was anybody else on the committee interested in the same things you were?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. See, the problem that we had and the problem in that legislative process and why we had the 500 different bills is that every little community had a school district. We had at that time, I believe it was almost 6,000 school districts in the state of California. Now you see, every one qualifies for something under a different denomination type of thing.

Well, I'll give you an example. City and County of San Francisco is the only city and county complete in the state of California. So every bill had to be written especially for the City and County of San Francisco. You couldn't just say a school district of 400,000 people, because some of that was in the county and some was in the city, but in San Francisco it was city and the county, all in one, contiguous.

Then we had all these crazy school districts that people wanted to start up, and didn't know why they had them, for various reasons. I would assume we had probably sixty or seventy school districts in San Mateo County. I think you've still got about thirty of them in there. We tried to cut them; at one point I think we cut them in half. Now, whether they're growing up or depleting or merging together the way they were supposed to, I don't know. I've never kept up with it. After a while I gave it up. But it was so frustrating.

You had special school districts from Mono County or you had a special district for Alpine County, which was a county of 125 people when I first went into the legislature. Then you come into school districts that had over 200,000, so you wrote special legislation for that. Then as soon as that worked out pretty good, another school district said, "Hey, we'd like to have that." Then you had to come back the next year and write

another piece of legislation to include that into that particular district, so they could have reading, writing, arithmetic, and maybe aid for the blind, which I did. I had some good legislation. I did participate a lot in aid to the blind.

As a matter of fact, if I remember correctly, I carried the major bills on creating textbooks for the blind. They never had them. They didn't have any textbooks for the blind. It's hard to realize these things, but there were no textbooks for the blind. And we allowed school money for that.

But then of course, I had a limit too; I had one little district. I think it was in south of Redwood City. It was in the Redwood City School District. It was down at Hoover School where we first got involved in that. I went down there and these little blind youngsters were there. The teacher said, "Well, we don't have any books to teach these kids." So I had to put in a bill to allow the school district to spend money to purchase Braille books for the youngsters. And of course they weren't even making the things at that point.

HICKE: That's incredible.

BRITSCHGI: Yes.

HICKE: Where did you go for them?

BRITSCHGI: Well, they finally. . . . I think they went back East and found somebody was making Braille books. They finally got some Braille books for the blind, for those little kids to be able to get an education out of it. So that was one thing. But that was so frustrating, in trying to solve those problems for the schools.

HICKE: Were there so many little school districts because everybody wanted control?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, that's what it was. The school board figured they could kind of control their areas to do what they wanted and so forth and so on. It was interesting but so frustrating. So really, the major legislation I had in San Mateo County, and all three of us carried (we had two assemblymen and one senator, Dick Dolwig, and a fellow by

the name of [Assemblyman Louis] Lou Francis and myself) laws basically pertaining to the schools.

We always met before we went into the general session of the year. The three of us met with the school people, and they would give us their problems. If it was something that was a legal problem, Dolwig would handle it on the senate side and Lou Francis on the assembly side, because they were both attorneys. Then I carried some of the other things that didn't require legal expertise. That's how we split it up. But really San Mateo County's only problem was education at that point.

HICKE: I have a feeling I have a lot to thank you for, for my children's education.

BRITSCHGI: Well, we tried. I think we tried. Everybody seemed to be happy with us; we didn't have any great opposition in any way. Nobody was mad at us because we weren't doing our job. I think the three of us represented San Mateo County very well.

Transportation; Legislative Representation Committee

BRITSCHGI: And then our next big step was transportation.

[End Tape 1 Side A]

[Begin Tape 1 Side B]

BRITSCHGI: That was the next problem we had in San Mateo County, and we really worked hard. We spent a lot of time. The thing that we created in San Mateo County, and every time I drive on it I'm so happy, was the Junipero Serra Freeway: [Highway] 280. That was to me a major accomplishment in San Mateo County. People may not think so, but thank heavens we have it. You wouldn't get anywhere if we didn't have that.

HICKE: And it's one of the more beautiful drives you can take.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. Later on, I carried legislation to connect, in Redwood City, the Bayshore Freeway with 280, on Woodside Road. That took a lot of special legislation. We got

that going; that helped that situation. And I got involved with the Highway, oh the one that goes over to Half Moon Bay, I've forgotten the number of it.

HICKE: Highway 92.

BRITSCHGI: Whatever it is. We only got it over to El Camino, later to the Bayshore completely as a freeway. They just finished work a couple of years ago. But we started that mess. We finally got that going over there. But we never could get enough money to go over to Half Moon Bay. There was always an objection to building a decent road over to Half Moon Bay, and that road is just a mess, a complete mess. Going over the top of the hill from the lakes, I'm speaking of, from 280 across the lakes over the top of the hill. That's terrible. People didn't want it done. There was objection to it. They felt they'd develop too fast, and those people were farmers and they didn't basically care too much for it.

I think there's a different attitude at the present time, but it's too late now.

HICKE: Did you have to deal with the Senate Transportation Committee on these matters?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. Yes. But I had a cinch on that, because my first wife--this is my second wife here--my first wife was a very good friend of Senator Randolph Collier, and anything that I wanted and got over to the senate never had a problem with Senator Collier. Because our wives were very close friends. And I can tell you just the difference of opinions.

Her name was Aida Collier, and my wife's name was Violet, and the two of them were buddy-buddies. They always ran around together, and they used to go antiquing and all this kind of stuff. They didn't have anything to do, because they were living up here.

One day the two of them were coming out of the Senator Hotel, and Mrs. Hosmer, "Mrs. Republican from San Mateo County," bumped into my wife. My wife introduced her to Mrs. Collier, and it was a very icy situation because at that point Randy Collier, who was a Republican, changed to a Democrat.

Well, after the whole procedure was all over, why she gets hold of my wife and says to her, "Violet, it is absolutely ridiculous for you to be seen with Mrs. Collier. You're hurting your husband; you're not doing anyone a bit of good by being seen with Mrs. Collier." Now can you imagine me taking a bill over to Randy, if he knew that I said that Violet couldn't be friends with Mrs. Collier? In those days, your friends helped you. And that's why I was. . . . I'm going to say, I was kind of successful in the legislature. I never had any problems, because I was friendly and had friends. And it's the friends that helped you. If you had a bill and you wanted it, no problems whatsoever.

HICKE: Can you give me some specific examples? Who else did you deal with closely?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, the chairman of the Government Committee. I can't tell you his name right now, because it won't come to me.

HICKE: I can look that up.

BRITSCHGI: There's a highway named 680; it's named after him halfway down here. As a matter of fact, I was closer to all the senators than I was to the assemblymen.

HICKE: Really?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. All of them were good friends of mine. I was accepted in the senate more than I was in the assembly. Odd. And there's some other reasons for it, but I had no problems with my legislation over on the senate side. Nothing. So transportation was a cinch for me to get things by on the senate, because I had a real good friend there. I've forgotten what the heck this man's name was. He's still alive, too. He's from Benicia. He was a newspaper man from down in Benicia.

HICKE: Okay, let's see. You chaired the Legislative Representation.

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. That wasn't much of a committee in those days. We never had problems with the lobbyists, as they are having now. Those people donated to your campaign a little bit, but it was nothing to what I read in the paper, and it makes me sick. I hate to even admit that I

was connected with the legislature, from what is going on now.

The Local Campaign Trail; The 1964 Republican National Convention

BRITSCHGI: Now I can tell you my facts of life. First time I ran for the legislature, in 1956, I didn't know anything about raising money. The first time I ran for the city council in Redwood City I spent \$24! [Laughter] Twenty-four dollars.

HICKE: The last of the big spenders in the West!

BRITSCHGI: Yes, \$24, and I got elected to the city council of Redwood City for \$24. So now we come to the state assembly, and the district is much bigger than Redwood City. As I told you, it was San Mateo, Burlingame, and so forth. So I had to run some newspaper ads in the San Mateo Times, of course, and over in the Half Moon Bay Review, and in the Redwood City Tribune. And also in the Palo Alto Times, because the Tribune and the Times were basically connected together, and they came into Menlo Park and Atherton, so I wanted to cover them.

I needed some money, and where the heck am I going to get this money? I had \$50 of my own, and all of a sudden people started sending me some money. I ended up, I had \$1,500. And that's what it cost me to get elected to the legislature the first time I ran. I spent \$1,500. I thought, "Boy, that's great."

Now, I go to the legislature. The word of advice that you get going to the legislature, coming in as a freshman, is "Keep your mouth shut, keep your eyes open, sit and listen and learn." I spent two years doing that, because we had what we called the long session and the short session, the budget session. We went up there in January, I guess it was; spent a month introducing bills; went home for a month while the Legislative Counsel went over the bills and got them all set. Then we came back, and I thought, "What the heck? How can I get reelected to the legislature when I haven't really done anything?"

I didn't carry any legislation to amount to anything the first two years.

I went home, and every street I went down, "I hear you're doing a marvelous job!" I kind of scratched my head, and I was wondering, were they talking to the right person? [Laughter]

So now the second election comes along. I'm getting these donations from all these various places like \$100 and \$50 and \$100 and so forth, and ended up I had \$4,500. A considerable improvement.

HICKE:

BRITSCHGI:

Yes. Now what am I going to do with the \$4,500? I don't need this. So I went to a central committee meeting, and I told them that I had \$4,500, and they said, "Ah hah, that's a lot of money, and that's too much for you. We're going to take some of that away from you, and we're going to give it to Lou Francis on the north end, who is not getting as much money as you are getting, and he needs it up there." That was basically a Democratic district up there.

So they took money away from me, and I said, "Ah hah, that's the last time the central committee is going to get any money from me. I'm not going to go through the central committee; I'm going to do my own fund raising and I'll handle my own money." And I did that ever since. It just kind of bothered me. I think I only spent \$2,500 on the next election. But I didn't have to spend it. Because I really had no opposition whatsoever. So I was rather fortunate. The Democrats. . . . well, I had another candidate, a man by the name of Martin Sweeney; he was a realtor. I think they took turns between he and Alan Baldwin. I think I had Alan Baldwin as an opponent two or three times, and I had Martin Sweeney two or three times. As Martin Sweeney put it, it kind of shook me up in a way.

I said to him one day, "Martin, what in the heaven's name are you running against me for?" I was looking for a free ride, see, so I wouldn't even have to spend a dime. I said, "What are you running against me for?"

He said, "Did you ever stop to think if you might die?" And that kind of shook me up. Here this son of a gun, he's waiting for me to die so he can walk right in as the only candidate, see? [Laughter] It bothered me a little bit. But anyway, Martin Sweeney has passed away since, and I'm still alive. [Laughter] So that was the kind of candidate I ran against. I had no great opposition.

HICKE: Well, I noticed you were endorsed by the state Teamster's Union, and the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of International Organizations].

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I got along fairly well with the unions, to quite a point. But a very interesting thing happened to me on one of my campaigns, and I might as well tell you this. In the year that I was up here, I was on the State Committee for [New York Governor Nelson] Rocky Rockefeller. There were five legislators that formed his big advisory committee. Rocky was a wonderful man. You had to know him to really appreciate the greatness in that man. A lot of people despised him. I found him very, very interesting, and quite a person. He was a doll, as far as I was concerned.

Well, the reason I got mad at the Republican party was we had the national convention in the Cow Palace. I couldn't even get a ticket to the thing. The legislators were just rags as far as the national committee was concerned; we didn't get a ticket. But there was a lady who belonged to the central committee who had a ticket, and she gave it to me one day. I went to the Cow Palace, and we sat way up in the top rows, and it was the day that Rockefeller was going to talk and [U.S. Senator Barry] Goldwater was going to talk.

Well, I wasn't much of a Goldwater fan to start with. I just didn't like his conservatism; I think it was ridiculous. But Rockefeller gave his speech, and as he got up to make his speech, the Goldwater people had people stationed in that building. It was jammed, the whole place. I guess it holds 18-19,000 people. They had monitors jumping up in the aisle when Rockefeller got

up to speak. They turned around and I was sitting right there looking this man in the face---I never saw him before, don't know who he was or where he came from---yelling, "He's a Communist! He's a Communist! He's a Communist!" That's what they did to Rocky. This went on for fifteen minutes. That man had to stand there, and I was mortified. I almost wanted to get up and walk out of the darned place.

That made me more of a Rockefeller fan than ever. Then it turned out that Rockefeller was defeated by Goldwater, so Goldwater was the Republican candidate. I refused to have anything to do with him. I went to a meeting. We used to have a lot of coffee parties for candidates or whatnot; this was in the campaign. Thank heavens this was the Friday before the election. I went down to Menlo Park to this coffee party, and there were four young ladies who came to the coffee party. The lady who puts the coffee party on invites the people in the neighborhood to come in and meet their legislators.

I don't know whether this was a plant or not, could have easily been, but these four young ladies came and they said that they were Democrats, and they didn't like Goldwater, and they didn't like Lyndon Johnson. How should they vote when they go to the polls?

I said, "Well, if I were you, and you're a Democrat, I'd vote as a Democrat." The word sort of spread around pretty fast. Thank heavens it was Friday before Tuesday's election day.

Then to make matters worse, I was endorsed by the CDC [California Democratic Council] of East Palo Alto. Because, this man that I mentioned, Martin Sweeney, was a realtor. He was against the Rumford Fair Housing Act. Well, I had voted for the Rumford Fair Housing Act, to put it on the ballot to start with. So when I went home, I had to support it. Because I supported the [Rumford] Fair Housing Act¹, I was endorsed by the CDC, and that's

1. Ch. 1853, 1963 Cal. Stat., p. 3823, Sec. 2.

what helped some of the labor votes that came along also.

Lo and behold, why they had a parade down in East Palo Alto. This fellow had a bullhorn, and I was riding in the car with him in this parade, and this was a real strict Democrat parade, CDC, couldn't be any more Democrat than what they thought they were at that point. He had this bullhorn, and he'd say, "Come on out and meet your assemblyman, the only Republican that voted for the Fair Housing Act. All the Way with LBJ!" About that point, I start to slide under the dashboard. [Laughter]

HICKE:

You found yourself in strange company.

BRITSCHGI:

I certainly did. Politics made funny bedfellows, I can tell you. I was sort of happy when that afternoon was over. As it turned out, Martin Sweeney got more votes out of east Palo Alto than I did. He beat me down there. I got about 1,500 votes, and I think he got 2,000 votes out of there. But it was 1,500 votes that I hadn't received the two years before. So I figured I accomplished a little bit down there. [Laughter] But it was funny. It was really funny. I kind of enjoy every time I look back and think about it; it really kind of gives me a little chuckle, how funny politics are.

HICKE:

Well, since you brought up the Rumford Fair Housing Act, tell me about that.

BRITSCHGI:

Well, that was Pat Brown's baby. [Assemblyman William Byron] Rumford carried the bill, he had carried it several times before.

HICKE:

This was 1963, so we're skipping up for that.

BRITSCHGI:

Yes. Byron Rumford was a Negro from Berkeley, and a very well-educated man. He was a pharmacist, owned a pharmacy business in the Berkeley area. He carried this act. That bill had always really gotten by the assembly, but it never, never, ever got by the senate, well, from the time I got there to '63; so it was three or four times, four times.

