

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

HON. LLOYD W. LOWREY

California State Assemblyman, 1940 - 1962

April 20 and 27, May 11, 18, and 26, 1987
Rumsey, California

By Jacqueline S. Reinier
Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento



March Fong Eu
Secretary of State

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

Information	(916) 445-4293
Document Restoration	(916) 445-4293
Exhibit Hall	(916) 445-0748
Legislative Bill Service	(916) 445-2832
(prior years)	

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None

LITERARY RIGHTS AND QUOTATION

This manuscript is hereby made available for research purposes only. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the California State Archivist or the Oral History Program, Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to:

California State Archives
1020 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

or

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819

The request should include identification of the specific passages and identification of the user.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Lloyd W. Lowrey, Oral History Interview, Conducted in 1987 by Jacqueline S. Reinier, California State University, Sacramento, for the California State Archives, State Government Oral History Program.



March Fong Eu
Secretary of State

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

Information	(916) 445-4293
Document Restoration	(916) 445-4293
Exhibit Hall	(916) 445-0748
Legislative Bill Service	(916) 445-2832
(prior years)	

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:

Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

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

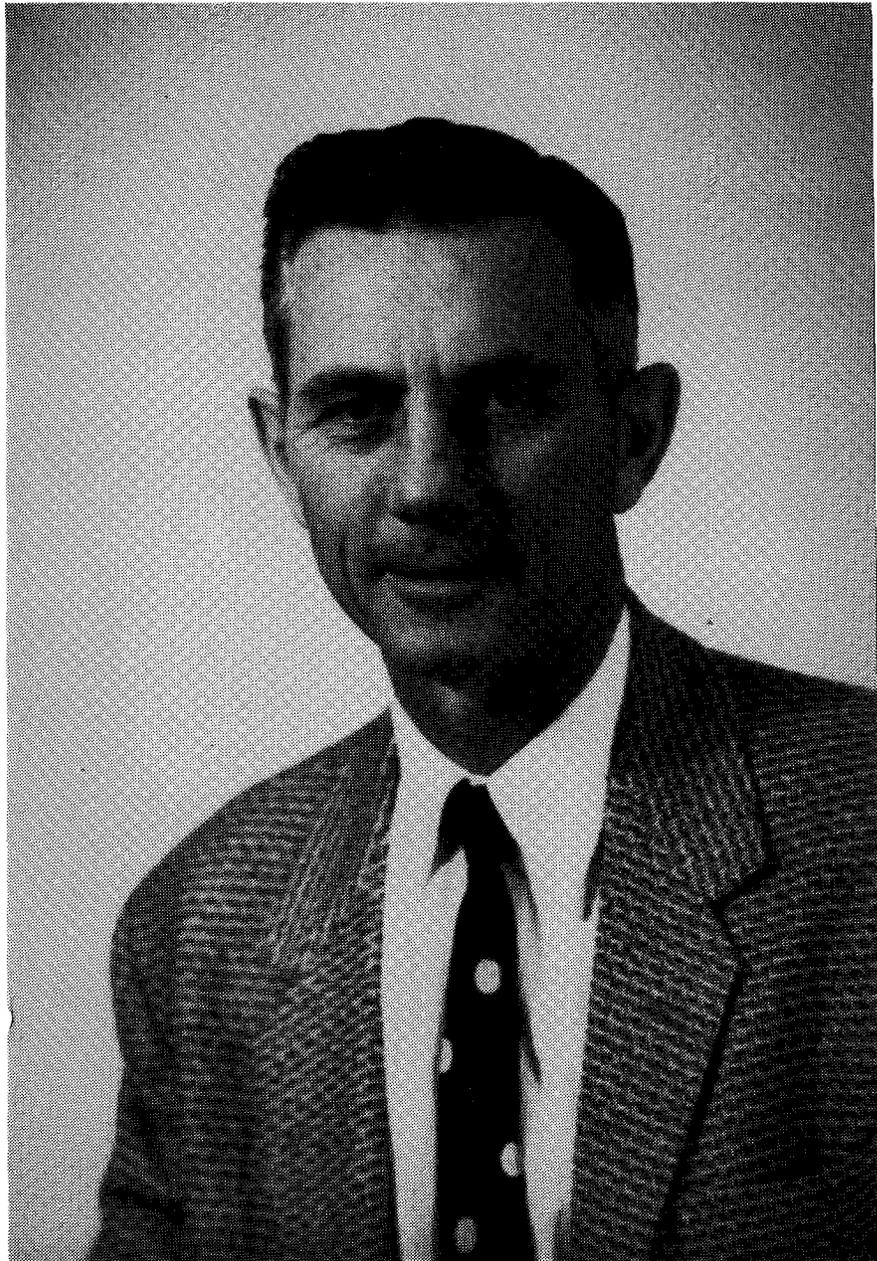
Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

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.



LLOYD W. LOWREY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW SUMMARY	i
BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY	iii
I. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND	1
[Session 1, April 20, 1987, Tape 1, Side A]	1
Growing Up in the Capay Valley	1
The Lowrey Ranch	2
Education	3
Teaching School	5
II. FRESHMAN ASSEMBLYMAN IN 1940	7
Running For The Assembly in 1940	7
First Impressions of The Assembly	10
Bipartisan Coalition vs Governor Culbert L. Olson	10
[Tape 1, Side B]	13
III. WORLD WAR II	15
Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943	15
Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem, 1943	17
Attitudes toward the Japanese in the Capay Valley	18
Possibility of Japanese Espionage	20
Japanese Internment	22
Investigation of Opposition to Legislation Regarding the Japanese	24
Reflection	25
[Session 2, April 27, 1987, Tape 2, Side A]	26
More on Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943	26
More on Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem	27
IV. POSTWAR ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES	28
Education	28
Vice Chair, Ways and Means Committee	29
Assisting Impoverished Rural School Districts	30
"Chick Sale" Bill	31
Governor Earl Warren	33
Arthur H. Samish	34
[Tape 2, Side B]	37

	Lessening Samish's Influence: Election of James W. Silliman as Speaker of the Assembly	37
V.	LOBBYISTS	44
	Lobbyists' Function and Practices	44
	Public Relations	47
VI.	AGRICULTURAL ISSUES	49
	[Session 3, May 11, 1987, Tape 3, Side A]	49
	More on Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943	49
	Return of the Japanese from the Internment Camps	50
	More on Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem	51
	The Family Farm vs the Large Grower	52
	160 Acre Limitation on Bureau of Reclamation Water	54
	Obtaining Votes on Agricultural Issues	55
	The Bracero Program	57
	Cesar Chavez and Farm Labor Organization	59
	Associated Farmers of California	60
	Agriculture, Corporate Interests, and Governor Ronald Reagan	61
	[Tape 3, Side B]	61
	Agricultural Legislation--Workmen's Compensation	64
	Hide and Brand, Meat Inspection	64
	Agricultural Spraying	65
	Pesticides	66
	Indirect Legislation through the Council of State Governments	69
VII.	COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS	70
	Committee to Amend the U.S. Constitution	72
	[Session 4, May 18, 1987, Tape 4, Side A]	75
	Reapportionment -- "One Man, One Vote"	77
VIII.	WATER ISSUES	78
	Public vs. Private Power	78
	More on 160 Acre Limitation of Bureau of Reclamation Water	81
	California Water Plan	82
	[Tape 4, Side B]	86
IX.	CONSERVATION ISSUES	88
	Dams	88
	Fire Control	89
	Governor Ronald Reagan and Conservation	91
X.	EXPERIENCES WITH VARIOUS STATE LEADERS	92
	Governor Ronald Reagan and Casper W. Weinberger	92
	Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.	94

	Civil Rights Legislation	96
	[Tape 5, Side A]	96
	Speaker Jesse Unruh	98
	Retirement	102
	Marriage to Helen Frances	102
XI.	TACTICS OF AN EXPERIENCED LEGISLATOR	103
	Use of the Interim Committee	104
	Use of the Press	106
	[Tape 5, Side B]	107
	Tactics of Effective Legislation	108
	Cutting Governor Earl Warren's Budget	110
	More on Vice Chair of Ways and Means Committee	112
	Role of Friendship in the Legislature	115
	[Session 5, May 26, 1987, Tape 6, Side A]	118
	Ostracization in the Legislature	118
XII.	CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATURE AND CALIFORNIA POLITICS	121
	Campaign Funds	121
	Growth in Staff	122
	Campaign Spending	123
	[Tape 6, Side B]	127
	Decline in Voter Participation	127
	Decline in Legislators' Responsiveness to Voters	129
XIII.	RETIREMENT: 1962 AND AFTER	131
	Native American Issues and Culture	132
	Future Plans: University of the Americas	134
	INDEX	137

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor:

Jacqueline Reinier
Director, Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
B.A., University of Virginia [History]
M.A., UC Berkeley [History]
Ph.D., UC Berkeley [History]

Interview Time and Place:

April 20, 1987
Home of Lloyd W. Lowrey in Rumsey, California
Session of one hour

April 27, 1987
Home of Lloyd W. Lowrey in Rumsey, California
Session of one hour

May 11, 1987
Home of Lloyd W. Lowrey in Rumsey, California
Session of one hour

May 18, 1987
Home of Lloyd W. Lowrey in Rumsey, California
Session of two hours

May 26, 1987
Home of Lloyd W. Lowrey in Rumsey, California
Session of one hour

Editing

Reinier 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.

On July 29, 1988, Mr. Lowrey was forwarded a copy of the edited transcript for his approval, which was returned with minor corrections.

Papers

There exist no private papers which the interviewer was able to consult for this interview.

Tapes and Interview Records

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

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Lloyd W. Lowrey was born on December 7, 1903 in Rumsey, California where the ranch was located belonging to his father, John Thomas Lowrey, and his mother, Jennie Caroline Travis Lowrey. He grew up on this beautiful ranch in the Capay Valley, attending a one-room school house in Rumsey for his primary education. From 1918 to 1922 he attended Esparto High School more than twenty miles away from the Lowrey ranch. In 1922 he went to the University of California at Berkeley from which he graduated with a degree in Geology in 1926. The following year he continued at Berkeley as a graduate student in Education, obtaining a secondary credential in 1927 and later a life credential in school administration.

Mr. Lowrey spent his young manhood as a secondary teacher and weekend rancher. He taught high school science in McCloud, Siskiyou County, and Weed, Winters, and Marysville, Yolo County from 1927 to 1940. From 1932 to 1940 he served as a member of the Yolo County Board of Education. While a teacher, he also managed the Lowrey ranch for his father until he took over the operation completely in the 1930s. In 1942 Mr. Lowrey served briefly in the California State Guard.

Mr. Lowrey has retained a life-long interest in geology, archaeology and paleontology. In the summer of 1933 he participated in the Rainbow Bridge Monument Valley Expedition as a geologist and paleontologist. In the 1930s he directed five subsequent expeditions to the areas of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers in New Mexico and Arizona and explored Glen Canyon of the Colorado River before that area was covered by the present-day Lake Powell.

Mr. Lowrey was elected to the California Assembly to represent Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, Yolo (and later Lake) Counties in 1940. He served in the assembly until his retirement in 1962. During these years he actively promoted issues in the areas of agriculture, conservation, and water policy while serving as vice chair of the Ways and Means Committee for eighteen years, chairing the subcommittee on education. Although a member of the Democratic party, he ran unopposed in his district during the years cross-filing was in effect. In the last ten years of his legislative career he served as California's representative on the Council of State Governments. As a rancher and conservationist, Mr. Lowrey has belonged to a wide variety of organizations, including the Grange, the Cattlemen's Association, the California Wool Growers' Association, the Soil Conservation Society of America, and the Society of American Foresters.