HICKE:

Four times it was proposed, and went through the assembly?

BRITSCHGI:

I think it was about three or four times. It would get by the assembly but not the senate. It didn't get by the

first assembly, because there were 57. At that point we were 57 Republicans. But it couldn't get by the senate.

So Pat Brown invited all these minority groups to come to the capitol. This was our first experience in the legislature of sit-ins, and it was a nasty situation. All these minority people came up there and occupied the halls of the legislature. There were various mixed-racial-marriage types that were there, brought their children with them. One family of four. And the last straw, and I don't know whether you've ever been to the capitol, but the rotunda has the banister up, guard rail I guess you might call it, so you don't fall down the well.

HICKE: From the second floor?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. Can you imagine seeing diapers hanging on that to dry? And the odor, and what not? It was just absolutely awful. At least they accomplished their purpose. The senate finally voted the bill out, and of course Pat Brown signed it, and it got on for the vote of the people. But that lasted about two months, and it was ugly.

HICKE: They were there for two months?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. They used the bathrooms; you couldn't even go into a bathroom; it was just absolutely filthy. They tried to keep them clean, but it was just a mess. They slept there. They had sleeping bags. They slept on the marble floors and stayed there all night and all day. Never left the place. It was just terrible. I felt they were defeating their purpose, but apparently they got it on the ballot. And away it went.

Republican Leadership and Caucus Voting

BRITSCHGI: When you're controlled by the caucus action of either party, it's bad. It's bad for the legislators. I don't know whether I was--I didn't care really--whether I was in favor of the Rumford Act or not. The only way it got on the ballot was that the Democrats needed some more

votes to put it on the ballot. I think they needed two-thirds votes; it needed fifty-six votes they didn't have.

So the Republican leadership said, "Let's put this on the ballot, so that we don't have all the minorities against us when we're trying to elect Republican assemblymen. And therefore, if some people will stand up and, say you have a safe district, and if you vote for it then it won't make any difference in your district, we'd like to have you vote for it." So I didn't have any problems, I had East Palo Alto. I didn't have any problems. So I voted for it. [Assemblyman] Alan Pattee voted for it in Monterey, and [Assemblyman] Frank Bellotti voted for it. I think we had twelve Republicans that voted for it.

What I'm trying to say is that the Republican party wasn't basically interested in the individual who voted for it. They were interested in the fact that they could go back and say, "We Republicans are not against the Rumford Act. We had twelve votes for it." And they took a caucus position on the bill, that we were to vote for it, so we voted for it.

HICKE: Who is "they"?

BRITSCHGI: The leadership, in the Republican party at that point.

HICKE: Would you care to specify, or would you rather not?

BRITSCHGI: Ah, well, you could tell who they were anyway. It was [Assemblyman Robert] Monagan and [Assemblyman Don] Mulford, and the caucus chairman, you know, and the minority whip and so forth. And that's the way things are--well, to some extent--I'm not giving any secret away from the Republicans. The Democrats do the same thing. [Speaker] Willie Brown is trying to do that right now, and that's why he's having the fight about the Gang of Five. They've told Willie Brown to go to the dickens, "We're not going to follow your caucus positions."

I think caucus positions are terrible. Absolutely terrible, and they should never be forced on any legislator, no way. I've often thought that we'd have much better legislation if everybody ran as an independent, and you could go up there and vote any way

you wanted, as long as you're representing your people. Now, if your people don't like the way you vote, you will soon find out about it. But to have to vote for something because somebody makes a motion that this is a caucus position. . . . out of the forty guys, maybe thirty of them say, "This is what the Republicans will do." The other guys, whether they get hurt or not, are stuck with it. That's bad. That's what bothers me on it.

That's what happens on a lot of this legislation that goes along now in the caucus position. I noticed they're doing it more and more all the time. I think it's kind of stupid. There ought to be a better way. Well, I know there's a better way. If you go up there, and vote as a free person. . . . when I went to the legislature, I thought I was going to go up there and represent San Mateo County, but sometimes I even had to vote against San Mateo County.

HICKE: Because of the caucus?

BRITSCHGI: Caucus position. It was ridiculous. I don't think it's good legislation at all. I don't think it's a good procedure.

HICKE: Well, there are three choices in ways to vote: you can vote the caucus position; you can vote your own conscience; or you can vote according to what you believe your constituency wants. How do you choose between those?

BRITSCHGI: Well, that's where you are. Most of the time, you had to vote the caucus position. Then you went home and said that if you had an opportunity to vote your own way. . . . you knew that you were voting wrong but you were tied to a caucus position. And it's not good legislation. I think the people at home have just as much right to be represented as everybody else on a vote. But if you don't vote that way, why they're not being represented. Or if your hands are tied, basically. So that creates a problem, a real serious problem.

HICKE: Did the Republican caucus become stronger as a result of the reapportionment and the rise in the Democratic strength?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I don't think so. I think the Republicans are getting stronger now because the Democrats have done such a poor job in what's going on at the capitol. Everybody despises what's going on at the capitol. Just reading yesterday---I don't know whether those facts are true, and I assume if the [Sacramento] Bee prints them, they must be true, because the Bee would never print anything in favor of the Republicans---but according to the article I read yesterday, the registration now is exactly even in the state of California. I think they said something like 45 to 45. The Republicans are climbing up, the Democrats are going down because of the nonsense that's going on. People are getting fed up with it.

You don't elect legislators any more; you elect people who raise money. It's just awful. There is no way you can elect a good legislator, a new, good legislator today. And there are hundreds of young people that are serving on city councils or supervisors or other jobs that they're holding in their area. But when you have a person sitting there with a purse string of a million dollars or half-a-million dollars, how can you fight that? There's no way in the world that you can win that election. If it is, it has to be a miracle. The incumbent would probably have to commit murder to lose, and then maybe he wouldn't lose anyway.

It's just terrible about what's going on right now as far as legislators are concerned. There are so many tricks to it, demands. We have demands, and I have received demands from legislators who do not have opposition for money. I've been involved in it. We had to do it because we wanted some legislation for a certain thing.

I'm not going to mention it, because it's right here at home. We had to contribute to that guy; that was his price, if we wanted to get an amendment to a bill that involved our lake out here. And he had no opposition.

Now, that man shouldn't even clink a dime. He had no opposition. He doesn't need any money. But they take that money then and hand it out to other people. That just absolutely has to be corrected.

So I could go on and on and on.

Colleagues in the Legislature

- HICKE: Well, let's back way up to your beginning responsibilities when you first got into the legislature, and who were your colleagues? Who was in your class, so to speak?
- BRITSCHGI: Oh, we went in there with fourteen new legislators when I went in at that point. Lou Francis, of, course from the north end; he was in there at the same time that I went in. We were both new. And there were a lot of southern California legislators that came in. There was a fellow by the name of [Assemblyman William] Bill Bagley that came in from Marin County, I believe at the same time. But fourteen of us.
- HICKE: How did you learn the ropes? You just sat and listened, you said, a lot of times.
- BRITSCHGI: You sat, looked, and listened. That's the way you learned.
- HICKE: How did you meet so many people, especially senators?
- BRITSCHGI: At social events, perhaps. We had a lot of social events. The legislature did a lot of work, but they had a lot of social events. If you were acceptable as a kind of a nice guy, you were invited to a social event. They used to have all kinds of barbecues, and things like that after the session was finished at night. And you got to know these people, and you went on little jaunts with them here and there, some committees . . .

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

BRITSCHGI: When we were serving on the committees, we would meet other legislators, and we always had a funny remark. People would come up and watch the legislative session from time to time, and two of the men would be arguing like the dickens over a certain bill, and it would seem like they were almost about to get into a fist fight. Then at noontime, they would be over at Bidell's Bar and having a drink, and they'd be there with their arms around each other.

The funny story was that this lady went up to her assemblyman and said, "I don't understand. How could you be fighting with this man so much about this bill, and he was so mean to you, how could you put your arm around him and have a drink with him at the bar?" The guy said, "Oh, I forgot. I need his vote this afternoon on another bill." [Laughter] So you created a lot of friends. If you came up here to be mad at anybody, forget it. We used to say this: you never get mad, you get even.

Ways and Means Committee: Fireman's Fund Story

BRITSCHGI: Now, let me refer back to the Fireman's fund.

HICKE: Oh, okay. I was wondering about the end of that story.

BRITSCHGI: This is very interesting. I was serving on the Ways and Means Committee, and any bill that pertained to money in any way had to go before the Ways and Means Committee. I was vice chairman of that committee, served a lot of terms on there.

We had a man presenting the bill. He represented the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association. So at that time, he covered a lot of territory. Among his clients in the Merchants' and Manufacturers' were Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. They had a bill that they were very interested in, and wanted to have it passed for a lot of reasons: that would save them some money and so forth.

In his presentation, there were some questions that could be asked about it, and someone asked him, "Who is interested in this bill?" To [Thomas] Tom Knight, who

was the lobbyist at that point, he said, "This bill has been presented to me, and the interest is in the Fireman's Fund."

So I said, "Mr. Chairman, I see all kinds of flaws in this bill. There is no way that we can allow this bill to get out of this house tonight. That's going to take a lot of study, and I suggest that we hold the bill over and take a look at it, and we may take it up later if you don't mind."

The chairman said, "There's objection to the bill, Mr. Knight. We'd better hold that over."

About three days later, Tom Knight came into my office, because I always. . . . I had a little different policy than everybody else: my door was always open to everybody. Anybody who wanted to come always saw me.

HICKE: That was not true of other legislators?

BRITSCHGI: No way. They came in to see me, they saw me. He came in and he said to me, "What in the heck is the matter with you? Why are you against this little innocuous bill?"

So I said, "Tom, let me tell you a story." So I told Tom the story about this gal who basically kicked me out of the place and wouldn't even give me a chance to be hired. I said, "No way am I going to vote for a bill for the Fireman's Fund."

He said, "I don't blame you. Let's kill the damn thing." [Laughter] So we did! So it goes back to the old remark we always had: you never get mad, you get even. [Laughter]

HICKE: Even if it takes a while.

BRITSCHGI: It takes a little while, but eventually you get even, see. And that's always one of the great things we had in the legislature; you never got mad, basically—you were a little irritated, but you never showed you were mad—but you always said, "I'll get even." And sure enough, there was always a day that the sun came over the hill and you had an opportunity to get even. [Laughter] I love that little story; it's kind of a cute little story. That's the way a lot of bills have gotten clobbered, for various reasons.

Reapportionment Bill, 1961

HICKE: One of the issues that you said that you thought was a major issue was the reapportionment bill. I saw an article where you were censured in 1961 by the San Mateo County Young Republicans for voting for that.

BRITSCHGI: Oh, that could have been, yes. That could have been. At that time, we didn't have any choice of whether we voted for it or not; the Democrats had all the votes. It was a question of saving your neck in your own district on reapportionment. At that point, I think they wanted to give me Stanford University. I didn't want Stanford University. They were going to move my district down to Stanford University, and the last place I wanted was Stanford University. They just thought a little bit different than I thought. I didn't want to fight those kids down there.

So, I got that taken out of the bill, and if they took that out for me, I told them I'd give them a vote. So I voted for the reapportionment at that point. But it was all Democrat-controlled anyway; there was nothing you could do about it.

But I'll tell you really what spoiled California government. It was not basically reapportionment. It was the one man, one vote; that is what really killed good legislation in California, as we knew it in the early days. See, in the early days, we had eighty assemblymen and forty senators, which they still have, but the assemblymen represented people. I had basically one of the largest areas in the state of California. I represented 394,000 people in my district.

Senators represented territory. We had forty senators, and theoretically each one had a county for his area. They had areas. Each one had a county. But we only had forty senators, but we had forty-eight counties, so some of the smaller counties were put into one district. One example again, Randy Collier of Yreka: he wins an election up there, and he wins with 5,600 votes.

I win, and I have over 100,000 votes; about 130,000 or 140,000 votes I think I had in that same election.

So they represented territory. In doing that, the assembly brought up the legislation that pertained to people as such, individually in an area. The senators were the checks and balances on legislation, because they looked at it from a territorial aspect. In doing that, they killed a lot of legislation that was really bad, that should never get by.

Then they had this, I think it was in Maryland or somewhere back East, where this one man, one vote came along, and the supreme court said, "Hey, you've got to knock this off." So then the next year, when they changed this whole reapportionment, Los Angeles ends up with twelve senators instead of one. And that is supposed to give them representation. Well, that gave the complete control of the legislature to the southern part of the state. One senator had almost all of northern California, where we had a senator for each county [previously], see, with two or three of the smaller ones thrown in here and there.

And [reapportionment] eliminated senators on that basis. Good senators got bounced out, because one who lived closest to the area where the most people [were]--not the territory but the most people--he was the guy that got elected. One election we had up here: we had three senators running against each other, all from the same party. We eliminated two of them, and the bad one won. The guy living in Jackson up here won. [Laughter] The other ones were good ones.

But that's where the people were, and that's where this one man, one vote came in. Consequently, ever after that, we've had bad legislative procedure; we've had bad legislative results, and I don't know how they're ever going to change it to where we will get good legislation again.

Senate Bills

HICKE: Let me go back to what you said. You said the senate often killed bad bills. Could you elaborate on that?

BRITSCHGI: Well, yes. Most legislation comes from people. I'll give you a perfect example: I was in the legislature two years, and a fellow called me up. In fact, he came to my house. We never even had an office in those days like they have now, with twenty-five people in there as aides. He came to my house. He had a station wagon, and he was carrying some refuse to the dumps off of Marsh Road, down there. The dump was down there. He got arrested by the highway patrol for using his station wagon to carry this refuse in the back of it.

In those days, a station wagon was licensed as a commercial vehicle, and it was designed for commercial use, believe it or not, not to carry people. If you use it for a commercial purpose, you had a commercial license on it. And if you carried people in it only, you had a people's license, like you have on your car. You could take your car, go down to Montgomery Ward's and buy a television set, put it in the trunk, and bring it home, and you wouldn't be violating any law. You could go down in your station wagon and put that same television set in the back of the station wagon, and you're violating a law because you're carrying something other than people, if you have a people's license on it.

This man said, "Hey, how can we correct this?" So I came back up to Sacramento, we talked to the legislative council's office in there, the attorneys in there. They said well, they'll introduce a bill that will correct this. And they did. I carried that bill.

The first opposition we got was from the Department of Motor Vehicles, because if we would allow them to carry things in their station wagon, then there would be no need for a commercial license plate.

HICKE: Which was more expensive.

BRITSCHGI: Which was more expensive, and they got \$500,000 for them. So, the way we overcame the opposition was that anybody

who had a station wagon with the commercial license plate could carry anything in it. But we raised the ante in getting a license plate for all station wagons. So anybody could carry anything in it that they wanted. That is the way legislation originates: from people.

Now, if you don't have any checks on that, anybody who's interested in something that may be even ridiculous would get by. They [the senators] were the ones who were kind of looked at as though they were the housekeepers, and it was tough to get bills by the senate. Most of the assembly bills got killed in the senate. Then we'd get mad, used to have fights. They would hold up our bills over there, and we'd say, "Doggone it, you're not going to get your bills by our place unless you let some of ours loose," and we got in that argument so many times. [Laughter] And then we'd reach a compromise, and we'd let some of them out, and they'd let some of ours out, and so forth. But they killed almost all of the very liberal legislation.

See, the senate was not a partisan group. The assembly was, but not the senate. You couldn't tell a Republican from a Democrat, because everybody voted different, and they voted very conservative. Most of the senators in those days were all millionaires, and they watched the purse strings very closely.

HICKE: That's how they got that way.

BRITSCHGI: They were very conservative. Oddly enough, George Miller, who was a state senator from Contra Costa County, was very very liberal. But when it came to money out of the state budget, he was as tightfisted as you ever wanted to shake a stick at. He has produced a son who is now the congressman from that area over there, and he's so doggone liberal it's unbelievable. I read about him from time to time, and he's in congress back in Washington D.C. He'll spend anybody's money any chance he gets. [Laughter]

But that's kind of interesting, and it's hard to explain in a way so that it makes sense out of it. But in this checks and balance thing that we had, we had

only---I thought---only good legislation, really. But now there's no way of stopping it anymore, because oddly enough, all those liberal assemblymen we had, when we had the one man, one vote change, all twelve of those senators ended up to be liberal assemblymen that got into the senate.

So, if you had a liberal assembly putting out bills, they went right through the senate. That's what's happened in the state of California at the present time. We have one man who is about as liberal as you could ever shake a stick at in the assembly when I was there. He came in after I was in there. He is now the most conservative senator we have in the senate. Now, whether the pendulum has gone all the way over there that everybody's liberal, and he's a little bit more conservative than the rest of the liberals, it's up to you to make up your mind. [Laughter]

HICKE:

He just looks that way next to everybody else.

BRITSCHGI:

Yes. That could very easily be. But he's the conservative watchdog on the senate side. It's kind of hard to put up with some of these things. When I look back, I just shake my head; I can't believe what I'm looking at. Some of the laws that they're proposing and some of the things that they do over there. But they're not legislating any more; they've gotten to the point now where you have to be a money raiser. They don't spend much time in legislation any more. They don't meet like we used to meet. We met all day, in session at ten o'clock in the morning, every day of the week, including Friday.

They don't do that any more. They meet on Monday, because they have to start collecting their per diem. To show that they were in there they have to register, check in, and they meet on Monday. Tuesday they don't meet, and I think they meet on Wednesday, and then Thursday afternoon they go home. They're never there on Friday. They don't accomplish anything; they're not doing anything. I don't think they're doing what we're hoping the legislature would do. That's why people are getting disgusted with them, if you read any of the articles

around: the respect that the legislature at one time had, it's all gone.

Changes in the Legislature under Speakers Luther Lincoln and Ralph Brown

HICKE: Did you see these changes starting during the period when you were in the legislature?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. When I first went there, we had a man by the name of [Luther] Abe Lincoln, who was the speaker of the house at that point. He served the two years, and then we got into this one man, one vote thing. That's when Pat Brown came in with his contingency, and the Republicans all lost out on that. We had a man by the name of Ralph Brown, who became the speaker. He was an excellent Democrat. He was an excellent parliamentarian. He was just so fair that it wasn't even funny. He was an ideal person for that job.

He would save anybody's neck. I remember my seatmate at that point was Lou Francis; we were sitting together. Lou Francis had a very controversial bill. Lou Francis carried a lot of bills for the service people, various organizations. As a matter of fact, he could almost be related in a way---and I don't mean this as an insult or anything, because the man's dead and he couldn't even defend himself of the point---but he was like good ole [U.S. Senator Joseph] Joe McCarthy of congress. He was looking for somebody under everybody's bed and whatnot, and he carried some of this really weird legislation.

Now, Lou Francis had a bill, and it didn't have a chance in the world to get by. I said to him, "Lou, don't bring that bill up. It's awful. Nobody's going to vote for it." And I was sitting there, and Ralph Brown came down from the podium, because it was coming up to Lou next for his turn. He said, "Lou, they're going to hurt you. Please don't take this bill up. I can't stop you from taking it up, but I really don't want you to take it up because I don't want you to get hurt."

Well, the man wouldn't listen. He proceeded to take his bill up, and he gave his little pitch as to why he wanted the bill and what not. And the Democrats, and Republicans too, gave him the silent treatment and nobody gave him a vote. Not a yes vote nor a no vote. And it was just like slapping a guy with a bucket of ice water. Never happened before in the legislature.

The poor guy was just mortified, and then ever after that, he had problems. Because he was the kind of person that just wouldn't listen. But Ralph Brown--getting to what I'm talking about--my heart went out for Ralph at that point, because it even made a bad taste in everybody's mouth, in the whole legislature, what they planned to do. This was all pre-planned against Lou. I knew it was coming, and I tried to talk him out of it, but he wouldn't listen.

Ralph Brown didn't have to come down and tell him that. But that was the kind of a man he was.

HICKE:

That's a nice illustration.

BRITSCHGI:

Yes, and he then later on got kind of fed up with the legislative process, and Governor Pat Brown appointed him to the appeals board in Fresno, I believe it was. Appeals judges, they were court of appeal.

HICKE:

The appeals court.

BRITSCHGI:

Yes. He was one of the appeals judges down there on the court, sitting down in Fresno. He has since passed away now.

Jesse Unruh

BRITSCHGI:

And then after that came [Speaker Jesse] Jess Unruh. Now that's altogether different.

HICKE:

Okay. Let's talk about Jesse Unruh.

BRITSCHGI:

Well, Jesse Unruh is a very interesting person. Very capable man, but he ran a very good speakership. I guess the power probably was a little bit hard to resist. And then having the control of the number of votes that he had. . . . He always said, "Well, if you don't like what I do, forty-one votes will cure it." Which it would, but

you could never get the forty-one votes, because he had everybody pretty much tied up.

Jesse started out by carrying a bill for some insurance man down in Los Angeles, and I can't pronounce his name correctly, so I don't know if I want to say it. It was the creation of a savings and loan in the state of California. They never were in existence before. This created the savings and loans, and the banks objected to it, but he got it through. It got signed into law.

For that, this gentleman who suggested he introduce this bill, said, "Now, Jesse, you did this marvelous job. What can I do for you?"

[Jesse] said, "Well, you can raise about \$25,000 and give it to me, and I can be sure we elect more Democrats. That will keep your bill intact without anybody fooling around with it. I guarantee you that."

So that was the first start of trouble. That's where we ran into trouble. Because Jesse got the money and immediately used it to elect Democrats and passing money around. That was the first start of passing money. Never heard of it before. And it grew. Then he went out and started making speeches and what not. With all the money he got from that, whatever amount it was, it all went into a fund to help elect more Democrats. That's why the Democrats really got started: the Republicans were sound asleep on the deal.

Funny thing about politics. I don't have any answer to it. I'm aghast at the contributions of today to these various legislators. There was one, for an example, in the paper two days ago, Senator [Joseph M.] Montoya sent out invitations--now I'm quoting from the paper--sent out invitations to a \$500 fund-raising dinner. In the invitation, he said, "This may be your last chance to contribute money to a fundraising such as I'm having here, because there're two measures on the ballot to be voted on in June, and should they pass, you will not be contributing this kind of money again."

Now, you can take it as a threat, you can take it any way you want, but that's the theory of this fund

raising now. What bothers me is that you talk to these various lobbying groups, who are complaining about what's going on in the legislature today. They complain, for example, hardly a day goes by that they don't get ten or twelve or x number of invitations to \$500 fund raisers, \$1,000 fund raisers.

I say to them--and I've said this to many of them-- "What are you crying about? You're the guys that are giving them the money! Did you ever stop to think of not giving them the money?" And they kind of look at me as though I'm crazy. But if they didn't participate, this fund-raising thing wouldn't be in the position it is. Why can I sit down and write a letter to x lobbyist, and expect him to get a contribution in line from his firm, and they give it to a Democrat or they give it to this, and they're yelling about the Democrats controlling everything? If they wouldn't give them the money, they wouldn't be controlling it all. Maybe some Republicans would get elected. But they're not doing it.

I'll give you another example of it: I was appointed to the board of directors of the Valley High Country Club that I belong to out there. And in kidding with one of the lobbyist friends that I had met, I said to him, "Hey, Mike [Michael Allen], I'm having a fund-raising dinner. How would you like to contribute to my fund?"

He laughed, because I knew him real well, and he laughed and he said, "Well, is that going to be a gold table invitation or is it just a regular?"

I said, "What's the difference, Mike?"

He said, "Well, a gold invitation is that you receive this in the mail. You are invited to participate in my fund-raising dinner, and for a table of ten, if you send \$8,000 you can have ten people sitting there at the table and you will be well taken care of." And these men do it. It's not uncommon.

Now, it seems to me that the business community is contributing also to this bad policy that's happening right now. And do you know what? These bills that we'll

be voting on in June are being opposed by the lobbyists. Out of one breath, out of one side of their mouth they say, "Oh, we're all in favor of this," and with the other side of their mouth, they're against it. They say this: "If we don't contribute, we don't get an opportunity to talk to the legislator."

Now, when legislation comes to that point, we're in trouble. If you have to buy your way into somebody's office. . . . Either I missed the boat or something; I don't know what ever happened to me. I never did that. Anybody could come into my office that wanted to, and they saw me.

But nowadays, they tell me you don't get by the first aide unless there's a notice in your hand that he's having another fund raiser.

HICKE: Well, one thing that the campaign funds are spent mostly on is publicity: radio and TV and that sort of thing. The alternative to large media campaigns is to depend on the press, whatever coverage you can get in the press.

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. Well, [Laughter] when I was in the legislature and ran, we advertised in, as I've said, the San Mateo Times, the Burlingame Advance, and what not. I don't know how much more you have to spend. I look at some of these TV ads, and they're so ridiculous. How they can spend the money, where they spend the money, I don't know. I can appreciate the fact that mailing has gone up to quite a bit of an expense. But I'm not so sure that we should be spending \$500,000 or \$1 million on a campaign to get elected. I don't see how you can eliminate a person that's an incumbent. There's no way in the world that you're going to eliminate an incumbent.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

BRITSCHGI: Now, they're talking about the biggest fight that will come up in June is between Senator [Daniel] Boatwright and one of the supervisors over there, I think her name

is either Peak or McPeak [Contra Costa Supervisor Sunne McPeak], I don't know exactly. It's a lady running against him. They say that's going to be the most expensive campaign that will ever be held in running for the state senate. Do we want to spend that kind of money? How in the world, for an example, can you run against [U.S. Senator] Pete Wilson? Pete Wilson's a good friend of mine, the United States senator. I know Pete very well. He has \$6 million in a fund already. How would you like to start running against somebody like that? Where in the world could you start collecting money to be combative to a person like that? The odds are so much against you.

HICKE: So what are you saying now, that there's no way to run against somebody like that unless you wait until they're through or they quit voluntarily?

BRITSCHGI: Or back to the comment of the man who ran against me, waiting for him to die. [Laughter] I think we're going to have to limit the amount of moneys that can be spent. Now, I wouldn't say you can't spend it for newspaper, you can't spend it for TV, or you can't spend it for mailings, if you want to spend it that way. But I think there ought to be a justified limit. You could kind of ration it out, and then maybe x number of dollars against the number of people in that area that you're representing, that you can't spend more money than that or whatnot, to hold it down. I think we ought to give more people chances. Again, as I say, sitting in the wings there are some people who could possibly be really good legislators.

I talked to one legislator one day, and I said, "How are you doing?" and he said, "Fine." I said, "What are you doing about your campaign fund?"

He said, "Well, I was only \$200,000 in the hole."

I said, "How are you going to make that up?"

He said, "Oh, simple. All I'm going to have is four dinners, and that will take care of that. I'll make \$50,000 on each dinner, and we'll pay that off."

I don't believe that anybody should be allowed to spend more money than what they have to start with! This deficit campaign funding is just awful. And I think poor old [former U.S. Senator and Democratic presidential candidate] Gary Hart is still in debt. [Laughter] He's never going to get out of debt in this monkey business. I don't think they should be spending that kind of money.

HICKE:

Well, let's go back to Jesse Unruh. You knew him.

BRITSCHGI:

Oh, very well, yes. Sure, I served in there for years with him.

HICKE:

Can you give me some of your recollections about him, or any stories that you can recall?

BRITSCHGI:

Well, I would say to you, at least Jesse was fair to me. If you played fair with Jesse, he would never hurt you. And this is where I got some of my objections from some of the people in San Mateo County, because Jesse said to me one day, "Hey, would you like to join the ball club?"

I said, "How do you play?"

He said, "Well, we help our friends, and we clobber our enemies."

I said, "Count me in. I don't see anything wrong with that." So I was always a good friend of Jesse Unruh's. I never basically had a problem with him. There's a book written by Senator [James] Mills. . . . I think it's a terrible book, to start with.¹

HICKE:

Mostly gossip.

BRITSCHGI:

Oh, it's terrible. I thought Senator Mills's book was terrible. I think it was an insult to the legislature, to be honest with you. Anyway, Jesse Unruh I found to be a very fair man. He did a lot for the legislative process in the state of California, for the legislators themselves.

HICKE:

For example?

1. A Disorderly House, Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1987.

BRITSCHGI: He fought for us, and we got more money. We got better accommodations. It was rather hard for legislators, and this was one of the problems that we had. We weren't getting enough income, and you often were in trouble. If you didn't have outside money to live off of, it was rather hard to come to Sacramento. You either had to come up here and live in one of the hotels, the Senator Hotel or someplace, as an individual, and then you were always free game for everybody else to clobber you.

When I came up here, I rented an apartment. I wouldn't come up without my wife. And as luck would have it, our son was grown. He was in Santa Clara University at that point. So he was out of our way, and we didn't have any ties at home, so we rented an apartment up here. It was the per diem that paid for that apartment, and so we were all right.

But when you have a family of children, do you bring your wife up here? You have to uproot the kids from schools and so forth, and come up here, and you have to then rent a house or someplace. So a lot of them left their wives at home, and of course that always caused problems galore. Jesse was always trying to work for better conditions for the men.

Then we got to the point where the Republicans finally took control, and [Robert] Bob Monagan became the speaker of the house. Then we made the biggest mistake in the world by making a full-time legislature. That was the biggest blunder of all.