Mr. Lowrey married Helen Frances on November 3, 1945. The Lowreys have three sons, Lloyd Jr. (born 1946), an attorney currently living in Salinas, Jan Thomas (born 1949) who now

manages the Lowrey ranch, and Timothy T. (born 1953) a renowned botanist, who continues his father's life-long interest in science. Since Mr. Lowrey's retirement from the California state legislature in 1962, he has continued to live on and manage the Lowrey ranch in the Capay valley.

[Session 1, April 20, 1987]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

I. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Growing Up in the Capay Valley

REINIER: Mr. Lowrey, you're a native Californian. Were you born near here in the Capay Valley?

LOWREY: Within two miles of where we're residing right now.

REINIER: Was that in Rumsey?

LOWREY: That was in Rumsey. In what was known in those days as the old Colonel Pickens place. Colonel Pickens was with [General George Armstrong] Custer when Custer destroyed himself and a group of men in the fight against the Indians.

REINIER: And when you were a boy did Colonel Pickens used to tell you stories?

LOWREY: Oh, he used to thrill me with the stories he told me about his experiences fighting the Indians.

REINIER: Now, your father was an early settler of this valley.

LOWREY: One of the first. He came here as a young man from over in Sonoma County where the family had settled.

REINIER: And when did he come here?

LOWREY: Before 1900. I don't know the exact date, but it was

before 1900.

REINIER: And then you were born in 1903.

LOWREY: 1903, December 7.

REINIER: Now, this certainly must have been a beautiful place to grow up.

LOWREY: Absolutely terrific. The community was so closely integrated. I wish we could once more experience a similar type of community, but I know with modern times as they are we never can.

The Lowrey Ranch

REINIER: Would you describe the ranch for us?

LOWREY: Well, my father bought pieces of property as he was renting and earning a living farming. Then, as I grew up, I added acreage whenever I was able to make a good purchase. So that our holdings now are a reasonable amount of land.

REINIER: How many acres do you have?

LOWREY: Oh, my hill range I have given to my three boys, and that's approximately a thousand acres. Then, the old home site that my grandfather bought here is forty-two acres and I've added about 600 acres of range land to that. And about fifty acres on the west side of Cache Creek, that's been leveled and under irrigation where we're planting and have planted almonds and walnuts.

REINIER: And you have cattle here.

LOWREY: I ran cattle for several years. Fortunately I sold just

before the break in the cattle prices, about a week or two before fortunately. And I was happy to get rid of my sheep because I figured at my age that I'd spent enough time handling sheep and cattle.

REINIER: And you're right up here at the northern tip of the valley, aren't you?

LOWREY: Right up against the northern end of the valley.

REINIER: Beautiful spot.

LOWREY: Oh, we think so.

REINIER: And you've lived here all your life?

LOWREY: Practically. Excepting when I was away teaching school and then when I was over in the capitol--I call it the nuthouse--as legislator for twenty-two years. But I was usually home every weekend.

Education

REINIER: Well now, you went to school in Rumsey when you were a boy.

LOWREY: One room school, one teacher. She had forty-eight students.

REINIER: And all the grades were together?

LOWREY: All in one room.

REINIER: And then you went on to high school.

LOWREY: In Esparto. In 1922 we had the largest graduating class that Esparto had ever had. There were thirteen of us.

REINIER: And you drove the school bus?

LOWREY: First it was an old Model T Ford with hard rubber tires. The roads were not paved and in one year's time the bus shook to pieces.

REINIER: How much did they pay you for that?

LOWREY: Ten dollars a month until there were two of us driving north and south, I in the north and [Albert E.] Al Tandy [High School friend] in the south. We struck for twenty dollars a month. So that was the huge wage I was paid until I finally, in my senior year, decided that the responsibility was too great for the amount of pay involved.

REINIER: But I suppose the whole time that you were going to high school you were working on the ranch with your father.

LOWREY: Decidedly, I really was.

REINIER: Then in 1922 you graduated.

LOWREY: Yes.

REINIER: And then you went on to college.

LOWREY: Immediately on to [University of California at] Berkeley. I wanted to go to Oregon State but my mother and dad insisted I go to Cal. So that's where I went.

REINIER: And what did you major in there?

LOWREY: I majored in geology and minored in constitutional history and mineralogy.

REINIER: Not journalism?

LOWREY: I had hoped to major in journalism but I refused to get

a degree in English. So I went into geology. And then coming out of school in the Depression, geologists weren't finding many positions. So I took a year's graduate study and became a school teacher.

REINIER: And you finished that with your credential in 1927.

LOWREY: Twenty-seven.

Teaching School

REINIER: Now then, you went on to become a teacher. Where did you teach first?

LOWREY: My first year was in McCloud. I resigned on St. Patrick's Day because I decided I didn't want to be a teacher any more. But the superintendent offered me a very fine salary and I went back to Weed at Christmas time. And then I stayed there for four years but I didn't like the cold winters. So I finally accepted a position in Winters in Yolo County where I taught, I think it was, eight years before I moved over to Marysville High School where I was given the position of head of the science department. It was while over there that I was induced to run for the assembly and won the election that ended my teaching career.

REINIER: Before we go on to the assembly, what were your duties as a teacher? What did you teach?

LOWREY: Practically every subject that was given in high school. Biology was my special interest although in the later years I tried to stay with math and science.

REINIER: And didn't you have quite a bit of responsibility for discipline?

LOWREY: Being a vice-principal, that was my assignment all my years. Discipline apparently was one of my abilities. And the schools gave me those responsibilities of handling the recalcitrant youngsters.

REINIER: So, were you good at that?

LOWREY: Well, I was usually one jump ahead of the youngsters because thinking of my high school experiences, I knew what to expect from them. So it was easier for me realizing what they were liable to do and why they did it.

REINIER: Also when you were a teacher didn't you go on some fascinating expeditions to the southwest?

LOWREY: Starting in 1933, I joined the Rainbow Bridge Monument Valley expedition. My first year was as a geologist and a paleontologist until the end of the expedition when I went down the San Juan-Colorado River with part of our expedition group as photographer. And then in the six succeeding trips I was selected as director of the river expeditions.

REINIER: So this has always been a great love of yours, archaeology and paleontology?

LOWREY: That's right. Anything where I could live out in the open. 'Cause I swore as a youngster that I wasn't gonna be limited to a time clock and an office.

REINIER: And all this time while you were teaching and going on expeditions you were still working on the ranch.

LOWREY: Usually, if I wasn't on an expedition, I was running the ranch for three months during the summer.

REINIER: And when did you take the ranch over from your father?

LOWREY: Well, I took over almost complete responsibility in 1932 or '33 when I started teaching in Winters which is only thirty-five miles from home.

II. FRESHMAN ASSEMBLYMAN IN 1940

Running for the Assembly in 1940

REINIER: Now you said earlier that your friends encouraged you to run for the assembly in 1940.

LOWREY: "Gus" Donnelly [Station Agent, Interurban Electric Train between Woodland and Sacramento] in Woodland was a very good friend of mine and a staunch Democrat. On my way back to Marysville one weekend Gus and two other Democrats accosted me on the street in Woodland and said they wanted me to run for the assembly. I thought it was a joke because I had no idea that I would be running for a public office. But they persisted and finally convinced me that I should run. So when I won, that ended my teaching career.

REINIER: How much did you spend on that campaign in 1940?

LOWREY: Oh, I didn't keep a record of it, but possibly a thousand or two dollars, with donations and a few of my

own dollars.

REINIER: And who supported you mostly?

LOWREY: Well, the youngsters that I'd been teaching supported me, and the farmers and the Democrats throughout the counties where I worked diligently. The people decided they would rather have me represent them than somebody else, because my opponent was spending a lot of money and I was making personal contacts and emphasizing the fact that I want to represent them, and that I wasn't being paid by some outside group. Proved successful.

REINIER: And that was the formula you continued to follow?

LOWREY: From there on in my twenty-two years. I had an opponent my first year and I had an opponent the last time I ran, token opponent, but I figured that if I spent over three hundred dollars on a campaign that I was wasting money. That if the people didn't want me for what I tried to do for 'em they ought to get somebody else. And they stuck with me.

REINIER: Well now, cross-filing was in effect then.

LOWREY: Yes, until Pat [Governor Edmund G.] Brown [Sr.] put the legislation through to eliminate cross-filing [1959].

REINIER: So did you also run on the Republican ticket in this district?

LOWREY: Up until cross-filing was eliminated, I ran on both tickets. But even after cross-filing the Republicans wouldn't put an opponent up against me. So fortunately

in my district cross-filing didn't have too much of an effect.

REINIER: So you've always had bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, would you say?

LOWREY: I always have had, and, to a certain extent many of my close, personal friends are Republicans. But the Republican party in California today and I are absolutely at opposite political posts.

REINIER: We'll explore that as we go on. What counties did you represent?

LOWREY: When I first ran in 1940 it was Yolo, Colusa, Glen, Tahama and Lake, I beg your pardon, not Lake. Jesse Unruh took Tahama County which was one of my very strong counties away from me and gave me Lake County thinking that it would cause me some political grief. But what he didn't know was that I had a lot of friends in Lake County so that losing Tahama County and gaining Lake politically didn't hurt me a bit. But I still keep my contacts, even now, with my old supporters in Tahama County. Last year I was invited up to their annual old-timers party and we still keep rather close contacts.

REINIER: Now is that mostly a farming constituency?

LOWREY: I would say, yes. Farming and the wildlife people and the conservationists, people that are interested in nature have always been my real good friends and

supporters.

First Impressions of the Assembly

REINIER: When you got to the assembly in 1940 as a freshman legislator, what were your impressions?

LOWREY: That I was a babe in the woods wandering in a real strange forest. That was my first impression. And, I wasn't very happy with someone trying to tell me how and when I should vote, and how I should perform.

REINIER: Someone was trying to tell you that?

LOWREY: Well, when you belong to a political party, you're supposed to do what the party leaders decide should be done. I had my own ideas as to how I wanted to function and insisted on following along those lines. I lost a lot of my interest in the Democratic party when I found that many unpleasant activities involved many of the members.

REINIER: Do you care to elaborate on that?

LOWREY: Oh, I think not. But I soon learned that politics, regardless of the party that you belong to, was dictated to by a few, whether you be a Democrat or a Republican. In other words, you weren't supposed to be an independent. I didn't subscribe to that and I still don't.

Bipartisan Coalition vs Governor Culbert L. Olson

REINIER: Who were the leaders of the Democratic party in the assembly in those years?

LOWREY: Well, when I first went in, the Republicans had a Democrat as speaker [Gordon H. Garland]. So there was really a political coalition which didn't meet with my approval at all. So I was one of the original recalcitrants.

REINIER: Now what was the objective of the coalition?

LOWREY: To defeat Governor [Culbert L.] Olson and any program that he tried to promote.

REINIER: Why?

LOWREY: He was a liberal and the conservatives were determined to eliminate the whole liberal stature of the state legislature.

REINIER: Now those were the days of the New Deal.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: Would you describe Governor Olson who was a Democrat as a New Deal Democrat?

LOWREY: Quite definitely. Personally, when I first ran, I asked for and had a personal appointment with him and begged him not to support me publicly as a candidate for the state legislature. And he said to me, "Don't you appreciate having the governor of the state supporting you?" And I said, "Very definitely. But I'm interested in being elected and if you come out and support me, I'll be defeated. So that's why I'm asking you not to support me."

REINIER: What were some of the specific measures that Governor

Olson was backing that the legislature tried to stop?

LOWREY: It wasn't the governor, I've always felt that it wasn't the governor, but it was his staff and the people that he appointed were so far on the liberal side. As far as I was concerned, he had a few people working for him that were just downright dishonest. I didn't hesitate to tell him that I had no use for them.

REINIER: Want to give us some names?

LOWREY: Well, I can't remember many of the names. One of those people that worked in his office is now a member of the state supreme court, Stanley Mosk. He was one of them.

REINIER: And you were opposed to Mosk?

LOWREY: Well, he did a pretty good job until he got to be Attorney General. And when he became Attorney General, in my estimation, instead of being what you'd expect an attorney general to be, he became a typical politician. And I think he's never changed.

REINIER: Well now, this group in the legislature was pretty successful in blocking New Deal-type legislation in California.

LOWREY: Absolutely, oh yes. But that was, I would say complete turmoil in the assembly at least in those days. We were continually having unpleasant incidents develop. In other words, we weren't coordinating to pass legislation, but most of the time it seemed like

we were at each other's throats.

REINIER: What kind of unpleasant incidents?

LOWREY: Well, as one little example, I introduced a bill to change the word "joint" to "joist" because as the bill went through, it related to joists in buildings. But the word joints slipped in in some way. So that seemed to be a bill that nobody could object to. But because I wouldn't join the then coalition that was running the legislature, they wouldn't let me bring my bill up on the floor. We were having a vote at another time on labor and my seatmate and I wanted to change our votes, which you're legally permitted to do...

[End tape 1, side A]

[Begin tape 1, side B]

REINIER: Now, at the end of the tape you were telling a story about how you and your seatmate wanted to change your votes.

LOWREY: And the speaker [Gordon H. Garland] wouldn't recognize me or my seatmate, so we had a stalemate. But in the confusion of the vote, I was called out by what was then the old post office, by two individuals from Governor Olson's office. They wanted me to change my vote. I told them if it was important enough to the governor that yes, I--incidentally they offered me appointments to high posts if I would change my vote--and I said, "If it's that important, I will change my

vote. I refuse to take an appointment. And immediately that I cast my vote with you, I will ask permission to make a special privilege remark, at which time I will resign from the state legislature and explain to the body why I am doing it." They felt that I meant what I said and decided that it probably wouldn't be a good idea for me to try to change my vote.

REINIER: So that was the governor's office?

LOWREY: Right. Two of these fellows that I was quite sure the governor hadn't given any such privilege, but that's the way they operated behind the scenes. And that happens in government continually. Regardless of the administration that's in power, usually has a few bad eggs.

REINIER: Now was Speaker Garland aligned with the governor's office?

LOWREY: Absolutely on the opposite.

REINIER: Absolutely on the opposite.

LOWREY: Yes.

REINIER: What was this coalition that dominated the legislature?

LOWREY: I would say the conservative Democrats in coalition with the total Republican group. So it was the Democrats that joined the Republicans to give them control.

REINIER: Were there regional alignments in that group? North, south, for example?

LOWREY: Well, not so much. I would say conservatives versus liberals pretty well statewide. Although most of the liberals came from southern California. Heavy concentration of them.

III. WORLD WAR II

Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943

REINIER: Now, you weren't in the legislature very long before Pearl Harbor.

LOWREY: That's right. I remember sitting there with my seatmate, John B. Cook, who was a World War I submarine flotilla commander, and J.B. was called back, even though he was over sixty, he was called back to active duty. And I at the time joined the state guard. And the president had a proclamation or some legal consideration that legislators were not to be permitted to join the armed forces at the time.

REINIER: So you weren't able to serve in the armed forces?

LOWREY: Well, I became a member of the state guard thinking that would be a way to eventually get into the actual conflict, but it never turned out that way. They asked me to handle a piece of legislation that the government wanted passed. When I went down to try to enlist in the navy, they asked me to wait until after

my bill went through the assembly. And by that time I was over thirty-eight. And fortunately, I never got into the armed services.

REINIER: What bill was that in the assembly?

LOWREY: That was California's Alien Land Law that actually put the Japanese in concentration camps.¹

REINIER: Will you tell me more about that?

LOWREY: Well, who contacted me from the federal government, I just don't remember. But they were looking for some legislator who would introduce such a bill and I was asked to introduce it and author it. I did. It went scooting through the legislature.

¹Mr. Lowrey is referring to the Amendment to the Alien Land Law of 1920 passed in June, 1943, that went into effect August, 1943. The Alien Land Law of 1920 had allowed a loophole through which Japanese could purchase land in the name of their native-born minor children and farm or manage it as their guardians. The 1943 amendment declared such possession illegal. Guardians farming for the benefit of wards were placed under court jurisdiction and required to report all financial transactions. When the act was violated, the land became the property of the state of California and could be sold by the county court. After costs were paid to the county, the balance went to the state. Statutes and Amendments to the Codes of California (Sacramento, 1943), pp. 3001-3002. Although Mr. Lowrey proposed a similar bill (A.B. 23, 1943) and sponsored the bill that was actually passed in the assembly, it was introduced by Senator Jack B. Tenney as S.B. 140 on March 24, 1943. It passed both houses by April 22, 1943 and was signed by Gov. Earl Warren on June 8, 1943. Journal of the Assembly, 55th session (Sacramento, 1943), p. 2183. Of course, authorization for military commanders to place Japanese-Americans in internment camps was given through Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942.

REINIER: When was that?

LOWREY: Well, it had to be not too long after Pearl Harbor. I'd have to look back at the state records to get the date of introduction [March 24, 1943], but it took a very short time to get it passed [April 22, 1943, signed by governor June 8, 1943].

REINIER: What was the content of the bill?

LOWREY: The Alien Land Law was giving the state permission to reclaim alien lands and to put aliens in the concentration camps as I recall the bill.

REINIER: Well now, there had been an Alien Land Bill in California since the Progressive period.

LOWREY: Yes.

REINIER: So, that Japanese, that aliens, that people ineligible for citizenship...

LOWREY: That's right, couldn't...

REINIER: Couldn't own land.

LOWREY: It's been so long ago, the actual content, legal content of the bill, I just can't remember the details of it. I'd have to go back and search through the records and get a copy to be sure of just what its legal requirements were.

Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem,
1943

REINIER: Was it House Resolution 238? Was that the bill that you were speaking of? Establishing a committee to

look into the situation of the Japanese in California?²

LOWREY: I could be wrong, but as I recall, it was the bill that permitted the Japanese to be placed in concentration camps.

REINIER: In the internment camps themselves?

LOWREY: Yes, yes.

Attitudes toward the Japanese in the Capay Valley

REINIER: Now, why did you happen to be selected to put that legislation through?

LOWREY: Well, I always assumed that I was selected because nobody else wanted to handle the bill. They thought it was too hot.

REINIER: But you were willing to.

LOWREY: I was happy to do it.

REINIER: And why were you happy to do it?

LOWERY: Because I grew up never trusting the Japanese. I could remember from boyhood when one Japanese in the community said, "We will dominate the west coast with

²House Resolution 238 was introduced by Mr. Lowrey on May 1 and adopted on May 5, 1943. It created a five member interim committee appointed by the speaker of the assembly to "investigate, ascertain and appraise all facts concerning the solution of the problem of the Japanese in California." Journal of the Assembly, 55th session, (Sacramento, 1943). The interim committee, chaired by Chester F. Gannon, became known as the Gannon Committee. Beginning its work in August, 1943, it adopted a resolution to keep all Japanese in internment camps for the duration of the war. Mr. Lowrey was not a member of the committee. Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, The Great Betrayal: the Evacuation of the Japanese-Americans during World War II (Toronto, 1969), p. 363.

the rising sun." Frankly, I was afraid that they might jeopardize our well being here on the west coast.

REINIER: You were afraid of sabotage?

LOWREY: I was afraid of the Japanese and their organization. As now there are some that feel that the Soviets are going to take over and dominate the world.

REINIER: Now was that an attitude that you developed growing up in...

LOWREY: That's right...

REINIER: In the Capay Valley for example?

LOWREY: That's absolutely correct.

REINIER: Were there many Japanese here in the Valley when you were growing up?

LOWREY: Well, there came at first "Little Joey," who I think was the first Japanese in the community. But as the years progressed, we had quite a Japanese society. One Japanese even started a Japanese school where all the Japanese youngsters were required to go certain periods and be trained in Japanese culture and their philosophy of life.

REINIER: Did many Japanese own land?

LOWREY: They came to own land in the later years.

REINIER: How did they do that? How were they able to do that when the Alien Land bill of 1913 was in effect?

LOWREY: Now, it seems to me that we eventually eliminated that law. But they rented it on long term leases, much of

the land. So that in many instances they didn't own, they actually controlled. We had large acreages of apricots and other deciduous fruits. They proved to be very conscientious and fine farmers. But they would really take all there was out of the land and then move over. When they exhausted its productivity, they would go to another piece.

REINIER: What was the source of the resentment against the Japanese when you were growing up?

LOWREY: Well, in my particular instance I can see the idea that they weren't too honest. They were a tricky bunch and were a dominating force. Besides, as far as I was concerned, they were aliens.

Possibility of Japanese Espionage

REINIER: Was there any evidence of espionage around the time of Pearl Harbor?

LOWREY: I think not. No espionage. But they had taken photographs of this whole area, of that I was aware. Certain individuals...

REINIER: Japanese?

LOWREY: became proficient in photography. They had layouts of the topography of the whole area. Because some were undercover officers in the military, the Japanese military.

REINIER: Japanese in California were?

LOWREY: Yes.

REINIER: How do you know that?

LOWREY: I was told that by the man who was in charge of naval intelligence here on the west coast.

REINIER: And do you remember his name?

LOWREY: No, I just remember that he, as I, was interested in paleontology. We were going to get together after the war and walk the John Day Valley in Oregon and try to collect some fossils, but we never did. I don't remember his name.

REINIER: Now, there was military concern about the Japanese on the west coast.

LOWREY: Oh, very definitely.

REINIER: And was that from Commander [Lt. Gen. John L.] DeWitt [head of Western Defense Command]. Do you remember?

LOWREY: Well, they came in to Goleta and landed a few missiles I guess. Several times during that winter when I was on active duty as an MP in San Francisco, we were put on all night alerts because they feared that the Japanese were going to attack the Bay and San Francisco area.

REINIER: What role, for example, did Attorney General Earl Warren play in this whole story?

LOWREY: I just can't remember. I wouldn't want to make a definite expression, but in the back of my mind it seems to me that I recall that he was opposed to the Japanese being put in concentration camps. Now, I have

no definite examples that I can recall of the attitude he took at the time, but it just seems to me that he was always opposed to the Japanese being interned.³

Japanese Internment

REINIER: Why at the time did you consider internment necessary?

LOWREY: Sabotage. I didn't trust them. That's the Japanese. I knew that some of them were devoted to Japan. In my estimation, they weren't true Americans, although I'm well aware of that brigade that fought so well in Italy [all-Nisei 442nd Infantry Combat Team Battalion].

REINIER: Now what happened to Japanese property when they went to the camps?

LOWREY: Well, they sold practically everything, I guess. And they lost heavily. In fact Congressman [Robert T.] Matsui has legislation in even today that's trying to get some claims for some of the Japanese families.

REINIER: So, those Japanese who were making a headway in agriculture at that time really lost out, didn't they.

LOWREY: Oh, they did, very definitely. No question about it.