HICKE: You've been going for about two hours. Do you want to put some of this off to next time?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, if you want to.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Session 2, April 5, 1988]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

IV. MORE RECOLLECTIONS OF STATE LEADERSHIP AND LEGISLATION

Proposition 1A; Full-time Legislature

- HICKE: Last time we had just started to talk about Proposition 1A, which was the lengthening of the legislature's time.
- BRITSCHGI: Oh, that went back into the full-time legislature.
- HICKE: Yes. If you could just tell me how that came about, and your part in it, and then some of the impact you think it had.
- BRITSCHGI: Yes. I didn't have very much to do with the thing, but as I recall, Proposition 1A was sort of the brainchild, I guess, of [Speaker Robert] Bob Monagan. The Republicans were in control at that time, I believe. They decided full-time legislators would be the next order of business. I think that was probably an offshoot of Jess Unruh. They always felt that the legislators were underpaid and they should be full-time legislators and would be better equipped to pass the laws of the state of California.
- But the problem that is now created. . . . I voted for it, and supported it, but I think it was a great mistake. I think everybody else including my good friend Bob Monagan would agree that it was a bad mistake to have full-time legislators. Because I don't believe the work is there to start with. In the second place, what has happened is that we've made professional legislators. The attorneys have taken over the chore of being legislators.
- HICKE: Why did that happen?
- BRITSCHGI: Because people at home apparently felt, in the various areas, a lawyer was better equipped to pass laws than the average person. That was a horrible mistake, and it's been a dread to the entire legislature, because the trial

lawyers took over. All these attorneys who were elected ended up being trial lawyers. They have absolutely, in my opinion, ruined the judicial system of today. I think the trial lawyers have done everything to wreck law and order as we used to know it, and what is on the books of today. I think the trial lawyers have just done a horrible job. As a matter of fact, if I had my way, I wouldn't have an attorney as a legislator, because they just don't have common sense as far as passing laws that affect the general public. They always have them affecting themselves.

For an example, the two main committees that we had, Judicial and the other committee, Criminal Procedure Committee, were made up entirely of attorneys. Of course, all those laws were passed in favor of the attorneys. They didn't care for anything else; they were looking out for their bread and butter. The trial attorneys, or the trial lawyers, are the big bugaboo in the legislature today. There is a big fight in all this.

Take, for an example, insurance, which is prevalent today: how we're being overcharged and all. This is a battle between the insurance companies and the trial lawyers. And the trial lawyers just will not give up. They're not going to give up any procedure that they can possibly find that's in their favor. Most of them are real liberal people. All these laws are very liberal, and that's what's costing us all the money in insurance today.

So when it comes to talking about attorneys, I'm not in favor of any trial lawyer. [Laughter] I could make a statement or two of what I think of them, but I don't think I'd better.

HICKE: Well, that's what we're after.

BRITSCHGI: [Laughter]

HICKE: But one thing. Could you clarify for me the connection between the full-time legislature and the increase in trial attorneys?

BRITSCHGI: Well, this came about, I guess it was probably in the late sixties, middle sixties probably, or late sixties,

when Proposition 1A went into effect.¹ Jesse Unruh thought that all legislators should have assistants. And most of the legislators of that day hired young attorneys. I presume the thinking was that they're lawyers, and they were talking about laws. They would be best equipped to be their aides.

So consequently when we had the change to the one man, one vote, and there was a tremendous shift in personnel in the legislature and in congress, why all these assistants, who were then familiar with the legislative procedure because they were the assistants to the then legislators, all ran for office. And they were well versed in what was going on and knew what was going on and were more capable of knowing what was going on because they were the assistants, and they came in and took over.

HICKE: So the trial attorneys came first, and then we had the Prop. 1A?

BRITSCHGI: Trial attorneys came first, and then they all seemed to end up with legislators. I guess they couldn't be good lawyers, so they turned out to be assistants to the legislators. [Laughter] You see, I don't have too much love for trial attorneys.

So consequently, I can give you a little interesting insight on all that, and as far as . . . Jesse Unruh-- again back to him--was the one who started all this. When I was in office, there were three of us: [Assemblyman Robert] Bob Badham, who is now a congressman, and [Assemblyman] Frank Lanterman, who is deceased, and myself were the only three legislators who did not have district offices. Consequently, our expenses when the year totalled out were about \$2, 000 for running our district offices.

Prop. 1A was passed by voters in November 1966. See Ballot Pamp., Proposed Amends to Cal. Const. with arguments to voters, Gen. Elec. (Nov. 8, 1966) p. 1.

What they gave us was the use of a telephone or a credit to our telephone bill at home in our house, and they gave us some stamps and a few other little things that we needed to mail out mail, and we got those credits. It amounted to about \$2,000 in a year.

Whereas, all the other legislators were spending anywhere between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a year. So it made them look rather bad. So Mr. Unruh came to me personally, and said, "Hey, you've got to hire an assistant in your district, and you've got to have an office to make everybody look equal. So I had to start a district office, which meant an office, rent a typewriter, and hire a girl to man the office. We had to have books, we had telephone, we had everything; so my office expenses would go up.

I got away with that for a little while, and then, by gosh, they came to me and said, "Hey, you're still not spending enough money. You've got to have an assistant." So I had to hire an assistant, and I needed all of them like I needed holes in my head. I didn't need them at all. That girl sat there most of the day and did nothing. Absolutely nothing. If we had two phone calls a week, we did very well in that office. That girl was just bored to death. But we had to have the office.

So these assistants--they called them field assistants--that kind of a person then became well versed in what the legislative procedure was all about. Those are the people that I am referring to, who later became the legislators. Because others moved up, and there were openings, and so they would be most likely to be able to take that over. Most of these legislators again hired the attorneys, and invariably they all turned out to be trial lawyers. Not all of them, but most of them. Then they came up to the legislature, and they were appointed to the Judicial Committee, because at one point, finally, we raised so much noise about it that they finally appointed one lay person to the Committee of Criminal Procedures, so that they couldn't say that it was all stacked with attorneys.

HICKE: By lay person, you mean a non-attorney?

BRITSCHGI: A non-attorney. And that was what started our downfall, as far as I'm concerned, in the legislature. Now how you can keep anybody, an attorney or anyone else, from running is kind of hard to say. But people felt that they were probably better equipped because they probably had more experience, and they won all the offices. And they're in there today, and the very same thing is going on today.

Increase in Legislative Staff

HICKE: Last time, you referred to the fact that you thought that the increased staffing was one of the biggest mistakes. Is this what you're referring to?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes. Well, I can give you an idea of a staff. When I was in the legislature, we had a young man by the name of [Assemblyman Robert] Bob Crown, who was the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and I was vice chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. We had two assistants to help us, a man by the name of Mr. [Ed] Levy and a man by the name of Lou Angelo. Those were our assistants, to Bob Crown and myself.

Bob Crown was accidently killed in a traffic accident, and he was replaced with Willie Brown as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Within three months, he had a staff of twenty-five to help him, or to assist in the Ways and Means Committee. What the twenty-five ever did, I'll never know, but I walked in that office and I was amazed to see all those people in there at that time. What has happened now is, you can't even get in to see a legislator now. You have to go see the staff first. You never walk into an office and see Willie Brown or anyone else. You have to go through five steps of staff members to see anybody.

It makes it rather hard to legislate, I would think, for the legislators themselves, and for the people who are interested in a certain project. You don't get to see the legislator any more. You have to talk to the

staff. And the staff is getting so large over there now they're talking about putting another addition onto one of the buildings down there to make room for more staff. Now, why they need all the staff, I will never know.

But it was coming; you could see it coming a mile away. Not only the Democrats, but the Republicans did the very same thing with more staff and more staff and more staff. So, maybe I'm a little old-fashioned. I don't think we needed them. . . . and I still don't believe we need them all.

HICKE: And you didn't make very much use of staff?

BRITSCHGI: I had one person in my office. One assistant.

Chairman, Legislative Representation Committee

BRITSCHGI: The only reason I had an assistant is because I was chairman of Legislative Representation Committee, and you had to have a staff member. Whether you liked him or not, you got him. It came with the job. They assigned you a man, and that was it.

HICKE: What did you do as chairman of the lobbying committee?

BRITSCHGI: Not very much. My idea was to--or at least, the idea of the chairman of the lobby committee--was to see that they [lobbyists] were all registered. If there were any complaints, any illegal activities or whatnot, why we'd have a committee hearing and call that person before the committee, discuss the situation, find out what had happened, and straighten it out. That was about the extent of it; it wasn't all that great of a job.

HICKE: Just kind of general oversight?

BRITSCHGI: That's right, yes. And see that they're all registered properly. We kept a record. My office had to do that.

HICKE: And they knew then that somebody was keeping track, at least. So that was probably . . .

BRITSCHGI: Yes. That was the way that worked. We had a little committee meeting, little committee title. But there wasn't anything to it. [Laughter] Because we never really had any problems when I was in there. Everybody behaved themselves, thank heavens.

HICKE: They knew you were watching them. [Laughter]
 BRITSCHGI: Yes. Of course, we watched them very closely to see that there wasn't any monkey business. But in those days, we didn't have the great inclination of raising money and those things. That wasn't really part of what the lobby people were involved in in that day. It was very quiet, because we had just gotten through what they call the [Arthur] Art Samish regime. He was the lobbyist who was supposed to have controlled the entire legislature in the early days. I didn't know the man, never saw him. But everything was very quiet, and they behaved themselves in very good shape.

Seatmate Willie Brown

HICKE: Well, speaking of Willie Brown, I think that he was your seatmate?
 BRITSCHGI: Yes, I was fortunate enough, I guess, to say, or I can say it, I was assigned both Bob Monagan originally, I guess when he first came into the legislature. I was his seatmate, and he ended up being the speaker. Then I had Willie Brown, and I think Willie Brown came from the fact that I supported the fair housing initiative. I think my friend Jesse Unruh and [Assemblyman Jerome] Jerry Waldie decided, "Well, if he's going to support the fair housing bill, why we'll let him support Willie Brown and see how he gets along with Willie."

But Willie and I got along real well. I made Willie Brown the best Republican voter that you ever laid an eye on the first two years he was there. [Laughter]

HICKE: Tell me about that.
 BRITSCHGI: Well, we had little buttons on our desks. Our desks were connected; two men sat side by side. By pressing the button, you register your vote up on the board. Well, Willie Brown was just as flamboyant as he is today, and he was the greatest handshaker and jabberer and talker and social guy you ever laid an eye on. He was just a doll, and I had more fun with Willie. Half the time, he would leave his seat and he'd be out jabbering with

somebody, fooling around and not paying too much attention to what was going on in the legislature. Every time he left and a vote came up, why I just voted him, and I voted him the way I voted. I just pushed my button either yes or no, and I'd push his button yes or no.

He'd come back about two hours later, and he'd say, "Hey, I didn't want to vote that way!" I said, "Willie, if you'll only sit down, you'll vote right. If you're only going to fool around, and run around, why I'm going to push your button for you." [Laughter]

HICKE: Did he tend to keep his seat a little more often after that?

BRITSCHGI: He watched; every once in a while when it was a very important vote for the Democrats, why he'd get back there. [Laughter] But most of the time, I'd vote him Republican when the bills didn't really amount to too much.

HICKE: That's a story probably not too many people have heard.

BRITSCHGI: Well, as a matter of fact, they came along and changed the rule so that nobody could push the other man's button. That of course worked out a little better. That then put him in a position where he was recorded as not voting. If he was gone all morning, for an example, and he'd never vote, then he'd have to come back in the afternoon and then record his votes, how he would have voted on those various issues. And they changed the rule to let him--not only he, but others--record their votes later on.

But that was kind of bad in a way too, because some of the legislators always seem to have to go to the bathroom when an important vote comes along, and they're not there. So they're not recorded. Then when they come home and someone says to them, "Hey, you didn't vote on this bill. How come?" He says, "Oh, I must have been in the bathroom or was called out of my office, and I wasn't there." But really what he was saying, he didn't have guts enough to stay around and get recorded on his votes.

So then, we finally changed that rule back again, that you could not record a vote, but you could put a

statement in the journal that if you were there, you would have voted a certain way. It kind of stopped the people from running around, and dodging votes is what they were doing. So that's what happened to that kind of a procedure. There were all kinds of rules that have been kicked around, changed around to meet the various little shenanigans that they used to pull from time to time.

HICKE: Did your constituents check on your voting record?
 BRITSCHGI: Oh yes, very much so. Of course, we always had a standard letter that we answered when they wrote and said they'd like to have your vote on this or that or something. We always avoided trying to write a letter back saying that I will support this or I will do this, because at the time, you know, it might have looked like it will be the right way to go, or the wrong way to go. Then when you hear all the debate on it, you change your mind. So we always had a standard little letter: we'd keep your thoughts in mind when we voted on your request. It kind of took you off the spot. I never really got into too much trouble on the remarks or votes that we made.

Governor Reagan's Budget

BRITSCHGI: Only once did I get in trouble. This was rather interesting; I must tell you this. When Governor [Ronald] Reagan was first elected, he decided to reduce the budget. The state budget was too high. So he put a mandate before the legislature that we should reduce the budget 10 percent across the board.

Well, the way the budget's written, that sounds very easy. But it was an impossible thing to do, because budgets aren't written that way on the state level. But he was doing it, saying, "We'll take 10 percent out of the University of California budget." But our budgets are what we call line-item budgets, so every item from the University of California. . . . and there were probably 1,000 pages in the budget on the items. If

we're putting in a new biology building at Santa Barbara or someplace, that meant we had to cut 10 percent out of that building, which might have been \$300,000. Then if we were doing something to a laboratory, for example, we'd have to take 10 percent out of that.

Well, you couldn't do that by just taking 10 percent out of the University of California. Everything was on line items. So a young reporter from the Palo Alto Times called me, because I was vice chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, as I have stated, at the time. He called me and asked me what I thought of the Reagan budget.

I said, "Well, the Reagan budget doesn't make sense because of this line-item situation we have." We just couldn't accept that. It had to be done different.

Well, the headlines in the Palo Alto Times came out, and it says, "Britschgi Says Reagan Doesn't Make Sense." That was the headline. Well, the next day, I started getting mail, and I mean really mail from my very good Republicans in San Mateo County and everywhere else. "Why don't you support the governor? Why don't you support the governor? Why don't you support the governor? What kind of Republican are you? You're not supporting the governor." Well, it wasn't a question of supporting the governor; it was a question that it had to be done a certain way.

I didn't say that he didn't make sense, that Reagan didn't make sense. I said the budget didn't make sense that way. Eventually, the governor had to present us with his 10 percent cut that he wanted on all the items. Either way, if he didn't do it, we had to do it, because we divided up the Ways and Means Committee into various subcommittees. For example, I ended up being chairman of the social welfare, and that took in health and social welfare, and that was a big part of the budget. Just took millions of dollars in that, because it handled all the aid and the aid to the children, and all the social services. And we had to go line by line, and figure out 10 percent of those things.

Voter Apathy

BRITSCHGI: So it was quite a problem, but back to the people. Most of them don't understand or didn't understand or still don't understand how the legislature works. The fact of the matter is that people are so lackadaisical about it, and that's why I think we have the legislature that we have: people don't seem to be interested. They don't care.

I'd go home many, many times, and I'd walk down the street, any street in Redwood City or anyplace else, and they'd say, "How are things going in Washington?" I was nowhere near Washington; Washington was 4,000 miles away! But they don't know . . .

HICKE: Thought you had a hotline, or something?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I think they thought I should be back in Washington instead of being in Sacramento. I don't know how you get people interested. For an example, there're congressmen right here, there're legislators who get free rides, and I mean by free rides, no opposition. That is a sin, as far as I'm concerned, whether it's a Republican gets it or a Democrat gets it, as to why there's no opposition to those people, other than perhaps they can't raise the money to run against them. But everyone should have some opponent, so that people will have a chance to understand some of the things that are going on, and what is going on or what is happening in the world of politics.