REINIER: To whom did they sell the land? Those who had been able to own it.

LOWREY: Well, I don't recall the details. I know that everything, all their possessions that they couldn't

³Actually as attorney general early in 1942 Earl Warren was alarmed about sabotage and favored action by the military. Girdner and Loftis, The Great Betrayal, pp. 26-27, 29.

take with them, they sold or gave away. Further than that, I never went into the details of how or what they did, although I know they suffered, really suffered a great economic loss. Well, they were just moved out, that's all.

REINIER: Well now, in the legislature you said that, whatever the specific legislation was, and we'll have to look that up, you didn't have any trouble getting that through.

LOWREY: Not one bit. As I recall, I recall no difficulty.

REINIER: Now you didn't have difficulty getting the bill through?

LOWREY: As I recall, I had no difficulty in getting the bill passed.

REINIER: Do you think that Japanese internment was rather generally supported in California then?

LOWREY: Generally speaking, I would say, yes. But then I might not be the proper one to make a decision on that, because admittedly I was, and still am prejudiced. So being a prejudiced individual my feeling on the subject might not be as correct as it might be. But my general feeling is that there was general support for such a movement in California.

REINIER: Was there any opposition in the legislature that you remember?

LOWREY: I don't remember any opposition. There might have

been but I don't recall it.

Investigation of Opposition to Legislation Regarding
the Japanese

REINIER: Now you were telling me the story of a coast guard officer.

LOWREY: As I recall, it was a hot day when a man in naval uniform came to my folks' home and I was there alone. He showed me his credentials and said he would like to have the privilege of looking at my files and checking on the people that were protesting my legislation regarding the Japanese. Immediately, when he left me, I got my in my car and drove to the federal building in Sacramento to verify that he was a legitimate naval officer. As I recall, he was in charge of naval intelligence on the west coast. And when I verified that he was really a naval officer, I let them send two yeomen over to go through my files and get copies of any of the letters that I had received from people regarding my legislation.

REINIER: What was the purpose of his finding those letters?

LOWREY: I assume that the military wanted to know who and why people were opposing such legislation.

REINIER: Do you remember who those people were who opposed the legislation?

LOWREY: Not even one individual. There was quite a file, but I don't even remember where the letters came from or who

they were from.

Reflection

REINIER: Now from the position of hindsight, how do you look back on that situation in the spring of 1942?

LOWREY: If we should have such an unfortunate situation develop again and I were in the proper position, I would take the same action now that I took then. That's a part of inter-government action and reaction. When arbitration, discussion, and other peaceful means of solving problems are exhausted, the final solution that diplomats and their trained personnel decide is that war and lethal methods should be employed in an attempt to solve the problem.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Session 2, April 27, 1987]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

More on Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943

REINIER: Mr. Lowrey, since we spoke last week, I've been able to do some research in the state library and I've discovered the Alien Land Law in 1943 was a series of amendments to the 1920 Alien Land Law. Do you remember the story of the passage of those amendments?

LOWREY: Partially. I remember that I was very active in promoting the passage of the amendments. In fact, I took the lead in attempting to have them adopted in the assembly.

REINIER: They seem to provide for guardians, Japanese aliens who were managing land for their native-born wards. The amendment seemed to provide that such guardians would be under the jurisdiction of the courts in California or the county district attorneys. And then the violators of these amendments would have their land seized by the court and sold and the proceeds would go to the state.

LOWREY: As I recall, at that time in order to evade the Alien Land Law provisions, the younger generations many of us thought were proceeding to violate the law. These amendments were to stop them from trying to evade the

existing Alien Land Law. That was the purpose of the amendments.

REINIER: Do you have any recollection of lands that were seized and sold by the state?

LOWREY: Off hand, I can't remember one specific instance where that occurred.

More on Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem

REINIER: There's another house resolution that went through the legislature at the same time. This was one that you introduced, House Resolution 238, relative to the creation of the Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem.

LOWREY: Well, many of us were concerned about the activities of many Japanese in California because officers in the Japanese military setup were functioning here in California. Some of us knew who at least a few of these individuals were, and we wanted to do something to prevent them from causing sabotage or performing acts in opposition to what we deemed proper for American citizens.

REINIER: This seemed to set up a study committee. There were to be five members appointed by the speaker of the assembly to, and I quote, "investigate, ascertain, and appraise all facts concerning the solution to the problem of the Japanese in California." Do you

remember, if that assembly committee was set up?

LOWREY: I simply am a blank at this time. All I can remember is that the United States military were very interested in having me pass this resolution.

REINIER: And this is probably the legislation that the military wanted to be sure that you stayed in the assembly for.

LOWREY: That, I'm quite sure, is correct.

IV. POSTWAR ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES

Education

REINIER: Now, while we're dealing with the same period of time, during the war and right after the war, there was such a tremendous population growth in California that caused a demand on the educational system. You were quite active, weren't you, in legislation to meet these educational needs?

LOWREY: I took a very active part because I had been able to be selected as chairman of the budget subcommittee in the assembly which recommended amounts of money to be appropriated to education. Plus the fact that we had many school districts that were sadly in need of financial assistance. My philosophy was, and still is, that money appropriated to education is providing for benefits to the general public because if there's any money available in the legislature, somebody is going to try and get that money for his district, regardless

of the particular need. And my feeling was, and still is, that when we devote money to education, it is money well spent.

Vice Chair, Ways and Means Committee

REINIER: Is this when you were vice chair of the Ways and Means Committee?

LOWREY: That's right, which I was. I am told by the researchers that I'm the only individual that served as vice chairman of Ways and Means Committee for eighteen years.

REINIER: And all that time you were in charge of the education budget?

LOWREY: Practically, up until the last few years. The speaker [Jesse Unruh] became upset with me because, I feel, I prevented money going to USC [University of Southern California] which is not a part of the state system. Because of it the University of California's phase of the budget was removed from my jurisdiction.

REINIER: That was Speaker Jesse Unruh?

LOWREY: That's right. Big Jesse.

REINIER: How was that money going to USC?

LOWREY: I can't remember the details, but there are many ways known to lawyers and those proficient in manipulating the laws of the state to provide for moneys being appropriated that many of us would feel was being accomplished illegally.

REINIER: How did you find out that the money was going to USC?

LOWREY: Well, I kept a very close watch on the budget activities. During the budget session every night I spent hours going through the details and watched amendments and the actions. Knowing the speaker [Jesse Unruh] as well as I did, I tried to keep pretty close tab on his maneuvers. More detailed than that I wouldn't care to express.

REINIER: You said earlier when we were chatting that you liked to be the vice chair of the committee.

LOWREY: Well, I always felt that it gave you, to be vice chairman of a committee, if you please, a certain amount of power and prestige without most of the responsibilities of being the chairman. And that's why I preferred to be vice chairman.

REINIER: And stayed there for eighteen years.

LOWREY: That's right.

Assisting Impoverished Rural School Districts

REINIER: Well now, you also authored bills in the education area. Didn't you?

LOWREY: Yes, as I recall now, it had to do with, particularly in the rural areas, many of the school districts were practically destitute. And, as I now recall, I authored several bills which would provide for giving

these districts financial assistance.⁴

REINIER: Did you always have the forty-one votes that you needed for educational bills?

LOWREY: Well, sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't. That phase of the operation had to be treated with a lot of caution. We had to make very careful counts to see where our votes were and how we should promote our activities to accomplish the votes that we needed.

REINIER: How did you go about getting the votes that you needed?

LOWREY: Well, I guess I tried to explain to the individuals who would listen just how badly we needed the money for these school districts. It depended on my ability as a salesman to sell my ideas to them.

"Chick Sale" Bill

REINIER: What about the "Chick Sale" bill?

LOWREY: Well, when I was a student in the elementary, one room school here in Rumsey, there were the girls and the boys "chick sales" in the far corners of the school area with, when it rained, muddy paths to the institutions.

REINIER: Maybe we should explain that a "chick sale" is an old-fashioned privy.

⁴For example, A.B. 98, authored by Mr. Lowrey in 1947, appropriated funds for public works in California school districts. Assembly Final History (Sacramento, 1947), p. 208.

LOWREY: That's right. That was made of wood and leaked and had a very bad odor and certainly wasn't very sanitary. And I tried to get our local school board to put in some modern plumbing for our students. They said that it would cost too much money, so I put this bill in to force our local school board to put in modern plumbing. And by doing that it also forced the rest of the state to comply.⁵

REINIER: Did you have the votes you needed for that one?

LOWREY: Eventually. It took some time and there was opposition, particularly over in the senate, because some of the school districts, particularly in one senator's area, had written in opposing the bill. I had some difficulty getting a simple little bill like this passed.

REINIER: Did you have certain groups in the assembly that you counted on to cooperate with on these educational bills? Like people in the southern part of the state, for example?

LOWREY: Oh. Quite positively, because, financially speaking, Los Angeles County and my district were about comparable. That is, in the wealth of the districts. And I worked very, very closely helping them get

⁵A.B. 527, authored by Mr. Lowrey and Lester T. Davis, provided sanitary facilities for public school pupils. It passed both houses of the assembly and was signed by Gov. Earl Warren on May 22, 1947. Assembly Final History (Sacramento, 1947), p. 302.

legislation passed for Los Angeles County, because when I did, it automatically helped take care of the financial needs of the school districts in my area.

REINIER: Why would anybody oppose modern plumbing for school children?

LOWREY: Well, one school teacher, and I read the letter, wrote in and said that her students had never had any modern plumbing in their homes. They weren't used to it. And if they put in modern plumbing, the children would be trying to take a bath, drinking water from it. And she didn't want that problem.

REINIER: What was the source of the opposition that you spoke about previously in the senate?

LOWREY: That was it. Some of these school teachers in the remote areas didn't want to spend the money. The school teachers were opposed. They just didn't want to be bothered with modern plumbing, that's all.

Governor Earl Warren

REINIER: Maybe at this point, since we're really still talking about the '40's, I should ask you about Earl Warren. What was he like?

LOWREY: A very affable person. A terrific politician. A great spender. Ultra-liberal and, in my estimation, an individual whose word wasn't very sacred.

REINIER: How so?

LOWREY: Well, I had occasion to be in his office on a

particular proposition and he promised to go along. Within hours he directed his office to do just exactly the opposite. As one respected senator said to me as we left his office, "Lloyd, Earl is a bad boy." And that's the worst statement I ever heard that senator make against any human being. In other words, I was never a favorite of Earl Warren's.

REINIER: Well, do you think that he was just stringing you along, that he meant to do something different all the time?

LOWREY: We could never tell. We just didn't trust Earl Warren's office when he was governor, period.

REINIER: And who is "we"?

LOWREY: Well, I'd rather not list their names, because I don't mind putting myself on the spot, but...there were both assemblymen and senators.

REINIER: Democrats?

LOWREY: Democrats and Republicans both.

Arthur H. Samish

REINIER: Is it true that [Arthur H.] Artie Samish had more power than Earl Warren in those years?

LOWREY: Well, that's what Earl Warren said. And after all, he was governor and made that statement. I would assume he had some idea why he made such a statement.

REINIER: Why was Artie Samish so powerful?

LOWREY: He was supposed to be the liquor baron lobbyist. And,

which I was never able to get projected in the press, also lobbyist for the Greyhound buses. Personally, I figured that perhaps he had as much power from the Southern Pacific Greyhound bus setup as he did from the liquor interest. But he dispensed favors to legislators. Well, it was almost unbelievable.

REINIER: One thing we should just clear up, did Southern Pacific own Greyhound in those years?

LOWREY: Absolutely.

REINIER: I didn't realize that. Well, how did he dispense favors to legislators?

LOWREY: I guess you would call it by providing desirable girl friends, various trips, allegedly financial assistance, and unusual special favors.

REINIER: And he had a fund to provide those favors from?

LOWREY: He must have had, because he once told a friend of mine that he'd be willing to spend forty-three thousand dollars in a campaign to see me defeated for the assembly.

REINIER: Was his influence as great in the assembly as it was in the senate?

LOWREY: I felt that his influence in the assembly was greater than in the senate. Now, I can't definitely verify that. But I know what his influence was in the assembly because he had staff members up at the clerk's desk in front, and the assistant sergeant-at-arms,

secretaries to legislators under his control. In fact, one secretary at a party one night-- something was said about how we were going to vote on a bill. I came forth and said, "Well, I'm either going to vote for the bill or vote against it." So this secretary called me aside, and said, "You should be more careful in expressing yourself, because you know we secretaries don't get too big a salary, and we get other remunerations from advising certain individuals how you legislators are going to vote." I very soon found out that this secretary was receiving additional finances from Artie Samish's fund. So, this is like a vine that intertwines and stagnates the main plant, particularly when over a period of time it has been able to establish itself.

REINIER: What kinds of roles did the other staff members play?

LOWREY: When a bill, a tough bill, was coming up, they would get on the telephone and call Samish's office, or some of his staff and advise them which way the bill was going, if it was going to be a close vote or if they needed a few more votes. Advising what should be done, so that right from the floor he could immediately get a hold of certain legislators and say, "You better change your vote, and do it in a hurry." That happened quite often.

REINIER: Were there certain individuals, elected individuals in

the assembly, who were pretty much beholden to him?

LOWREY: As far as I'm concerned, personally, there was absolutely no question but what they were. We called them Samish's men.

REINIER: About what proportion of the assembly would that be?

LOWREY: Well, I don't know. At the time I might have had definite figures on it, but it was a fairly decent proportion, unbelievably.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

Lessening Samish's Influence: Election of James W. Silliman as Speaker of the Assembly

REINIER: Didn't you participate in the effort to lessen Samish's power?

LOWREY: Not only participated, but was active in forming a group that eliminated Samish's power in the state assembly at that time [1951-53].

REINIER: How did you go about that?

LOWREY: Three of us had a definite plan. And, over a period of quite some time we kept adding individuals to our group whom we could depend on. When we had, finally, a large enough group, we talked a group of Republicans who were opposed to Samish to join us. We had enough votes to eliminate the then speaker and put our own man in as speaker [James W. Silliman] who was violently opposed to Samish and his program.

REINIER: What prompted the three of you to get that started?

LOWREY: Well, we knew that legislation wasn't being handled properly when it was dominated by the so-called liquor baron and lobbyist who Earl Warren claimed to be more powerful than the governor. Such an individual should be eliminated from state government. That was the basis. It was just trying to do the job which the people of the state of California elected us to do and we took an oath to try and carry through on, what we promised the people we would do.

REINIER: Do you remember when it was?

LOWREY: Well I'd have to go back--the records would show when Jim Silliman was elected speaker, the exact dates. I would have to check with the records to verify.⁶

REINIER: Well, how did you three get together? Didn't you call yourselves "The Three Horsemen"?

LOWREY: Well, several of the legislators called us that. We had formed a very firm personal friendship. We had formed a group of three that took sections of what was coming up legislative the next day and each of us would

⁶James W. Silliman was elected speaker of the assembly on January 5, 1953. Sam L. Collins, the previous speaker from Orange County, had been closely tied to Arthur H. Samish. Perhaps because of attacks of his power since 1951 Mr. Collins decided to run for the state senate in 1952 (a race which he lost), opening up a fight for the speakership. Jonathan J. Hollibaugh of L.A. County hoped to become speaker and he was the individual defeated by Mr. Silliman in 1953. Richard Rodda, Sacramento Bee, January 5, 1953, 1:5.

check to see which bills should be given careful consideration. We had been going together to lunch over a long period of time. We just formed a very close personal as well as political friendship.

REINIER: Who were the other two?

LOWREY: I've kind of forgotten their names, too. All of a sudden their names have slipped me.

REINIER: Well, this must have been done in great secret, this gathering strength.

LOWREY: Absolute secrecy, absolute secrecy. Now we also, not only on the Samish deal, but we worked with a group of Republicans over in the senate to put together our version of the budget, which we were successful in doing for a few sessions until someone found out what was being done. And then we had to give up that program. But it worked very successfully for a period of years. Particularly to cut Earl Warren's budget down to what we felt was a reasonable spending program.

REINIER: How many years did you do that?

LOWREY: Oh, I think about six years.

REINIER: Were you part of what was then called the economy bloc in the assembly?

LOWREY: We were on the other side of the fence from what was at that time called the economy bloc. [Laughter] Very definitely not a part of it. That was a Republican-Democratic coalition of which we were very

definitely not a part.

REINIER: But still interested in cutting spending?

LOWREY: We were interested in eliminating waste in state government. I think that's perhaps the theory on which we operated.

REINIER: But how did you gather the necessary votes to defeat Samish?

LOWREY: By very careful and lengthy discussions trying to establish a close relationship with individuals whom we thought could be brought to our point of view. It was, we felt, a real political accomplishment.

REINIER: Did it take a while to build the necessary strength?

LOWREY: Oh, yes. It took an extended period of time. More than one session to put the group together.

REINIER: And then once together what did the group do?

LOWREY: We met in a room in the capitol. And at that meeting, as I recall, was a representative, believe it or not, of the AFL-CIO. And also a man I considered one of the best political writers in the state, [Herbert L.] Herb Phillips from the Sacramento Bee, who sat in on this meeting. With these men being present, we felt that it gave us status and we were proceeding in the proper direction. It was at that meeting that we had to accept Jim Silliman as the speaker instead of a legislator from Hollister [Robert C. Kirkwood] that some of us, originally thought should be made the

speaker.

REINIER: Why couldn't you get your first choice?

LOWREY: Because Francis [C.] Lindsey, who controlled I can't remember whether it was eleven or fourteen Republican votes, was in favor of Jim Silliman. We had to have those Republican votes in order to carry the day, so we compromised. And we compromised on Jim.⁷

REINIER: So your fight really was to oust the speaker...

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: And put Jim Silliman in.

LOWREY: That's exactly it. Because by putting a speaker in opposed to Artie Samish, he could clear the legislative floor from Artie Samish's army.

REINIER: So the speakers before Silliman [Charles W. Lyon and Sam L. Collins] had been closely linked to Samish?

LOWREY: That was our feeling. And we knew one way to eliminate his influence was to put somebody in who we knew didn't like him.

REINIER: So were you successful in getting your candidate in the first time around?

LOWREY: That's right. It had to be done in one fell swoop and very quickly. We didn't falter because we had to keep

⁷Robert C. Kirkwood of Santa Clara County was appointed Controller by Gov. Earl Warren on January 6, 1953 because of the resignation of Thomas Kuchel, who had been appointed to the United States Senate by Gov. Earl Warren on December 22, 1952. Rodda, Sacramento Bee, 10:2.

this thing under wraps. We couldn't have leaks, because if there had been leaks, it would have been rather easy to tear our coalition apart. So when we had the votes, we moved fast and surprised the opposition.

REINIER: How many votes did you have?

LOWREY: I have often thought that I should have kept a record of that. Maybe I did, but I don't remember. All I can remember is that we had enough votes to eliminate the speaker and put a new one in.

REINIER: And what kept your coalition together?

LOWREY: Just the precept of eliminating Samish from dominating the legislature, that kept us together.

REINIER: And when you got your new speaker in, did he fulfill your hopes?

LOWREY: More than fulfilled our hopes. He was much more adamant than we had anticipated. We thought that some of his treatment was a little harsh, but it was absolutely most effective.

REINIER: What did he do?

LOWREY: Anybody that he even thought had a tie with Samish, he saw to it that they were eliminated from the assembly payroll. So that cleaned out the sergeant-at-arms and also the clerks up front, and some of the secretaries, legislative secretaries.

REINIER: Did he reorganize committees?

LOWREY: He probably did, but that detail I can't remember, because that wasn't a part of the program that I was so interested in seeing put together.

REINIER: Well now, what was Samish's reaction to this change?

LOWREY: Well, he just disappeared.

REINIER: It really did lessen his influence then?

LOWREY: It eliminated his influence.

REINIER: In the assembly.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: Did he continue to have influence in the senate?

LOWREY: It really had the effect of eliminating Samish's power. Politically, he was clearly defeated and never regained. And as I recall now, his health was starting to fail too.

REINIER: And eventually he went to the penitentiary, didn't he?

LOWREY: I don't recall that. I can't remember whatever happened to Artie Samish.

REINIER: I thought that the federal government got him for income tax evasion.

LOWREY: They might have, but my interest was getting him out of the state legislature. I can't recall what happened to him after our successful maneuver.⁸

⁸In 1953 Arthur H. Samish was convicted of income tax evasion and later served two years in a federal penitentiary. Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History (New York, 1968), p. 470.

V. LOBBYISTS

Lobbyists' Function and Practices

REINIER: Now, Samish was certainly a powerful lobbyist. Were there other lobbyists that had a similar kind of power?

LOWREY: Well, not to the extent. The milk lobby, I always felt, was quite powerful, but they didn't infiltrate the capitol personnel groups the way Samish did. Also, the trucking interests were extremely powerful. Well the AMA [American Medical Association] was one of the strongest groups in both the assembly and senate. I assume the AMA still is.

REINIER: What kind of...

LOWREY: Of course, you had the insurance people, real estate, Southern Pacific, and the power and telephone lobbies, but while they had their own influence, they were also quite helpful to legislators in becoming educated as to various phases of governmental activities. Because it was impossible for an individual to become knowledgeable in all phases of activities. You have to ask lobbyists for information so that you can become a little better educated.

REINIER: Did you rely on the lobbyists then?

LOWREY: I would say if the lobbyist were an honorable individual, which most of them were, you could depend on them to give you a truthful answer to your question.

REINIER: Now were there other lobbyists that used the kind of financial methods that Samish did?

LOWREY: Well, they tried to. Allegedly, money was dispensed for votes on bills. I recall a man coming up from the south and I heard him say, "Who do we pay? We have the money." It had to do with, as I recall, horse meat. Now, I just happened to be going into the capitol and overheard this conversation on the side.

I was offered a few hundred dollars, I don't remember the amount, once by another legislator. I told him that my minimum was a quarter of a million or two hundred and fifty thousand. That is, if I were going to vote for the bill anyway. Depending on how important the bill was, the ante went up. Because if I were going to go San Quentin, I wanted something when I came out. No one ever offered me money after that.

REINIER: Were there more subtle ways than just offering you money?

LOWREY: To write your publicity for you. If you're a licensed insurance operator, you could be given insurance policies. Similarly in real estate. For lawyers, they could get cases. For insurance, for the timber industry--and I'm just mentioning a few that I think of. Because more than once I had lobbyists tell me that I was foolish that I didn't get a license to sell insurance and real estate. That it would be so easy to

legally assist me financially. Incidentally, I wasn't interested.

REINIER: So that's how it worked?

LOWREY: That's how it works.

REINIER: For lawyers as well?

LOWREY: Definitely for lawyers.

REINIER: How does it work with lawyers?

LOWREY: Well, they have cases coming up in various areas. They will hire these lawyers' offices to defend or prosecute, which is certainly legal for a lawyer to do.