HICKE: There's no debate if there's no opposition.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. And then people will criticize later on. We had one fellow here for an example, a fellow by the name of [Vic] Fazio, who is a congressman. He was an assistant to one of the legislators here, and then he ran for the assembly and got to be an assemblyman, and now he's the congressman. I hate to tell you this, but Mr. Fazio talks out of three sides of his mouth at the same time. He's a very staunch Democrat, so obviously he's against everything that the administration in Washington does.

He is against everything as far as defense is concerned, and votes against everything the

administration proposes in defense. Then he comes home here and there're all kinds of military bases here, and he's saying, "I'm back there fighting for you, and trying to help you and get more money for your contracts and all," and these people believe him when he's home here talking this way. They don't care what he does in Washington. Nobody follows him through. And the guy's running unopposed. There's no opposition.

And then the same way with [Congressman Robert] Matsui. This is a very Democratic area here, and it's rather hard for a Republican to even get his name on the ballot, but still those men should have opposition and should be brought to task to explain what they're really doing and why they're doing what they did do. But if they don't have any contest, they don't have to answer to anything. Of course, that's bad, in my opinion.

Again, it goes back to money, as to how these people can afford to run against them. So as far as that goes, I think that answer here gives you an insight on something of that.

Relationship with the Media and with Labor

HICKE: Well, you had this one bad experience with the media, but in general, what was your relationship with the media?

BRITSCGI: Oh, I got along with them very well, because in my area, they couldn't beat me anyway. It was predominantly Republican newspapers. So I didn't have any problems with the newspapers at all. The only problem we ever had with a newspaper was with the Half Moon Bay Review, as it was known then in those days. This man was fresh from Boston, I forgot what his name is right now, but he owned the paper. He was a redneck Republican.

You were interested in my being endorsed by the labor unions. All that came about by Mr. [William] Knowland, who owned the Oakland Tribune at that point, and Mr. Knowland was the United States senator from California, Senator Bill Knowland.

He was proposing a right-to-work act, was fostering it along. Of course, right-to-work is just opposite of what unionism is all about. We were in the milk business, and we were very much unified with the unions. They were basically our bread and butter. So I wasn't about to come out and hurt the unions, and I was never really in favor of the right-to-work too much to start with.

So when it came to taking a stand on this right-to-work act, I opposed it. For my opposing it, the unions endorsed me all over the place, that I was their darling angel. But this owner of the Half Moon Bay Review just tore me up and down from one side to the other. He suggested I should be a Democrat, and in fact I was very close to being a communist, as far as they were concerned. [Laughter] In fact, I had one man in San Mateo County write me a letter. He was head of the Republican assembly I believe, I don't even know his name now. But he wrote me a letter and said I should go to Russia, because I was a communist. I thought the letter was so funny, I read it on the floor of the legislature. It's in the journal there someplace. [Laughter] It was hilarious, really. I was not even good enough to be a Democrat; I was a communist.

Well, that was my endorsement of the labor unions, at that particular time. But after that went by, why then they went back and endorsed all Democrats again. I was very seldom ever endorsed by the labor unions. But during that period of time, I was. It was about . . .

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

HICKE: I have dates here when you were endorsed. In 1962 you were endorsed by the state Teamsters Union.

BRITSCGI: Yes, I think that was the year.

HICKE: And in '66, you were endorsed by the AFL-CIO. In '64, there's a newspaper headline that said you were accused

of voting far left, pro-Democrat, pro-Communist. That must have been . . .

BRITSCHGI: That was it, that was it. [Laughter]

Responsibilities as Republican Whip

HICKE: Okay. Well, what were your responsibilities as the Republican whip?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, that really wasn't anything. It was just a title that they had, and they gave it to a new legislator that they thought might need some help or something. It was just a little title. It was nothing. Basically, you were supposed to see that the legislators who voted---if we took a stand on an issue in our caucuses---to see if they all voted that way. It really didn't amount to too much. It was just a little title that you walked home with and said, "Hey, I'm the Republican whip." Nobody knew the difference whether you were or not. Because, see, after it passed in the caucuses, the caucus chairman would present the arguments for the Republican party on it, if it became a party issue. And everybody mostly followed it. There were no problems. Never got into any difficulty on that one at all.

HICKE: It was an idea taken from congress?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I believe so. I'm sure.

Legislation to Bar Professional Boxing and Harness Racing

HICKE: Okay. Well, in 1963 you carried legislation to ban professional boxing in California. What was that all about?

BRITSCHGI: That was kind of interesting. I think at that particular point, we had a boxer who was killed. Died in the ring. So Alan Pattee, another good Republican assemblyman from Monterey at that point and one of my very good friends, and I decided, "Let's try and get rid of boxing." We thought it was too dangerous. They tried to stop boxing many, many times here in the state of California, and they're still trying to stop boxing. But they have

never, ever done it. But we came pretty close to it. [Laughter] The only problem we had with this bill to do away with boxing, we had to have people there to testify as witnesses. The only witnesses we could get were people who had their brains rattled from boxing to start with, and they were horrible witnesses! [Laughter]

Lo and behold, this young man came to town. He was from Montana, and he had been boxing. He came to town, and he read about this, I guess, and he came to my office. I said, "Oh, boy, we've got a good candidate here to be our witness."

The day of the hearing, everything was fine. We said, "What do you want for this? We don't have any money to give you for a witness, or anything else." He said, "No, just put me up in a hotel so I'll have someplace to sleep and eat for two days, until the hearing, I'll be happy." So we did that, see. Alan and I put him up in a hotel, and got the man over there. [Laughter] He started being questioned by some of the legislators on the committee that were hearing the bill. Then there was a boxer in town here by the name of Lopes, Joey Lopes. Joey was testifying, and this man was sitting next to him, and they were up there at the table. Our witness wanted to start a fight with [Joey]. It broke up the whole meeting. [Laughter] And they declared the bill killed.

This guy, I think he had a couple of screws loose upstairs and his brains were rattled. He was just out of it half the time. And really, when you get right down to it, he was a perfect example of why they should outlaw boxing.

HICKE: Oh, yes. Even if he didn't answer any questions, he was there as a perfect example.

BRITSCHGI: [Laughter] He didn't do a good job as a witness though, I guarantee. The fellows kind of made a joke out of it rather than anything else, and they finally killed the bill. So that was our experience with boxing.

We had the same kind of a situation happen in horse racing. I was sort of a horse racing fan years ago,

because we had Bay Meadows, which is in our district, so I always had to go there. I kind of liked horse racing. One of the other legislators, a former senator, Senator Lou Cusanovich, he and I went to a harness race one night. The race was so crooked. It was so obvious it was just awful. Even the results were terrible by the stewards. The whole race was just. . . well, we used to call them boat races, when they wanted a certain horse to win. Harness racing in those days was just unbelievable.

So we put in a bill to stop harness racing, because it was too crooked. We didn't get very far with that, but we had a lot of fun with it, I'll tell you, because it was just awful what they used to do with harness racing. I don't go any more, so I don't know what's going on in harness racing. But they could control everything, and they did. Every once in a while somebody couldn't pay their hay bill so they let that fellow win with his horse so he could pay the hay bill. The only problem was, you could never find out who owed how much on hay. If you could figure that out, then you'd know who was going to win the race. [Laughter] So that's the way crazy bills come up.

HICKE: But why couldn't that bill get through?

BRITSCHGI: Too much opposition, too strong of a lobby for horse racing. Everybody in the horse racing business was against the bill.

HICKE: I know, but are there that many people in the horse racing business? Or are they just vocal?

BRITSCHGI: There's a lot of money in horse racing, a lot of money in horse racing. They figured if we would be able to stop harness racing, then the next step would be to stop the other horse racings, general thoroughbred racing, I guess they call it. So they were going to be sure that nothing ever started creeping up on that.

HICKE: Was that true of boxing also? Who opposed the ban on boxing?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I believe that there was a lot of money in boxing. There was a very prominent lady in Los Angeles, and I

don't know whether she's still alive or not. Her name was Eileen. . . . can't think of her last name. She was Madame Boxing in the state of California. That was her story here a while back. I'm not sure whether she's still alive or not, or whether she has passed away. But she was the queen of boxing.

Then of course we had some people in the legislature who were very interested in boxing. Assemblyman [Vincent] Vin Thomas. As a matter of fact, he was a boxer, and he coached boxing at Santa Clara when I was down there, so I knew him before I ever came to the legislature. Of course he was very much opposed to the bill. He thought boxing was very fine, and a lot of people still like boxing; they think it's all right. I don't think they'll ever outlaw it, but I don't look at boxing, because I think it's terrible. I'm not interested in it. I don't think they'll ever stop boxing. Every once in a while, somebody gets their brains bashed out on the ring, and they think nothing of it.

I guess boxing isn't too bad when you look at wrestling. If you've ever looked at wrestling on TV, why that's something that ought to be controlled. I guess they don't call that a sport any more. I think it's a show or something; they do it on a different basis. But I think it's nonsense, but that's only my opinion. How people can get interested in looking at that stuff is beyond me. But again, people love it. So as long as [there is] interest, I guess that's what they want.

HICKE: But it's too bad to have a sport where people get hurt so badly and killed.

BRITSCHGI: Well, that's right. They think they have a little better protection now. I think their gloves are different in boxing, and I think they watch them a little closer, and they examine them. I think they are more restrictive now than they were years ago. Years ago, you just had somebody going through town who wanted to pick up fifty dollars, so he became a boxer for that night. Get in there and got his brains beaten out, and if he lived,

why, he collected the fifty dollars. If he didn't, why, somebody else collected it, I assume. I think that's what happened. But I think now you have to have doctors' tests, you have to have blood tests, you have to have this. They do it a little better. I think they control it much better.

Reflections on Governors Knight, Pat Brown, and Reagan

HICKE: OK. Well, I wonder if we could talk a little bit about the governors. Maybe you could think about the different styles and characteristics. You actually were there under three: Goodwin Knight, Pat Brown, and Ronald Reagan.

BRITSCHGI: Yes.

HICKE: Let's start with Goodwin Knight.

BRITSCHGI: I didn't know Governor Knight very well. He was only there two years when I was there, but he was not much of a governor. He was a very nice man, but he was not too much of a governor, in my opinion, as to what I thought a governor should be doing and did. I remember when I first went there, we had fifty-six Republicans on our caucus, and we'd have a lunch every Tuesday. The governor came to these lunches from time to time and discussed the problems.

And I well remember, in those early days before we completed the water channel down to Los Angeles, all the talk about water: "What are we going to do about water for Los Angeles, and the southern part of the state of California?" What sort of disgusted me a little bit with Mr. Knight as governor at that point: we had gone through an entire session, and we were in the last two weeks of the session, and he came over to our caucus and asked the question in these very words---and I think I can quote him word for word---"Gentlemen, what are we going to do about the water situation in the state of California?" This was the last two weeks of the session. You couldn't introduce a bill, you couldn't do anything.

I thought to myself, "Where is this man? Where has he been?" The whole time of the session. . . . this was six months later; it was in June before we retired for the year--because we always retired in June--that he came over there and asked us this stupid question of "What are we going to do about water?"

That's the only thing I can ever say about Goodie Knight. And he came down to San Mateo County one time. This I thought was rather funny. He was in my district, because we were having a fund raiser in Atherton. The congressman was there, and [Senator Richard] Dolwig, the senator, was there. I was there, and the assemblyman from the north end of the county was there, Lou Francis.

So Mr. Knight gets up and he tells all the people who are at the party to be sure and vote for Congressman Arthur Younger, and be sure and vote for Senator Dick Dolwig, and be sure and vote for Assemblyman Lou Francis, and ended it right there! [Laughter] We were alongside the swimming pool, and I thought to myself, "If he gets ever close to that swimming pool, I'm just going to nudge him a little bit so he'll know that I was the assemblyman from that area!" [Laughter]

So those are my thoughts of Governor Knight.

HICKE: Maybe he thought you were a shoo-in and didn't need any help. [Laughter]

BRITSCHGI: No, I don't know. It was in my district and everything, and he didn't even know I was there! Either I didn't impress him or something else. So those are my thoughts of him.

Then we came along to Pat Brown. He's the next one. I knew Governor Brown from way back when he was a district attorney in San Francisco and I was down in Redwood City as a city councilman and a mayor. So we knew each other from way back. I liked Pat Brown. I thought he was a very, very nice man. He probably didn't do too good of a job as a governor but he had his problems trying to be the governor and trying to combat Jesse Unruh, who wanted to be the governor at the same time as being the speaker. They were at complete odds

all the way along. But I think Pat Brown was a very, very nice, likable man, who probably might have been in a little bit in over his head as far as the governor[ship] was concerned.

He did about as good a job as you could expect out of the situation. He never bothered me. He was not a mean man. He was never vindictive in any way. If he had a problem, he always called you in. I well recall walking down the hallway one day, and he calls me and says, "Hey, I've got a problem with milk, and I don't know the answers to it. Come on in here and help me out." I was quite pleased with that; I thought that was pretty good.

Just the opposite, for an example, of Governor Reagan when he went in there. Reagan didn't know too much about being a governor or anything else at that particular point. I had, for an example, forty-five women from San Mateo County, Republicans, who came to Sacramento to see the legislative process. Of course, we're always happy to have them there, and they were my guests for the day. They wanted to go in and see the governor's office, and that was all part of what we always did: take them for a tour through the governor's office. They went in one aisle around the back. They all wanted to see the governor.

Well, he was in his office, and I wanted him to come out. I asked one of the people if he [Reagan] could come out and just say hello to the ladies. They all would have just swooned if the governor came out. But he refused to come out; he said he was too busy. And I thought, "No one is too busy to put their head out of the door for two minutes to say hello and to say, 'I'm working, I've got something,' and excuse himself." But he would not come out.

He never worked very closely with the legislature. I would say this, and I can see it even today, the same pattern is typical of the man. I don't think that Reagan has a mean bone in his body or intends in any way to hurt anybody's feelings in anything, but I think his basic

problem, even right today, is the people that he--and I don't know whether it's his fault or whose fault--the people that he is surrounded by. I don't know much about Washington, as to whether he had a choice as to who he gets to be this, that, or somebody in his cabinet, how it happens to work that way. But the poor man came to Sacramento, and I don't think he knew where the bathrooms were. And he was surrounded with a bunch of. . . . I'm not going to say it in one way or the other, but people who were incompetent. A bunch of incompetents, I guess is what I'm trying to say. They were just awful, and they didn't help him at all.

When the governor came in there, he came in to a deficit. Our money problems were quite large at that point. He came in to cut back on everything and to cut down and so forth. That's why he got elected. But the people that he surrounded himself with. . . . whether he did it or somebody else did it; I think basically the moneybags of Los Angeles did it to him. I think they somewhere along the line probably told him, "Hey, you've got to take this guy, you've got to take that one, you've got to do this," and they didn't know anything. They just didn't know anything about state government. And he got connected with those people, or they were there, whether he chose them basically I don't know. I just have no way of knowing. But that was to me the governor's biggest, I'm not going to say drawback, but the biggest problem that he had was with the help that he had, let's put it that way.