REINIER: And then the payments are in terms of fees.

LOWREY: Right. To the law office. Allegedly in one instance, on the Bay Bridge, a legislator received a policy, an insurance policy, to his office for a quarter of a million dollars, which would amount to quite a decent fee. That's just one example that I knew of.

REINIER: What about wining and dining?

LOWREY: Well, yes, but I always thought that was a waste of the lobbyists' money. I never missed an opportunity to get in on these dinners and parties. Because I thought that if they were foolish enough to waste their money that way, that that was a good way to get them to spend money that didn't get them votes.

REINIER: Did they invite you to their parties even if they knew you weren't going to vote for them?

LOWREY: Well, the lobbyist for the Southern Pacific happened to

be personally a good friend of mine. But, to my knowledge, I never gave him one vote. The lobbyist for the trucking industry is still (he's no longer a lobbyist) one of my very close, personal friends. I never recall giving him one vote. The lobbyist on the PG & E [Pacific Gas and Electric Company], who is now dead, was always taking me to dinner, and I was a well known opposition to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. So our personal friendships with lobbyists didn't reflect in votes in many instances.

Public Relations

REINIER: Now I'm curious, in these years, these were also years when public relations firms, like Whittaker and Baxter, were beginning to play a very important role in politics. How would you assess that?

LOWREY: Personally, I never gave much thought to it as an individual legislator.

REINIER: So that didn't have the effect on your activities the way the interaction with the lobbyists did.

LOWREY: As far as I can remember, none whatsoever.

REINIER: So...

LOWREY: Living in the area I did, I could afford to be quite independent and try to represent the wishes of the people of the district. The voters seemed to know that they could depend on me. So I didn't have to go to, or wasn't interested in these public relations

organizations.

REINIER: They were mostly helpful then in getting elected?

LOWREY: Not with me. I didn't use any public relations organization at all. I did my own public relations by getting out and contacting the people that elected me. For instance, my most extensive campaigning was done in the weeks immediately following being reelected. I covered my district quite carefully. I really went out and campaigned, but to ask the people what they wanted me to do, find out what the problems were. In so many instances they would say, "Well, what are you, a politician, doing around here now? You just got elected. Why are you back?" And I said, "Well, if I'm going to represent you, I have to know what you want me to do, and how you want it done. That's why I'm here, trying to put a program together for the next session." And over twenty-two years it worked quite successfully for me.

REINIER: And what were the demands of your constituency? What did they want you to do?

LOWREY: At that time they wanted honest representation. We had water needs, agricultural needs, educational needs...

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Session 3, May 11, 1987]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

VI. AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

More on Amendments to Alien Land Law, 1943

REINIER: Mr. Lowrey, I thought today we'd talk about agricultural issues. To begin at the beginning of your career in the assembly really brings us back to the Japanese issue during World War II. I was able to do still a little bit more research and I found that there was a Lowrey Bill that was introduced in the house with many of the provisions of those amendments to the Alien Land Law contained in that. Do you remember introducing that bill in the house in 1943?

LOWREY: I remember quite well that I introduced such legislation.

REINIER: Could you tell us what happened to it?

LOWREY: It's been so long ago, I have forgotten the details of the legislative procedures that developed. But apparently instead of my bill being finally adopted, a similar senate bill, which came over to the house, was the one that the legislature adopted and apparently was signed by the governor.

REINIER: Yes it was, and I think it was introduced by Jack [B.] Tenney. I saw it referred to as the Tenney Bill.

LOWREY: Those details of how the legislation was finally adopted I don't recall. But I was very active in supporting the bill and in all probability handled the bill on the assembly side.

REINIER: There was another bill as well that was called the Lowrey Bill in 1943 concerning condemning farm implements and machinery that had belonged to aliens. Do you remember that one?

LOWREY: I don't remember the details of that particular piece of legislation. But, in as much as I was prejudiced, admittedly prejudiced, and not favorable to the Japanese, I took every opportunity to cooperate in legislation to curtail their activities in California. Return of the Japanese from the Internment Camps

REINIER: And the issue in 1943 really seemed to be the return of the Japanese from the internment camps. For example, should they return what would be their position in California agriculture?

LOWREY: I recall that quite well! Many of us felt that their activities had been so curtailed that they'd have a little difficulty getting back into the position they'd been in before the war.

REINIER: Did they have that difficulty when they did come back?

LOWREY: Well, they didn't come back into my community in the

Capay Valley. In the Winters area some were back, but land values were very high then. As I recall, financial conditions were such that it wasn't favorable for them to move back as fast as they had hoped to.

More on Assembly Interim Committee on the Japanese Problem, 1943

REINIER: Then the other piece of legislation that you were involved in at that time was the house resolution creating a five member committee of the assembly to hold hearings on the issue of the return of the Japanese. We mentioned that earlier. That was the committee that was chaired by Chester [F.] Gannon of Sacramento. Do you remember the activities of that committee?

LOWREY: I don't remember the activities of the committee as much as I remember the activities of Chester Gannon on the floor when he would get excited or we would be involved with a discussion which would excite him. When that happened we used to smile and sometimes laugh, because he was bald and his forehead and the top of his head would turn red when he really became excited. We all got a big kick out of that.

REINIER: So you liked to get him excited?

LOWREY: Oh yes. We went out of our way to get him into discussion where we could antagonize him.

REINIER: Well now, you weren't a member of that committee were

you?

LOWREY: That I can't remember. I don't remember the details of that, but I served on so many committees that most of them I just can't remember.

REINIER: I think they held hearings throughout the state, especially in southern California on the issue of the return of the Japanese from the internment camps.

LOWREY: That is practically a total blank in my mind these many years after.

The Family Farm vs the Large Grower

REINIER: Now, going on to discuss agriculture and agricultural issues, during the years that you were in the assembly agriculture had a great deal of influence, didn't it?

LOWREY: We carried important agricultural legislation in most instances; we had forty-one votes. It was a combination of Democrats and Republicans who were not particularly interested in party affiliation, but were interested in protecting agriculture. My particular interest was in the family farm. Agriculture in general, but particularly the agricultural farm.

REINIER: So, did you represent the family farm rather than the large growers?

LOWREY: Very definitely. Because I resented right here in our own county of Yolo what I have called over a period of forty or fifty years, "the big twelve." Those were the big farmers that received the huge subsidies and,

in my estimation, they got special financial protection that we, the smaller farmers, weren't able to get.

REINIER: Beginning back with the New Deal?

LOWREY: As long as I can remember they have dominated Yolo County politics, even up to the present time.

REINIER: Well, did they support you for the legislature then?

LOWREY: They didn't, but everybody else did. In fact, the organized Farm Bureau, that they represented, didn't support me. But the individuals that belonged, the local farmers, were my strong supporters.

REINIER: So you were not particularly affiliated with the Farm Bureau yourself?

LOWREY: Well, I was a member of the Farm Bureau for several years, but I finally became so disgusted with their politics that I refused to join again. In the '40's when I married, I had my wife join the Farm Bureau so we could get their compensation insurance for my workmen. That still goes, and I still am not a member of the Farm Bureau and not a supporter.

REINIER: Well now, these individuals in Yolo County, were they individuals or corporations that owned land here?

LOWREY: Mostly individuals. Large, with large acreage.

REINIER: But what about the north/south controversies in agriculture?

LOWREY: Well, we felt that it was more a water fight, plus the large corporation farming that grew up in the San

Joaquin Valley and even further on south. I never supported them then, and I still am not favorable to them.

REINIER: So you supported the small family farmer?

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: But during the years that you were in the legislature, family farms declined, didn't they? Like from 1940 to 1960.

160 Acre Limitation on Bureau of Reclamation Water

LOWREY: Yes, that's right. But some of us, for instance, I was a great supporter of the 160 acre limitation, and always voted in favor of it. The Farm Bureau and the big corporation farmers, who were Farm Bureau members, were opposed to the Bureau of Reclamation water, even though they were getting it dirt cheap for two and a half [dollars] an acre foot.⁹ But on important agricultural legislation we many times buried the hatchet and joined hands to get our forty-one votes,

⁹The Newlands Act of 1902 limited the amount of water one owner of land could obtain from a federal reclamation project to enough to irrigate 160 acres, or in case of a married couple, 320 acres. In 1944 this limitation was applied to water from the Central Valley Project. By 1957 in the test case of the Ivanhoe Irrigation District, large growers were successful in obtaining a decision from the supreme court of California declaring the limit "unlawful discrimination." This judgment was reversed, however, in 1958 by the United States Supreme Court. This limitation applies only to federally funded projects and the massive water projects of the 1960s were built with state funds. Bean, California, pp. 405-407.

which we were able to, generally speaking, maintain at that time. That's not true today.

Obtaining Votes on Agricultural Issues

REINIER: So, has the influence of agriculture in the legislature declined by today?

LOWREY: Well, we now have professional politicians, in my opinion, in the state legislature. It's a profession with them. In the days when I was a member, we weren't members of the legislature as a profession. Most of us, were in there trying to represent the people of our district. Particularly, when I first joined the legislature, our salary was twelve hundred dollars. So, you couldn't be a professional politician on twelve hundred dollars a year, when you had to use some of your farm money to finance yourself to stay in the legislature.

REINIER: So did you consider yourself a layman?

LOWREY: Very definitely.

REINIER: But now, I'm interested in those forty-one votes. You always had the forty-one votes when you were in the legislature?

LOWREY: In most instances. Well, I had one vote, a liberal Democrat, that I never let it be known as long as I was in the legislature, that I had this vote. But [A. Philip] Phil Burton from San Francisco, who used to call me Uncle Lloyd, came to me and told me that when I

had to have the forty-first vote to come and let him know. And I had that vote. Not many times, I never exercised that prerogative unless it was dire necessity. The rest of the legislators never even knew that we had such an agreement between us.

REINIER: Why do you think he made that agreement with you?

LOWREY: For one reason, apparently he took a particular liking to me personally. And secondly, he said that everybody had to eat, and for the good of the nation we had to preserve agriculture, which I thought was a laudable conclusion to draw.

REINIER: Did he expect a trade, that you would then vote for something he favored?

LOWREY: Never. Never even suggested it. Because very often I was aggressively opposing his what I thought was ultra-liberal legislation. But I still had that. There are personal friendships that develop in the legislature. So that when you leave the floor, you try to forget what transpires in your discussions, whether you're a Democrat or Republican. That was the condition that existed up until the end of my term in the legislature. Partisanship was beginning to dominate instead of joint cooperation to get good legislation for the people.

REINIER: So you think it was in Pat Brown's administration that partisanship began to be more of an issue?

LOWREY: I am quite sure of it!

The Bracero Program

REINIER: Well, we'll get back to that later. Clearly an important issue in agriculture when you were in the assembly was farm labor. Did you favor the bracero program? I believe that was a national program, wasn't it?

LOWREY: I favored the bracero program then. And I still favor the bracero program for the simple reason that, if we want our crops harvested by agricultural labor, the tasks that have to be performed are hard work, physical hard work. I tried many different ways, many different groups, working for me. I finally came to the conclusion that with the higher prices demanding that we get retribution for the wages we paid, the braceros worked. They worked diligently. They want to work ten hours a day. I've never had but one that complained and when I offered to send him on his way, never had any more trouble. So I'm thoroughly convinced the only way we can get our crops harvested at all economically is by using the bracero labor.

REINIER: So the bracero was used as much by the family farmer as he was by agribusiness.

LOWREY: That's right. Of course, we didn't use so many of them and we didn't use them for long periods of time, perhaps. But we have had braceros that keep coming back to work for us over a period of years. Quite

often, I have taken the names and addresses and sent them Christmas cards to let them know that we appreciated. The press has reviled the farmers for using cheap labor. But, most of us feel that we can pay the bracero a higher wage than we could using most local labor. And we do that by just giving them, donating extra funds, that really aren't a part of the regular salary. You may say it's under the table assistance.

REINIER: You mean beyond the contract that you have for the braceros.

LOWREY: That's right. We just give them gratuities for doing a good job.

REINIER: Where did they stay when they were here?

LOWREY: Well, they usually, quite often, in our community, congregate. A group of them have a building or they live in some farmer's establishment. Then there may be, say, fifteen or twenty of them living there. And they go out and work for the various small farmers.

REINIER: And then they returned to Mexico when the contract was over.

LOWREY: That's right. We used to feel that, I never had it happen to me, but other growers that have had what they called the "wetbacks" picked up, if they took them back to the border, you ordinarily figured that it took two weeks for them to get back to go to work again.

REINIER: So those were the individuals who came in illegally, whereas the braceros came to work legally.

LOWREY: Yes. Most of the farmers I know never paid much attention, they didn't ask any questions. If a man wanted to work, he had a job, if he would work.

Cesar Chavez and Farm Labor Organization

REINIER: What has been your opinion of Cesar Chavez and attempts to organize the farm workers?

LOWREY: I have never been a supporter of Chavez and his methods of operation. That's just another branch of organized labor where Chavez, in my opinion, is making a good living for himself. Now, there's no question or doubt that perhaps on large agricultural operations the braceros were not properly treated. I don't doubt that a bit, but I blame that partially on the labor contractors. While I never worked through a labor contractor, I know of how they operate. I always had a feeling that there was a relationship between Chavez and some of those individuals. Anyway, I was never in favor of Chavez, and I'm not at this time.

REINIER: Has there been important legislation on the state level concerning farm labor...

LOWREY: Oh yes.

REINIER: That you've been involved with?

LOWREY: Well, there were so many other phases of agriculture that I was so interested in, I tried to stay away from

the labor end of the operation.

REINIER: Leaving that to whom? Who would be interested in the labor issue then in the assembly?

LOWREY: Well, I would say the Farm Bureau was perhaps the most active agricultural group.

Associated Farmers of California

REINIER: What about the Associated Farmers?¹⁰

LOWREY: I'd say the Associated Farmers are right-wing, in my opinion, an ultra-conservative, selfish, group.

REINIER: But, they had quite a bit of influence in the legislature.

LOWREY: Oh, terrific, because they put the money into the legislators' campaigns. In fact, I guess they put money in against me at times.

REINIER: So, there were some assemblymen who were very much supported by the Associated Farmers?

LOWREY: Very, very definitely. Particularly, I think more down in the San Joaquin Valley. Well, you take Coachella Valley, and down in that area, where they have large corporation farms, yes, they carried, and still carry a lot of weight.

REINIER: Are you willing to give us any names of people whom you

¹⁰The Associated Farmers of California was organized in the 1930s and was funded by large growers and corporations. Originally, it sought to prevent agricultural strikes and unionization of farm labor. Bean, California, p. 497. The group has served as a lobbyist for large growers since its organization.

feel were very much supported by the Associated Farmers?

LOWREY: Well, I can't remember off-hand. Generally speaking, I think that they were Republicans, and some of them were very good friends and people with whom I worked.

REINIER: Worked in what?

LOWREY: Worked with in agriculture, for agricultural legislation.

REINIER: But were the Associated Farmers mostly corporations?

LOWREY: That was my general feeling. I being prejudiced, I might not be the right individual to form an opinion on that, but that was my general feeling.

REINIER: But, in this case, we're talking about being prejudiced against corporations.

Agriculture, Corporate Interests, and Governor Ronald Reagan

LOWREY: That's right. Because they were huge. Well, we had oil companies, many of the oil companies. And then in citrus they carried terrific weight. I know when [Governor Ronald] Reagan was selecting state Director of Agriculture I had several Republicans that asked me to support a fellow...

[End tape 3, side A]

[Begin tape 3, side B]

REINIER: Well now, we were discussing your efforts to get a young man appointed, and what was the position?

LOWREY: State Director of Agriculture.

REINIER: In the Reagan administration?

LOWREY: Right.

REINIER: How would you happen to be advising a Republican, Governor Reagan, on such positions?

LOWREY: Because I was one of two Democrats who were on the committee to recommend appointments to Reagan's new cabinet [1966. Mr. Lowrey had retired from the legislature in 1962]. When I presented this man's name [Casper W.] Cap Weinberger called me out in the hall and said, "He's a fine man, but we just can't take him. Because the citrus industry has poured so much money into the Reagan campaign, they demand that a vice chairman of the Bank of America get that appointment. That's the way it has to go." And that's the way it went.

REINIER: So, the large corporate growers in southern California had a great deal of influence on Reagan?

LOWREY: I hadn't realized that they had that much political force, but that's the way the chips fell.

REINIER: Well now, how did a Democrat happen to be on Reagan's advisory committee?

LOWREY: Because, some of my friends thought that I should support Reagan, and get a change in the way the California state legislature was being run. In my discussions with Reagan some way he found out that

Helen Gahagan Douglas was a very close, personal friend of mine, and emphasized to me that he had supported her. I think that more than anything else influenced me to cross party lines and become active in Reagan's campaign, unfortunately.

REINIER: Unfortunately?

LOWREY: Absolutely, because two weeks after he became governor I realized that he wasn't the individual he had portrayed himself to me to be. I have had no use for him, and I think he's one of the greatest menaces the United States has ever had.

REINIER: How did he let you down?

LOWREY: Because, he apparently isn't interested in agriculture. He apparently isn't interested in natural resources. He's interested in taking dictation from the big corporate interests. There's no question of doubt in my mind of that. Because I had questioned him at great length before I would join with him, and he promised me faithfully that he would never be a candidate for president. I told him if he were going to go up to Sacramento just to get his foot in the door to run for president, I wouldn't have anything to do with him. Two weeks after he became governor, he started promoting himself for the presidency. That's when I parted company with him.

REINIER: Now, that's an interesting story. A little later I

think we should deal with the reasons why you supported Reagan after Pat Brown's administration. But let's go on right now with agricultural issues. You did support, and introduce, a great deal of agricultural legislation while you were in the assembly.

Agricultural Legislation--Workman's Compensation

LOWREY: I can't remember many specific agricultural bills excepting one. That was, I don't know whether it was a joint resolution or a regular bill, to provide for workman's compensation for farm laborers.

REINIER: Do you remember when that was?

LOWREY: In the late forties or early fifties, I would guess.

REINIER: And did that go through?

LOWREY: Yes. I don't remember the details of how we put it in the statutes, but we had not too much difficulty getting it adopted.

Hide and Brand, Meat Inspection

REINIER: I saw in some of the research that I did that you also sponsored hide and brand legislation for the cattle industry.

LOWREY: Oh, and I was chairman of the interim committee that toured the state trying to get the Department of Agriculture to get hide and brand and meat inspection into a reputable position, because it had deteriorated so that we weren't getting proper results. In fact,

just here recently [Harold J.] Butch Powers, Senator Powers, and I at a luncheon were discussing some of the incidences that took place as we toured the state on interim hearings on meat inspection and hide and brand. We changed the laws at the time so that they were more enforceable.

Agricultural Spraying

REINIER: Agricultural spraying was another area where you seem to have introduced legislation.

LOWREY: In that phase of the activity I only have a faint remembrance of that. But I recall that we had incidents where spray spread from one field to another. Well, particularly, I handled practically all the legislation for the agricultural aircraft operators that did the spraying. We had to have specific provisions to protect not only the man that was doing the spraying but for the adjacent land owners. That was quite an extensive program that we carried on. In fact, an attorney in Yolo County, Carl Rodegerdts, was attorney for the aircraft people and their lobbyists. So it was very easy for me to work closely with them because Carl was personally a good friend of mine.

REINIER: Well now, would you have any difficulty getting that kind of legislation through the assembly?

LOWREY: Yes, we had. In those days, we were just beginning to use aircraft more in agriculture both for seeding and

spraying. And the people and the legislators had to be educated a little bit as to the need for this type of legislation. I recall that one bill I had that I couldn't get passed was taken over by a legislator from Stockton. He was setting up specific legislation that would have only let one group operate. He took and amended my bill without my knowing it. Someone called my attention to it while they were having a hurried meeting in the back of the assembly chamber. And I went back there and saw what was going on. And, I put a stop to that immediately.

REINIER: How did you do that?

LOWREY: I just told them that it was my bill and I hadn't given them permission to amend my bill. He better stop that type of an operation or else I would take it up on the floor and accuse him of subterfuge.

REINIER: Did that kind of thing happen quite a bit in the assembly?

LOWREY: Well, not too often. But this fellow did things on the spur of the moment quite often without thinking about what he was doing.

Pesticides

REINIER: Well, you know when we get into this area of aircraft spraying, we're getting into the very controversial issue of the use of pesticides.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: Did you have doubts about the use of pesticides back in those years?

LOWREY: Not particularly, because we didn't have so many different formulations, chemical formulations, then. Research hadn't excited people to the point where every pesticide would cause cancer or some other unfortunate human disease. So, I was in favor of the use of pesticides on a reasonable basis but being careful that those used were properly researched.

REINIER: Were you aware then of possible damage being done by pollution through pesticides?

LOWREY: Yes. And, I was aware that sooner or later the fertilizers and the pesticides that were flowing from the fields in northern California into the Sacramento River, sooner or later something was going to have to be done about it. But, it wasn't generally recognized by the general public and the urban areas at that time. So we didn't have the terrific conflict that exists today.

REINIER: But even though you knew that, you kept that knowledge under wraps.

LOWREY: That was one of the phases of my activity that I'm not particularly happy about or pleased with myself. But on the other hand, if I'd have taken the opposite position, I wouldn't have been a member of the legislature any longer. I would have been quickly

eliminated by agriculture.

REINIER: So exposing that kind of dumping wouldn't have been serving your constituency?

LOWREY: On the contrary. Well, here just this year a state senator who runs a consulting set-up in Yolo County appealed to the state agency to keep them from preventing the farmers in the upper Sacramento Valley from--I was going to say dumping--from permitting the drain water carrying these pesticides into the Sacramento River. People in Sacramento have been complaining loud and long. He's had several write-ups in the Sacramento Bee accusing him of conflict of interest. So, today this is really a prominent phase of the activity of agriculture.

REINIER: Knowing what you know now, would you have handled this situation differently, from hindsight?

LOWREY: Well, it wasn't a critical problem that existed in that era. And, there were so many other activities that I was very definitely interested in that I tried to specialize in a few and not get into the controversial ones any more than I had to.

REINIER: Because if you had gotten into that controversy, would you have lost your seat in the legislature?

LOWREY: I probably would have because I would have had no backing. Science hadn't progressed to the point and public interest was not such that I could verify what I

knew was going to happen twenty, thirty, forty years in the future.

Indirect Legislation Through the Council of State Governments

REINIER: What then were your specialties in agriculture?

LOWREY: Water was one of the phases that I was particularly interested in and agricultural conservation very definitely. I became particularly active as California's representative to the Council of State Governments where I served on many committees and became very active. As an example, I went to a meeting in Washington and pyrotechnics was an issue. Well, a few days before I'd been up in the rice area where they'd been exploding bombs and shooting into the air to scare the birds off from their grain crops, rice. Some of the fellows on this drafting committee said, "Now, California, you're going to say that you have so many ducks and geese out there that you have to herd them off of your fields." And I said, "Absolutely." Then I explained that to him.