I think it's the same way back in Washington. Some of the people that he has: they come and they go and what not. Why he has let himself get entangled with that kind of a person, [the kind] that sometimes I wonder if they know what they're doing. I just don't know. If you're around Governor Reagan, he is the most charming person you ever wanted to be with. I've gone to many parties with him, and heck, we called him "Ron." I can call him "Ron" today. He's just a real down-to-earth, great man, but [Laughter] whether he had the ability, if

it was his ability to choose the people, why he chose the ones that he did, I'll never know. I don't know what the answer to that is. It's prevalent today, with all these people back there that it seems to me like they go out of their way to embarrass the governor, and now the president. I don't know why, but that's what's befallen the poor person. I think if he goes down in history on anything, it's going to be the people that he's been surrounded with.

I just don't know whether he makes the decision or what, but the ones we had here in Sacramento were terrible. I won't tell you some of the things about them. I'd be into a slander suit so far it wouldn't even be funny. Just couldn't believe them.

HICKE: Can you tell me some things anonymously, or . . .

BRITSCHGI: Nooo, no no no, no way. No. Because some of them are still very much alive, and where they are I don't know. Whether they're in San Francisco or not, I have no idea. That ought to give you a hint.

HICKE: Did you know [U.S. Attorney General] Edwin Meese?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I knew Edwin Meese a little, but not to any great extent. I've spoken with him, been to parties with him and all. But he sort of came in a little bit after I got out of there. I was in there four years with Governor Reagan, and then he appointed me to the Unemployment Board. So I don't dare say anything. I don't want to say anything against Reagan, because I'm not making these comments as anything against the governor, and the president. But there's somewhere in there that somebody has not done right by the governor or the president, in surrounding him with the people that he's been surrounded with.

I would say perhaps the best person he's ever been surrounded with is [Caspar] Cap Weinberger. Cap Weinberger was truly a very, very excellent choice in doing anything, because Cappy and I were in the assembly together, and I got to know Cap Weinberger very, very well. We were very good friends. But some of these

other ones, I shake my head. I don't know who shook them out of the woodwork. [Laughter]

HICKE: I want to ask you a little bit more about Pat Brown. You indicated that you thought perhaps he was over his head just a little bit. Can you elaborate on that?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I think--at least in my opinion--the office of the governorship takes quite a bit of administrative ability. I think George Deukmejian right now is probably the best administrator of the governorship that we've had in years and years, perhaps since Governor Earl Warren.

HICKE: You've actually said all three that I asked you about really weren't very good administrators.

BRITSCHGI: No, they weren't. They were not good administrators. Whether it was due to the difference in the parties, or the makeup of the legislature, versus the governorship. . . See, Pat Brown was in there, and Pat Brown was holding on for dear life because Jesse Unruh was breathing down his neck all the time. Unruh wanted to be the governor. That was his main goal, was to be the governor.

But Pat Brown had a much more pleasing personality than Jesse Unruh ever thought of having. When it came to administrating, again, we're coming back to attorneys. Attorneys are not good administrators. I don't care, you can take any one of them along the line.

HICKE: They have no training.

BRITSCHGI: That's why they're good attorneys, because they're good in that line of work, and that's why they're in that line of work.

HICKE: And they focus on that.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. And as far as trying to tell somebody even how to live, I think the attorneys probably have a harder job keeping a family together and paying the bills and all, because they have no idea of who pays the bills and what the costs of things are, and why they're even paying the bill. Administrators are something that's a different breed of cats. For Pat Brown, of course being an attorney, being an administrator of the district attorney's office in San Francisco, was altogether

different than being a governor of the state of California. Because San Francisco is a city and county, of course, all of its own, and things are done differently in San Francisco than anyplace in God's world. Only San Francisco.

So again, Pat Brown was out of his class. Way before that time, they had a fellow by the name of [James] Jimmy Rolph, who was the mayor of San Francisco and finally became the governor, I think at that point. He was a bad governor too. Because again, San Francisco is different. So I would say that personality-wise, Pat Brown was probably tops. He was just a plain, ordinary man. But I think he was in a little bit over his head on that governorship thing, and he had no help whatsoever from the Democrats in the legislature. Most of them didn't like him because I think they were more loyal to Jesse Unruh than they were to Pat Brown. They made it as miserable for Pat Brown as they possibly could, and that's where they had their problems. That's why poor old Pat Brown didn't go very much further, and that's why Reagan came in and took over.

He [Brown] had to take all the blame. I would say the legislature caused the problems, and Pat Brown got stuck with them. That's, to me, what happened to Pat Brown, because basically I liked the man. I thought he was a real nice person.

- HICKE: In the struggle between Brown and Unruh, what were the Republicans doing?
- BRITSCHGI: Encouraging it.
- HICKE: [Laughter] Cheering on the sidelines?
- BRITSCHGI: Yes, encouraging, that's right.
- HICKE: But did they choose up sides, or did they change sides, or . . .
- BRITSCHGI: We had nothing to say about it. We were so few at that point; we had twenty-four assemblymen. We might as well have gone home, because there wasn't anything we could do. We couldn't pass a bill, we couldn't do anything, unless we had Democrat support. If it was a noncontroversial, nonpolitical bill, we could pass it.

But we never passed a bill that was in any way controversial as far as the effect of the Democrat party on the Republican party or the Republican party on the Democrat party. [We] couldn't even get it off the starting blocks. There was no way you could do anything. We just sat there, hell, for the four years, I guess, and did nothing the whole time. We tried to stir up an argument, but it would never get anywhere.

HICKE: Even your vote didn't matter much? I mean, they didn't have to cultivate your vote?

BRITSCHGI: [They] didn't need you. Because most of the bills, except if there was an urgent bill, why it only took forty-one votes. And they had over fifty-seven votes.

HICKE: It was almost always on a partisan level?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, sure, everything. Of course, you must remember that the Republicans did that very same thing to the Democrats when I first went in there. We had fifty-six Republicans when I first went in there. The Democrats couldn't get a bill off the ground; they couldn't do anything. That's why I wonder sometimes if maybe we shouldn't have an independent legislature, not Republican and not Democrat, and stop all this crazy party fighting thing. Then pass bills that are good for the state of California and not good for the one party above the other party, because one party takes a stand on this or a stand on something else. Then the legislators follow that, and whether it's good, bad, or otherwise, that's it, because they've got the votes.

But if everybody could vote independently. . . . and I tried to do that a lot of times, and that's why of course I wasn't in great favor with some of these people in our party in San Mateo County. Because I always felt that, as much as San Mateo County didn't really have any great need for reform or anything along those particular lines, that we were there--at least I felt I was there--to try to help people help themselves in the needs that they had.

Of course, that's sort of the thinking a little bit of the Democrat party. And that's why they always said that I was a maverick Rep. . .

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

HICKE: So you were a maverick Republican.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I was called a maverick Republican many times by people in San Mateo County, because a lot of times I voted along with the Democrats on some of the things, because I felt that's why we were supposed to be there: to try to help some of the people. But some Republicans take that as a slap in the face and say, "Well, he's there to do that kind of thing, why he certainly is a Democrat instead of a Republican."

HICKE: The party rises above everything else.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, it sure does. Except in the [Congressman Paul N.] McCloskey deal. We ought to get over to that pretty soon.

HICKE: Okay. Let's talk about that.

BRITSCHGI: That was my senate defeat.

HICKE: Oh, this is when you ran for the senate? This was 1970.

Investigation of the Highway Division

HICKE: Before we get to that, let me ask you about a couple of other things. In 1966, you demanded something which we probably need today: an investigation of the highway division for inability to keep traffic moving. And that was twenty years ago!

BRITSCHGI: [Laughter] Well, I was always interested in traffic. The first thing after I got in the legislature, I went after the highway patrol, because in the early days--they still do it to some extent, but not as much as they did in those days--the highway patrol always hid out behind signboards and bushes and waited until your car was going seventy miles an hour, eighty, or a hundred miles an

hour, and then they'd zoom after them and give them a ticket.

My theory was altogether different. I thought that the highway patrol should be on the highway patrolling. When people would see the color of the black-and-white automobile, knowing that it was a police authority, even in the city street, that you immediately--and I think this is perhaps true, at least with me it's true, and I'm sure with a lot of other people--when you see a black-and-white car, I always check to see that I'm doing everything right, staying within the lanes that I'm supposed to be in, and my speedometer's right, and I'm doing this right, and my lights are on if they're supposed to be on, or whatever. You sort of quickly check over everything.

Well, if they're hiding behind a signboard, you aren't going to be checking anything. That was my big argument with the highway patrol. I finally got a lot of them back out on the streets on that, at least in San Mateo County. There was a Captain [] Kennedy there, and I had a lot of meetings with Captain Kennedy at that point to get those men out on the Bayshore Freeway where they belonged. They always hid on the off ramps. I'll tell you where you can find them, I noticed one here not too long ago, down there on the Bayshore. Right at Burlingame there's a development over on the right side, where Days Inn Hotel is, and the Hilton, and I think the Holiday Inn is over there and the Kee Joon's Restaurant.

Well, of course, there was nothing over there, but those trees are still alongside of the Bayshore freeway. There's a group of trees right there. Invariably, you'll go along there and you'll see a highway patrolman sitting off the side of the road, behind those trees. My basic point was to get those men out on the freeway.

HICKE:

You think a deterrant is better than a . . .

BRITSCGI:

Oh, certainly, better than going in there and writing up the obituary list after the accident has occurred, because someone hasn't done what they were supposed to be doing. Well, that was my one big issue.

The second big issue was to try to do something about improving San Mateo County's problem along the Bayshore freeway. Years and years ago, that was terrible. Now, I haven't driven it in the morning in years. I don't know whether it's bad now or not, but it's very crowded.

HICKE: It is, yes.

BRITSCHGI: I well remember putting in a resolution asking the highway division to make a study of the possibility of double-decking Bayshore freeway from San Jose to San Francisco, which would make another freeway out of it. I also suggested as a possibility that it could be a toll road, so that if trucks were coming through, it would be much easier for a truck. . . . and they would do it-- they'd pay the toll going through, so they wouldn't have to stop and start and fool around and waste all their time.

Well, the Division of Highways took a look at that resolution, where they were supposed to make a study. The answer that I got was an insult to everybody's intelligence, and after that I just shook my head and said, "The heck with it." Their answer to me was, in a letter, that it's very unfeasible to double-deck the Bayshore freeway, especially at the San Francisco Airport, because it would be a detriment to the airplanes landing and taking off at the San Francisco Airport if that freeway was double-decked.

Now, if you can swallow that one, you can swallow anything in God's world. But I received that letter from the Division of Highways. I just could not believe it. Every once in a while, I go down there and look at that, and [Laughter] the Hilton Hotel is about five stories or four stories right next to the airport.

HICKE: Besides that, they now have an overhead freeway that runs along beside the airport.

BRITSCHGI: Over the top and around the airport and everything else. [Laughter] I looked at that and I laughed, and I thought to myself, "Boy, they sure came up with a bright answer for that question." And I still think it's not too bad

of an idea; it would sure help a lot of traffic. If people wanted to pay, they could use it. They could certainly build it and try it; it's never been tried. I think they're going to have to double-deck highways in various areas shortly. It's probably going to be expensive. But to dislodge all properties is too costly. Sacramento here is going to find this out in a very short time. We're having a most terrible time here with traffic.

The city of Sacramento is sound asleep. They had, at one point, land bought by the Division of Highways and the city of Sacramento and the county of Sacramento, all of them, for a belt around the city of Sacramento. You know what the authorities in this great cow town of Sacramento have decided, or did decide? That this was a waste of money, and they'll never need that type of freeway around the city of Sacramento, and they disposed of all the land. Developers got hold of it, and disposed of all the land. Now it will never be built unless they dislodge blocks and blocks and blocks of people, or go over the top on an overpass type of thing.

They're going to be so sorry, this town is just going to be a mess. Well, it's grown up now, to where there's, I think they said the other day there's 1,300,000 people involved in metropolitan Sacramento here. At night, you just can't move around. There's no way you can go anywhere. You can't get off the freeway; you can't get on the freeway; it's just terrible. Traffic here. . . . There's only one road, that's highway 80 and highway 50, and they don't connect. If there was a connection to them, it would be find and dandy, but nothing connects.

Our great authorities say that they're going to do something about it. So now they're going to attempt to put a half-a-cent sales tax on. In order to get everybody improving it, they're going to give some to light rail and some to the roadway, and now we have a great argument. Those who are against light rail and those who are against traffic per se are fighting. And

now we've got two sides, one against the other, so it will kill the whole thing. It will never pass the election.

But I have always been one who has been trying to find an answer to it. I have had this question asked me once, and I never will forget it. The question was, at a coffee party, "What am I going to about getting automobiles off the freeways?" Something to think about. I think about that question every once in a while, and that's one of the questions that has stayed with me, because anybody who ever comes up with that answer is going to be a great one. I don't know how you get people out of the automobiles.

California is an altogether different place than most other areas. Our things are so diversified. Maybe we're spoiled; we won't walk three blocks. We won't walk four blocks. But maybe if the price is too high to park your car you might decide to walk three or four blocks.

But I went to San Francisco here a while back, and the price I paid for parking in the O'Farrell Street Garage would make we want to go on BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] any day of the week! [Laughter] I was aghast. I'll always take a second look before I drive to San Francisco again and park in the O'Farrell Street Garage. Well, and in some of the others, I think it's \$1.50 for twenty minutes now.

HICKE:

BRITSCHGI: I think it cost me around \$12 for four hours, or something like that, in the O'Farrell Street Garage. So I'll think twice about that.

HICKE: Well, it [the double-deck freeway] was a good idea twenty years ago, and it's still a good idea.

BRITSCHGI: Well, it might have been a partial answer. It might have been an answer maybe if they would have done it, if someplace else might have copied the same thing on the double-decking of the freeway. Whether they can get the structural supports that will hold the second deck up there or not, I don't know; but it seems to me they could have studied it. The answer I got was enough to make me want to throw up, so I just said, "Oh, well. Forget it."

Because I was bothering the airplanes at the airport.
[Laughter]

After seeing those buildings that are down there now. . . . I'm speaking of the large hotels, even the buildings along that Burlingame commercial area I was talking about, where that Oriental place is out there, I think that's about sixteen or eighteen stories high.

HICKE: That's Kee Joon's.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. It would be about three times the height of the double-deck freeway. I don't know. I'm amazed and aghast every time I go down there, because it makes me mad when I think about it.

HICKE: Yes, that must have been very frustrating, and you probably had other experiences like that.

BRITSCHGI: Oh, sure. You sure do, from these various departments.

HICKE: What makes you keep trying?

BRITSCHGI: Well, that's what you're in there for. You're trying to accomplish a few things and see if you can do something good for what you were in there for. So you try various things. Some were good, some were bad. In fact, in various areas it would be a deterrent to them and they would oppose them. And this happened with a lot of other places, a lot of other legislators the same, only with other aspects of the subject matter.

HICKE: Another thing you tried was offstreet parking; you had something to do with offstreet parking? Does that ring a bell?

BRITSCHGI: No, I don't remember that.

City and County Government Committee

HICKE: Okay. How about cities and county relations? That was the, I guess. . . . I'm getting this from some newspaper articles and so forth, and that was probably the committee you were on.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I was on the City and County Government Committee.

HICKE: That's probably what that referred to.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. I had always had an interest in that, trying to help the cities.

HICKE: Do you recall anything specific?

BRITSCHGI: There was never anything. You see, some people have various ideas. It all goes back, I guess, to paying taxes. People will say, "We don't need a city government, and we don't need a county government. We need a regional government." I guess probably what that might be referring to is at one time there was a great hue and cry to dump out all the cities as such [governments], and all the counties as such, and have a regional government, because there were too many administrative people running, and they were at loggerheads with the county or the city. In San Mateo County, I guess we had, I think at that point it was eleven or twelve cities. Somebody had the bright idea that they wanted to combine them all and leave no city [government], and make it a county.

Well, that all sounds very great, but when you come down to it, the reason that you have a city or the reason you have any other administrative government type of thing, a water district or something else, is because someone does not supply that area with that service. So therefore, you get a group of people together, and they say, "Heck, we're fighting here in Sacramento." We have various little areas like Carmichael and Fair Oaks and a few others that are all part of Sacramento as such but not within the city.

Well, they want all these services, but then they don't want to pay for them. The county says. . . . well, it's just like the sheriff's office. The county supplies all police service to everything outside the city of Sacramento. And everybody else, the police department, the sheriff's department, doesn't get there quick enough when they're called. Well, they can only be so many, and they're probably busy doing something else.

So they say, "Heck, let's form a city, and we'll have our own city government, and we'll have a police department and all." Well, the minute you do that, of course, it gets a little more expensive to do it. But the reason that people want that is because they want

this service real quick. And that's why you have a city, because you want water and you want sewers and you want gas and you want electricity and you want this and that.

But it's easy and very nice and comfortable for people to get to the city government type of operation, because they're close to them. You're right there and you're on the phone. You're calling the mayor or you're calling the city manager or something else. But if it was a regional type of thing, or even a county, you can't talk to your board of supervisors. They're the most idiotic group of people you ever laid an eye on. I just can't believe this board of supervisors we have around here. They don't seem to care for anything. And they're manipulated.

I can give you a perfect example here in Sacramento County, which is all development-manipulated. All developers. They manipulate the whole operation here. We have a beautiful subdivision going in right out here, about two or three miles south of town here. Seven thousand new homes going in. Well, there's always a big cry that you build all these houses and the poor minorities don't have a place to live. So, they sneak in a certain area, section. . . . the fact of the matter is, I think it's on the books here in Sacramento County that 20 percent has to be for minority and low-cost housing.

Well, what you really do is you tear down the whole subdivision after that has happened, because in come these apartments that are not well built because they're low-cost housing, and all the riff-raff comes along, and this has happened out here. They built these very cheap apartments, so the minorities all moved in there and we have the most fantastic gang drug setup out here that you ever wanted to shake a stick at.

So now we come along. We have this 7,000-home development thing out here, and you know what? Developers sneaked, or snuck if that's a good word, snuck in an area for low-cost housing. The people finally woke up to the fact that around these two- and three-hundred-

thousand-dollar houses, they're going to have right in the middle of it a cluster of low-cost minority housing.

HICKE: Didn't you say that was mandated?

BRITSCHGI: Well, I think it's suggested that they do it. But they don't put them in the middle! This [low-cost] development goes right in the middle of this huge development, and they're going to have these low-cost housing things in there. The answer to it was, by the developer and the housing commission, that this is the way that you integrate minority, low-income people with people of a little more affluent living. Their children will be able to mingle with the children in the affluent area, and they will know how to adjust themselves and be able to adjust and live better by learning how the affluent people's children live and play. That was the answer.

What they didn't tell the people out there was that this was going to happen out there. All these people bought out there because they thought it was going to be a very nice, lovely area. And as people are all trying to be urbanites nowadays, now they're going to find out they're going to be right in a quagmire of. . . . Probably it will end up to be a drug mess if there ever was one, because every one of them here are that way in Sacramento. We have some nice gangs here that are connected with the Bloods and so forth of Los Angeles. This is the center of cocaine here in northern California. Right here in Sacramento. Hardly a night goes by that we don't have a murder. Yes. And they're all drug related, every one of them. Unbelievable.

So, my interest in city and county government, and in that type, was to get the counties to supply the services; you wouldn't have to have all these other little regional districts. But the boards of supervisors in many counties don't seem to be doing a very good job. That causes quite a lot of problems: the services that people demand, water districts and sewerage and those kinds of things.

IV. POST-1970 ACTIVITIES

Running for the State Senate: 1970

HICKE: In '70 you ran for the senate. Maybe you can tell me about that.

BRITSCHGI: Well, that was a very interesting race. I was supposed to be a shoo-in on that. There was no way I was going to get defeated.

HICKE: You were running for Senator Dolwig's seat?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. Because Dolwig retired. This all goes back. I'll have to tell you that Arthur Younger died; he was a congressman. Everybody wanted me to run for congress. They thought I'd be an ideal congressman at that point.

Well, my wife didn't want to go to Washington, and I wasn't too crazy about going to Washington. So I decided not to run. So Pete McCloskey came to see me, said, "Are you going to run?"

I said, "No, I don't think so."

He said, "Well, I'll run."

I said, "That's great. Go ahead." So Pete McCloskey and I became very good friends and what not from that standpoint. Lo and behold, who decides to run but Shirley Temple Black, for congress.

Well, the Democrats in San Mateo County knew that a Republican would win the election, whoever it was. Shirley Temple Black was a very lovely girl, but when it came to knowing anything about politics, she wasn't it, I'll tell you. [Laughter] Poor Shirley. She was very sweet. I really liked her, but poor gal, she didn't know anything about it. She decided to run.

So anyhow, 20,000 Democrats re-registered as Republicans in San Mateo County so that they could vote in the primary for McCloskey, and that's what defeated Shirley Temple Black, because McCloskey was my kind of a Republican. He was a pretty basic kind of liberal, middle-of-the-roader. Shirley Temple was very much of a conservative, was what she thought she was. [Laughter] I heard her speak a couple of times, and poor Shirley. I

think she meant well, but she didn't know what she was doing.

Well, these 20,000 Democrats turned out . . .

[Interruption]

HICKE: OK, we were just talking about Shirley Temple Black.

BRITSCHGI: So the primary came along. Twenty thousand Democrats re-registered as Republicans and they defeated her and voted for McCloskey. Well, McCloskey then became the very conservationist type of legislator. Where he got his great fame, he was stopping, I think it was, a PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric] power line that was going to go down on top of the Skyline Boulevard up there. He fought against that, and the conservationists thought he was their darling.

But these 20,000 people stayed registered as Republicans as long as McCloskey was around. When I ran for the senate, I had 80,000 registered Republicans in San Mateo County. And there were 70,000 registered Democrats in San Mateo County, so I had a 10,000 pull on it. I was really a cinch to win the election. The only problem was that these 20,000 Democrats were included in that 80,000 number. And when the votes came out in the final, [Arlen] Gregorio, who was my opponent, ended up with 90,000 votes and I ended up with 80,000 votes. So I pulled some of my own Democrat votes that I always do, and he pulled those other 20,000 Democrats, who were Democrats all the time; they went back and voted for the Democrat on that, because this was a new senate deal, all over the whole San Mateo County. That's how I lost that election. Those people are still to this day registered as Republicans down there, and there's going to be a battle right now going on in the congressional race down there.

There's a senator or a congressman; I think he lives in Pleasanton. I don't know how he's involved over in San Mateo County, but I guess his district probably runs over that part. He's going to be in for a rude awakening if he doesn't wake up to the fact that that's what's going to happen to him. Because McCloskey's supporting

the other guy, who is running against him in the primary election. Apparently, there are two Republicans running in that election. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if this congressman that's in there gets dumped, because those McCloskeyites are going to vote for this other fellow just as sure as I'm sitting here. He doesn't know what's going to hit him on that. That's why I lost that election down there.

HICKE: What were the issues in your campaign?
 BRITSCHGI: There weren't any.
 HICKE: Just personalities?
 BRITSCHGI: Yes. Just, it was a question of whether . . .
 HICKE: Partisanship?
 BRITSCHGI: . . . of whether you wanted to have a Republican senate. What was involved in it was the control of the senate. And had I been elected to that, the whole state of California would have been different today. That election changed . . .
 HICKE: It was twenty-one and nineteen beforehand?
 BRITSCHGI: . . . changed the whole procedure in the state of California. Because the Republicans were in charge of the senate. They had the President pro tem in the senate, and [President pro tem] Jack Schrade was a very good friend of mine; he was the president pro tem at that time. As soon as this vote came in, it changed the whole thing. He got dumped out and the Democrats have taken over ever since, and that's why we got stuck with [President pro tem David] Roberti, who's in there right now. When I think of that whole thing, it makes me sick. But as it turns out, I was better off anyways by getting out of there.

Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board; George Deukmejian

BRITSCHGI: Of course, Reagan appointed me to the Unemployment Board after that.
 HICKE: How did that happen?
 BRITSCHGI: I had a lot of good friends in the senate. The senate had to confirm me. I wasn't going to be appointed, but

they put so much pressure on Reagan that they finally decided they better appoint me. They were going to hold up the budget if they didn't appoint me. They had gotten that far, because the office, or the vacancy, was open in June, and I didn't get appointed until September. They held off as long as they could, and they didn't get a budget until they made the appointment. Again this Senator Cusanovich, who comes into my life quite often: he and I were very good friends, and he is the one that did the work up there for me to get the appointment. That's how that worked out.

HICKE: How did it happen that you had so many good friends in the senate?

BRITSCHGI: Well, they were all my buddies in the assembly.

HICKE: Oh, formerly assemblymen.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, they all moved over to the senate. In fact, quite a few of them are still over there right now. I can go over there and I am very welcome over there in the senate at the present time, because most of them are all really good friends of mine. I was with them for ten years or so. Even the present governor was in the assembly with me. So I still know a lot of those people.

HICKE: Tell me about Deukmejian.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

BRITSCHGI: George was a very different kind of an assemblyman. George was very quiet, very studious and very interested. He had more problems probably in a lot of other areas. He was from the Long Beach area, and it was a growing area in that time. They had a lot of problems down there. George worked hard in doing his job.

George was sort of, I'm not going to say antisocial, but George never attended too many of the social functions, because he was always so busy working at his job. We never saw very much of George. But I never had a problem with George, always got along really well with

him. He was a very brilliant guy. That's why I say I think of all the governors right up to now, he's the tops, the best of all by far of any of the other governors. George was a state assemblyman, then he went into the senate and became a state senator, and then he was attorney general, I guess, at that point from there. Then he came in as governor, and nobody could be more qualified than George.

The problem is, like everything else, everybody wants more than they either deserve or expect. But they ask for it, and then when they don't get it, why they get mad at the person who has control of it. But I think the man has done an excellent job in trying to do everything to keep everyone happy in California. I think the people kind of feel that way; I don't think there's very much in the way of criticism. Oh, the legislators do it, but they do that because it makes good copy at home if they get their name in the paper that they're taking on somebody.

So once in a while, they don't get what they want out of the governor. Why then the governor is an SOB and so forth. Two weeks later, they think he's great because he signed a bill that they wanted. So [Laughter] that's the way the ball bounces. But I think California is very lucky in having George as a governor. He's been the best of all of them.

HICKE: What were your responsibilities on the Unemployment Board?

BRITSCHGI: Ah, that was something a little different.

HICKE: That was the State Unemployment Insurance . . .

BRITSCHGI: State Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board. That board handled all of the cases from the Department of Employment. When people became unemployed through one reason or another, there is a law that says that you can apply for unemployment insurance that will help you until you get your next job or your next employment. Well, lots of times people were displaced for maybe not their own fault, but maybe the administration's fault or whatnot. So consequently, they'd have an opportunity to

have a hearing before the department. Then if they didn't like the results of that hearing, whether they should be given unemployment insurance or should not be given unemployment insurance . . .

For an example, if a person came to work drunk, why he'd eventually end up getting fired. Well, they'd have a hearing, and the hearing officer would decide that he was fired for his own fault. Therefore he should not be receiving unemployment insurance. Because the unemployment insurance program is a program most people don't understand. It's a program that's paid for exclusively by the employers, not the employee. The employee doesn't contribute a nickel to it. It's all contributed to a fund by the employers. He has to file the amount of moneys that he pays his total work force; then he has to pay a percentage of that into a pot, and that's where the money comes from to pay for unemployment insurance.

Well, after the hearing officer decides that this fellow was really fired because he stole something or he was drunk, he would be denied his unemployment insurance. Then he has a right to appeal to our board, and these were the cases that we received. In my time we had a five-member board. We had seventeen attorneys sitting up there with us, and they would read the cases first and recommend to us what decision we should make, and then we'd read it over. We had our own policies: whether a girl should get unemployment insurance because she got pregnant, or something. All things like that is what we really did. It was very, very interesting. I learned more excuses as to why you should get something for nothing [Laughter] than you could ever shake a stick at.

Honestly, we'd laugh; we'd sit there and we'd go over these cases, and we were assigned about, oh, we'd try to do about ten or twelve cases a day, each one of us. But we were always about five, six thousand cases behind. There were just so many of them. Now they've increased the board number to seven, but they don't do

half the work that we did. Right now, it's gotten to be a political thing.

It was basically sort of political when I went in there. If it was a Republican governor, the board would be Republican, and if it was a Democratic governor, he would appoint Democrats, because you serve for four years and then every four years your term would come up. Then you had a chance of getting kicked out or not.

So after the eighth year I was on there, I got kicked out by one who I haven't mentioned a word about, who is not even worthwhile talking about as a governor or anything else.

HICKE: That's right, we did skip one. [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.]

BRITSCHGI: We skipped him, and I'm glad we did. [Laughter] Because he's not even worthwhile talking about. I have no love for the boy. I knew him when he was practically in diapers, because his father and I, as I told you, were very good friends. He was something else. How that man ever got to be a governor or anything else is beyond me.

Anyway, they had a problem with a gentleman who was in the Department of Recreation or something serving under him, and they wanted to get rid of him. So instead of firing him, which they could have done, why, my term of office came open at that very same time. So they called me at twelve o'clock and said, "We want your office vacated at three." That afternoon.

So I told the girl, I said, "I'll do you better. You can have the damn thing right now," and I just threw all the stuff on the floor and walked out the door. Never finished the thing that I was doing. [Laughter] I thought if they were going to fire me that quick, why they can have it. Called me at twelve o'clock. In fact, it was at five minutes to twelve they called me. "We want you to vacate your office by three in the afternoon." [Laughter]

So I did. I said, "To heck with it, I've had enough political life." That was thirty-four years of it. I

said, "I'm going to retire and play golf." And that's exactly what I'm going to do now.

HICKE: [Laughter] In about five minutes or so.

BRITSCHGI: Yes, go play golf.

Final Reflections: Rewards of Being a Legislator

HICKE: Well, let me just ask one wrap-up question. Back to the legislature. What were the particular rewards of being a legislator?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, I think it again goes back to my same subject matter. I received a great benefit of feeling the reward of being able to do things for people who needed some help. That was my mission. I didn't go to the legislature to try to cure the world. Some of these fellows came in there and tried to cure everything. They ended up being a mess. I didn't want to be a mess. But I did want to and always tried to help people. If people came to me and needed help, I just did everything I could to help them out. If they honestly, really needed help.

So that was my great mission in legislative work: to try to help other people. And I think I've accomplished some of that, in a way.

HICKE: It certainly does sound as if you did.

BRITSCHGI: I think I did. I had a lot of things done for the area down there that I was happy about: getting moneys for the marinas for the city of Redwood City, and doing some freeway work, and the school work where I was able to get money for certain things for them. As I say, San Mateo County really didn't have all those great problems in those days. They were free of problems; luckily for me they were. It was just the little individual things that people came and complained to me about. If they were worthy, we tried to help them and do what we could for them.

HICKE: On the other hand, what were the worst factors of being a legislator?

BRITSCHGI: I don't think there were any, for me. I would say to you right now that the worst factor of my being a legislator

is that I am afraid to ever tell anybody I'm a legislator from the actions of the present legislature, in its entirety, and what it's doing today. I don't believe they're doing the job that they're supposed to be doing. I think the whole legislative process has gotten completely out of line. And they're not legislating for the good of the people of the state of California; they're legislating for the good of the legislator. And there's quite a difference there.

HICKE: Indeed.

BRITSCHGI: And with that, I will thank you very much.

HICKE: Well, I would like to thank you very much. It's been a very informative interview, and thank you.

[End Tape 4, Side B]

[Session 3, September 3, 1988]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

Creating the Senior Legislature, 1980

HICKE: I've got my tape recorder here, and I think we're ready to roll, if you're ready. You're going to tell me about creating the senior . . .

BRITSCHGI: Senior legislature. In reading the local papers, I read where a group of senior people went to their legislators and talked about creating some legislation for the seniors, especially in the area of nursing homes.

HICKE: When was this?

BRITSCHGI: In 1980. In fact, it was just a little bit before-- probably '79--but I say 1980. The answer they got from the legislators was, "Go back home and write letters to the legislators, and that will help get your message across." I was really concerned with that thing, and I wasn't doing anything but playing golf, so I went down to the Commission on Aging, which had offices in Sacramento, and I volunteered myself to do some work for them if they needed some help in creating a better avenue of getting to the legislators.

The secretary to the Commission on Aging, whose name was John but I can't remember his last name to save my neck . . .

HICKE: Maybe we can find that. It was 1980?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. I think he's still there. He said, well, they were thinking about creating a senior legislature. I said, "Good, I'd be very happy to help you." So I joined a group that met every week, and we went over avenues of trying to create a senior legislature.

HICKE: Who else was in the group, do you recall?

BRITSCHGI: Well, there were five other people from the area here. There was a lady from Auburn. I couldn't tell you their names; I just don't know.

Then I thought, well, I've got a better idea. I want to go around the United States. I will take a tour. My

wife and I got in our little old Toyota, and we went around the United States. I visited forty-three states, and got into thirty-eight state capitols. That had to do with helping the seniors in their plight all over the United States.

HICKE: So other states had programs already in place?

BRITSCHGI: Some of them did, yes. Quite a few, I would say. I think there were about twelve of them that had senior legislatures that met and brought their problems in that form to the legislature as such. Now, Levi Strauss [& Co.] put up \$25,000 to help create this legislature, but we knew it was going to take about \$50,000. And I'll get back to that a little bit later.

As we went around the United States, I found that the best program that was on at the time was a senior legislature as it was conceived in Georgia. They had the best one.

I brought all this material back to our meetings, and we sifted through it for quite a while--a couple of months, probably--and that was the start of the creation of the State Senior Legislature in California. What we had to do was put down all the rules: how you were going to elect assemblymen, how you were going to elect senators, and how many we'd have, and all of that. The Commission on Aging set up appointments by the governor and various other people, I think the assembly appoints some of them, and the Health and Welfare Department I believe appoints a few. Mrs. [] Levi was in there as the senior--I don't know what her title was at that time--heading the whole aging program.

And then we had several committees in the legislature that were working on senior programs.

HICKE: Who was qualified to be elected to this senior legislature?

BRITSCHGI: Anybody could get elected from the districts. There were I believe eleven districts. I'm thinking now, but I think there were eleven districts in the state of California.

HICKE: And was there an age requirement?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, yes, you had to be a senior citizen, sixty-five. And then they had to run a campaign, get elected just like an assemblyman would or a senator would, and they had to appear before their people and try to convince them to vote for them. And we held the elections and got them all elected. Then brought them up to Sacramento with the money we had, and then we were trying to get more money from the . . . I knew where there was money in the state legislature.

So I went over to see Mr. [Assemblyman Louis] Papan, who was chairman of the Joint Legislative Rules Committee. When I was on that committee, I knew we had a couple of hundred thousand dollars to play with. So I went to see Lou Papan, and he promised me that they'd come up with another \$25,000 to meet the \$50,000 that we were going to expect to spend, because we had to pay for these people and transportation, to house them up here and to keep them for three days in their legislative sessions.

We asked them all, the ones who were elected, to meet with their people and see what kind of legislation they wanted. Well, nursing homes was the big problem--and still is--but it was the main source of interest at that point.

HICKE: That stands to reason.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. The way they're handled, and who was doing it, and all of that stuff.

Well, we got them all together and we held our sessions in the assembly chambers, just like the legislature did. They introduced their bills, and we sent them to committees, and the committees reported back on them. Quite a few of the bills were identical, but a little bit different little versions. The Legislative Counsel also cooperated with us, and they wrote the bills up for the seniors. They worked over them for about three days, but you know, what happened was that before we could get the money out of the legislature, we were blackmailed.

HICKE: What? Oh, dear.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. Isn't that something? We were blackmailed by the fact that we had to promise to introduce a resolution for

Mr. Papan saying he was a great supporter of the seniors, and he could use that to campaign. We had to do that for the chairman of the senate committee.

HICKE: Who was that?

BRITSCHGI: Mellow, [Senator] Henry Mellow. And we had to do it for the chairman of the assembly committee. I think his name is Ferlando or Ferlandi. You've got to be careful: there are two of them that are almost alike. This man is from San Pedro.

HICKE: Okay. Well, we can find that.

BRITSCHGI: I think he's a doctor or an osteopath or a dentist or something. He calls himself doctor. I think he's a doctor of some sort.

Well, before we got through, we had to give him a resolution for all the great work he did in handling the chairman of the Commission on Aging, or aging programs in the legislature. And we had to have a resolution for Willie Brown, and we had to have another one for Leo McCarthy. I tell you, I was just sick. I could have just gone out and said the hell with the whole thing.

But we did pass a few little bills which basically were secondary to these darn resolutions that got by.

So we had a dinner that night, and after that, I just sort of dropped away. I note every once in a while reading the paper whether the senior legislature is still meeting, and now they're producing bills. Whether they still have the same resolutions for these guys, I don't know, but they all went home and used them to campaign, how great they were, helping the seniors. So I said, oh well, we got the thing set up, and they're meeting now.

HICKE: They're still meeting?

BRITSCHGI: They still meet, yes. They meet every year.

HICKE: But you gave up participation?

BRITSCHGI: Yes, I stayed away from it. I just got them started, and that was the end. There was really nothing I could do in there anymore anyway.

HICKE: Other than the one on nursing homes, did they pass other resolutions?

BRITSCHGI: Oh, they had some bills on. . . I think it was on feeding and housing. There were several bills that they did. They ended up with about eleven bills that they got by, as I remember.

HICKE: And then what did they do with these bills?

BRITSCHGI: Well, that's the way it happens: nothing. They were sent to the committees that handled the bills in the various houses, and that's the end of them. So I thought I was really doing something good, but I'm not so sure anymore that it was good or not. I never hear from them. I guess they got it started and that was the end of it.

HICKE: Well, it seems like if they can hang on, certainly their time is coming, if it hasn't come yet.

BRITSCHGI: Well, I think so. I think they'll be able to put enough pressure on these men down there, and ladies, that they might be able to get some of their things by. If they use it properly, but the whole thing really, Carole, ended up to be so political. Even the executive secretary thought, "Well, I'm going to take his place away from him, as executive secretary." And he kind of brushed me off a little bit on the thing, so I thought, the heck with it. I've got something else to do; I'll go out and play golf.

HICKE: Yes. Who needs that?

BRITSCHGI: Yes. But we did get the money from Levi Strauss, and that means all the credit in the world, because they're the ones that really got us started. They put this money up as front money for us. And then we finally got the money out of the state legislature; it was there all the time, and we had the promise of getting it, and there was no sense of having to have all these resolutions to these men. But that's the way politics bounces around.

I wanted to get you to put that in there as an accomplishment of mine. I'm proud of creating the darn thing.

HICKE: That's really interesting, and I'm glad to have it in there, and I hope that people will read about it and that more people will hear about it.

BRITSCHGI: Well, I put that in as my swan song, Carole. I forgot to tell you all about that when we were interviewing, and I thought that might be a little important.

HICKE: Yes. Well, I'm just delighted that you thought to add that, and that we could do this telephone interview.

BRITSCHGI: So I kind of take that down as a monument of my work, closing it off. I was proud of going through forty-three states and going into thirty-eight capitols.

HICKE: Oh, yes. How long did that tour take you?

BRITSCHGI: Two months. And I can tell you a little aside of this thing here. There were so many things that were so interesting that it wasn't even funny. I'd come out of one state laughing and going into another state.

I'd go into New Jersey, and we went to Trenton, which is the capital. It is just a god-awful place. Trenton, New Jersey, is the scum of the earth, in a way. So I go there, and I go to the aging department, and I ask the gentlemen there how they are getting along with their getting money for their operation of their thing, because every state I went to practically was screaming for more money. Well, he said, "You know, we've got \$41 million and don't know how to spend it."

HICKE: What!

BRITSCHGI: And I kind of looked at him, and I thought he was telling me a fib. Well, you know what they did? When they put in gambling in New Jersey, in order to get the senior citizens to vote for allowing the gambling to be established in Atlantic City, some smarty wrote into the legislation that the seniors, senior citizens, aging group, get 10 percent of all the profit money off the top. So they're in great shape. They don't have to worry about anything. They've got more money than they know what to do with.

And then I go up to Vermont. We went all over. We had a great time. We went up to Vermont, and I get up there, and I run into a real different kind of a person. [Laughter] I asked him how they solved their problems. Well, mostly nursing homes and feeding the aged were the

two big problems. I said, "Well, how do you feed your people when you're spread out like this here in Vermont?"

"Well," he said, "if we can't get to some area, why we have Mrs. Jones who lives over there cook the meals and the people can get to her house easy, so five or six of them will go to her house for the dinner or lunches, whatever it happens to be, and we pay her."

I said, "What do you do about inspections?"

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Don't you inspect the place that you're having the food? And you have to have bathrooms, men's and women's bathrooms when you have feeding facilities, and things like that?"

He said, "I don't even know what you're talking about."

I said, "You come out to California and you'll find out in a hurry." [Laughter] You couldn't feed anybody outside and get paid for it without having the sanitary facilities and all the rest of the things that go with it, you know. And then I said to him, "Well, how do you make decisions, if you have to make a decision real quick around here?"

He said, "You see that white building down there? That's the church and the statehouse, and the steeple near it has a bell. We ring the bell, and everybody drops what they're doing and we all come to the building and we discuss the problem, and if there's fifty people there, if twenty-six of them vote for it, that's what decision we follow."

HICKE: Well, that's back to the original town meetings, isn't it?

BRITSCHGI: That's exactly what it was.

HICKE: That's wonderful.

BRITSCHGI: That's exactly what it was. Well, we went to so many different places. I tell you, it's just utterly amazing the difference.

HICKE: And you compiled all this in a report?

BRITSCHGI: And I've thrown it all away now.

HICKE: What!

BRITSCHGI: Yes.

HICKE: Didn't anybody keep it?

BRITSCHGI: No. I've thrown it all away. We gave them the information, basically most of it that they wanted. We compiled it out of Georgia mostly, and some out of Kansas that came in. Kansas had a good program. But some of the others didn't even know what I was talking about. I go up to New Hampshire and I talk to the lady up there who was head of the aging, and I said, "Well, what are you doing about money?"

She said, "Well, we don't have any problems with money."

I said, "What do you mean, you don't have any problems?"

She said, "Well, I'm married to the speaker of the senate, so there's no problem with money there at all."

HICKE: [Laughter] Oh, that's wonderful.

BRITSCHGI: So I tell you, I came home with a world of knowledge.

HICKE: Not all of it applicable, though.

BRITSCHGI: I should have written a book on it at the time.

HICKE: You should have!

BRITSCHGI: I go to North Carolina, and I think the fellow's name was Yarrington or something like that. I said, "How do you get along with getting money from the legislature?"

"No problem at all," he said. "The governor and I were raised together, we're buddies, and he takes care of me and I take care of him and there's no problem with money."

HICKE: Oh, that is marvelous. That is absolutely great.

BRITSCHGI: There were real interesting things that we ran into, just fantastic things, really.

HICKE: It must have been an amazing trip.

BRITSCHGI: Oh, it was. I came home with so darn much material that you just couldn't believe what I had. And then I think about a year ago I threw it all away. I didn't think I'd ever need it again, not knowing that Carole Hicke would be coming along.

HICKE: That's right.

BRITSCHGI: I could have kept some of it for you, but. . . Anyway, that's one thing that I wanted you to have in there.

HICKE: OK, well that's great.

BRITSCHGI: As long as we were talking about [Inaudible] people, give them a little credit on that.

HICKE: Absolutely. Well, you know, that reminds me: I'm not sure that I asked you if you have papers anyplace, either on deposit in the archives or bill files, or do you have any at home?

BRITSCHGI: No. I don't.

HICKE: That's one of the things they ask us to check on.

BRITSCHGI: I threw most of my stuff away. I've been out of there since '70, so I didn't think I'd need it anymore.

HICKE: Yes. You didn't know again that I was coming along to ask about it!

BRITSCHGI: No, darn it. I'm sorry I didn't, Carole.

HICKE: Well, I am too, but hopefully if we get this program under way and more people learn about it, then people will keep us in mind.

BRITSCHGI: Yes. I think so. Most of the things I told you are probably coming true. Have you been reading the paper about our state legislature?

HICKE: Oh, yes. It's hard not to read about it.

BRITSCHGI: I'm not very wrong, everything I said.

HICKE: That's right.

BRITSCHGI: I'm thinking about it. I noticed that [Senator William] Bill Richards, the other day--he's a retiring senator--spoke to the reporters, and you'd swear that he read my report to you already. He was almost word-for-word about those guys.

HICKE: What paper was that in?

BRITSCHGI: It was in the Sacramento Bee about two weeks ago. It was just the day the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] moved in when he spoke. He hit it right on the head.

All right, Carole.

HICKE: Well, I really do appreciate this a lot, Carl. Thank you so much.

BRITSCHGI: I hope you get something out of this one. Anything else, let me know. OK, Carole.

HICKE: OK. Thank you. Goodbye.

BRITSCHGI: Goodbye.

[End Tape 5, Side A]

[End of Interview]