Then in another instance, a question of rice came up, whether it was going to be the type they were going to recommend from Louisiana or some of that area or California-type rice was going to be included. And those fellows said, "Now I suppose you say you grow rice out in California." This is an Easterner. And I

said, "Absolutely, we're one of the three greatest rice producers in the nation." He said, "I don't believe it." I said, "Well, I can go and get the records for you if I have to." Well, we work these things out. But, this is a type of indirect legislation that I did for agriculture, really educating some of the Easterners as to the problems.

REINIER: So that would be indirect legislation on the national level?

LOWREY: That's right. But, the Council of State Governments has a committee on uniform laws, the drafting of uniform laws, and each year they put out a booklet recommending the legislation that the state should adopt. Well, I was on this drafting committee of uniform laws. In fact, I finally became chairman of the committee. One example was hot pursuit across state boundaries. That is, if you were after a fugitive, you could cross a state line to pick him up. Another one, we were having trouble with truckers crossing state lines with agricultural products, well that legislation...

REINIER: Uniform legislation then was passed by several states?

LOWREY: Would be passed by several states.

VII. COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

REINIER: How did you get to be a member of the Council of State

Governments?

LOWREY: I decided, after reading some of their literature, that California should become an active participant in the activities of the Council. So I talked Jesse Unruh, who was speaker, into appointing me to the Council of State Governments as one of the representatives from California. I religiously attended all the meetings.

REINIER: That must have been then in the early sixties when you played that role.

LOWREY: That's right. In fact, about every month, I would leave San Francisco airport at midnight and get in to Washington the next morning, shave and take a shower and have a cup of coffee, and then attend the meetings, quite often one day, sometimes two days. Then I'd be back in my office by 8:00 the following morning, which was pretty tough going. But in the early days I was single and I could get away more.

REINIER: But you didn't attend the Council of State Governments until later, however. How long did you?...[Actually Mr. Lowrey was appointed to the Council of State Governments in 1953 by Speaker James W. Silliman. He was not single at that time because he was married to Helen Frances in November, 1945.] *¹¹

¹¹Mr. Lowrey added the preceding bracketed material during his review of the draft transcript.

LOWREY: I can't remember when I went on, but I remember the last session I attended. I paid for it myself out of my own pocket because I had retired from the legislature in '62. We met in Honolulu.
Committee to Amend the U.S. Constitution

REINIER: That was quite a controversial session of that Council, wasn't it? Didn't the Council recommend some state's rights...

LOWREY: Oh, yeah.

REINIER: legislation?

LOWREY: Oh, yes, and the president wanted to put his own man in as president of the Council of State Governments.

REINIER: The president?

LOWREY: Of the United States.

REINIER: Was that [President John F.] Kennedy?

LOWREY: Yes. And because I was a director and on the nominating committee, one of his men was sent to me with a list of people that I should support. And there were two people on there that I said I could support. One was a judge from Missouri and another one was, well, he was a congressman, [Jerome R.] Jerry Waldie. I said I could support those two, but the rest of them, no. For president we already had a fellow from Pennsylvania who--it was the Republicans' turn to have president of the council. Well, I got the word very quickly around what Kennedy was trying to do and Jesse

Unruh as his...

REINIER: What were they trying to do?

LOWREY: They were trying to take over and run the Council of State Governments themselves.

REINIER: Well now, I'm interested in this state's rights recommendation that the Council was making. What was the reason for that? Maybe we should say first, what was the content of those recommendations?

LOWREY: Oh, boy. I can't remember all the details. I was chairman of a committee that was trying to get a review of the federal constitution to cut Earl Warren's stature down as supreme court justice, because some of us felt that he was going too far.

REINIER: I believe that it was that states could review supreme court decisions.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: Well, was this because of the area of civil rights?

LOWREY: Well, some of us felt that it was becoming too liberal and we weren't enforcing the laws as some of us felt they should be. We wanted to curtail his [Chief Justice Earl Warren's] powers. So we had our resolution. We had some of the finest constitutional lawyers in Washington working as our advisors. We had this resolution passed by sixteen states. Earl Warren got wind of it some way, and got a hold of Kennedy and Kennedy came out vocally in opposition to it. And that

ended that program.

REINIER: I think Unruh and Pat Brown came out in opposition to it too.

LOWREY: Oh, very definitely. In fact, Unruh told the Council that if they didn't get rid of me!...

[End tape 3, side B]

[Session 4, May 18, 1987]

[Begin tape 4, side A]

REINIER: Mr. Lowrey, at the end of the last tape we were talking about the Council of State Governments and your activity in that group, and we were talking about those very controversial proposals that were made in 1963 on state's rights. I know that they were very complex proposals, but I understand that basically what they proposed was to establish a court of the union that would give state chief justices power to overrule the U.S. Supreme Court. There was a second one that would permit states to amend the federal Constitution. And a third one that dealt with the issue of reapportioning state legislatures and that would eliminate federal judicial authority in reapportionment of state legislatures. Now, we mentioned at the end of the last tape that there was a great deal of controversy over this issue, and you were saying that Jesse Unruh was particularly an opponent of these issues in 1963.

LOWREY: Well, it just happened that I left the legislature in '62 so that in '63 I had been kept on the administrative staff [of the Council of State Governments] more or less, along with a senator, a lady

from Connecticut, I believe it was, so that we'd have continuity in what had happened in the past. So we could relate what had transpired and continue the council's efforts in a logical manner. It happened that Jesse Unruh was attempting to become a power in the Council of State Governments. There were some of us that didn't want him, because he was so closely associated with President Kennedy. We didn't want this organization to become a political fiasco run by the federal government, the president and the White House. And Jesse was able, being speaker of the assembly, to have the constitution of the council changed so that no one who was no longer a member of the state legislature could serve in any official capacity in the council. Well, that eliminated me and also the senator from Connecticut.

REINIER: Do you think that was directed specifically at you?

LOWREY: Oh, I'm quite sure, because it was not only Jesse, but [Randolph] Randy Collier. Senator Randy Collier was also instrumental. Well, they were adamant, they were going to get me off the council, and that was the method they employed to do it. If the council wasn't willing to go along, they were going to restrict the finances that the state of California contributed annually to the council. There was no alternative.

REINIER: So they were successful.

LOWREY: Very successful. And fortunately, from my point of view. It saved me money, because I was spending my own money to attend many of the sessions, no longer being a member of the legislature.

Reapportionment--"One Man, One Vote"

REINIER: Well now, were these proposals aimed really at the civil rights gains that had been made? Was that the underlying reason for them?

LOWREY: Well, that wasn't my particular interest. My particular interest was to thwart the chief justice of the supreme court in his methods employed to, what I felt, was denying legitimate legislative power to rural areas by "one man, one vote."¹² It turned the tide completely to the cities and left the rural areas as they are today, without proper representation.

REINIER: So it was the reapportionment issue that was the real issue as far as you were concerned.

LOWREY: As far as I was concerned that was it.

REINIER: But others might have backed the same resolutions because of their opposition to civil rights.

LOWREY: I think there's little question of doubt that that was

¹²Mr. Lowrey is referring to the United States Supreme Court decision in Reynolds v. Sims in 1964 that legislative districts must approximate each other in population size (ie.: one person, one vote) and take into consideration population shifts. The effect of this decision in California was loss of power by rural districts. John H. Culver and John C. Syer, Power and Politics in California (New York, 1988), p. 149.

a fact.

REINIER: You said you had sixteen states that were favoring these proposals, and most of those were in the deep south, or at least eight of them were in the deep south, weren't they?

LOWREY: Well, it was so long ago that I don't remember exactly, but I think perhaps that's a true statement. I know I had worked very closely with representatives from many of the southern states, particularly Florida, Virginia, Arkansas, well, a whole group of those states.

REINIER: So you've always been very much opposed to the "one man, one vote" decision?

LOWREY: Yes, but I voted, unfortunately, with Pat Brown, for which I've always been sorry since.

REINIER: You voted with him on what?

LOWREY: Well, so that you couldn't cross-file.

REINIER: Oh, I see, eliminating cross-filing.

LOWREY: That's right.

VIII. WATER ISSUES

Public vs Private Power

REINIER: Now we want to talk a little bit later about Pat Brown's administration and your relationship with it, but I think that we should pursue the issue of water in California, which, of course, has been such an

important issue when you were in the legislature. In the early years would you say that it's correct to say that the water conflict was mostly between public and private power?

LOWREY: Partially so. But from the time I went to the legislature some of us felt that with the political power of southern California that we had to be very watchful that our water rights in the north were not taken away from us.

REINIER: So, of course, it also was a regional conflict.

LOWREY: Very definitely.

REINIER: Very definitely. Now how did [Pacific Gas and Electric Company] PG & E fit into the picture?

LOWREY: Well, because they used the power of water to generate electricity they were very definitely interested in a part of the overall water problem in California.

REINIER: And they worked long and hard to prevent a project like the Central Valley Water Project, for example, from being completely a public project.

LOWREY: That is absolutely true, but my recollection of the maneuvers and the details of that time are quite hazy. I was strongly in favor of public power and became rather closely associated with the federal bureau of water [Federal Bureau of Reclamation] instead of with the Army Engineers, and supported public power development.

REINIER: And you were long an opponent of PG & E.

LOWREY: Because my feeling was that they exerted too great a political influence with their money and lobbying activities, and that the consumer, the general electrical consumer, was not being as fairly treated as he should have been.

REINIER: Well, what were the alliances? Were the big growers in southern California allied with PG & E in these battles?

LOWREY: Well, that was my feeling. Of course, there was the Metropolitan Water District [of Southern California] and the Southern California Edison [Company] that were involved in this whole procedure too. As I say, the details of the legislative procedures are quite hazy now, I can't remember all the maneuvers that they and we instituted in the early forties.

REINIER: In the early forties. On into the fifties too.

LOWREY: That's right...

REINIER: That continued to be an issue in the central valley. For example, I think it was in 1944, when Shasta Dam was completed, Harold Ickes is reputed to have said that he had no choice but to sell the power from that dam to PG & E.¹³ Then PG & E continued to control the power, even though it was a federal project.

¹³This statement is quoted in Bean, California, p. 405.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: But you were friendly with lobbyists for PG & E even though you were a political opponent?

LOWREY: Well, I won't mention one of the lobbyists name, but he was one of my closest personal friends with whom I associated. Neither he nor I after he left the lobby, the PG & E lobby, could remember when I ever gave him a vote.

REINIER: But that didn't matter in your friendship?

LOWREY: Not one bit. He was a very fine person who unfortunately was taken by cancer here a few years ago.
More on 160 Acre Limit of Bureau of Reclamation Water

REINIER: Now, another issue of the same time period, of course, was the one hundred sixty acre limitation [on Bureau of Reclamation Water].

LOWREY: Very definitely. I was, and still am, a strong advocate and supporter of the one hundred sixty acre limitation which the Federal Bureau of Reclamation supported. All during my legislative career at every opportunity I supported any activity that would promote the one hundred sixty acre limitation, and opposed the state Farm Bureau organization which opposed the one hundred sixty acre limitation, in my belief.

REINIER: And PG & E and the large growers formed an alliance to oppose the limit too, didn't they?

LOWREY: Oh, absolutely. But, particularly in the San Joaquin

Valley and on down, when the bureau [Federal Bureau of Reclamation] had cheap water they were using every legal and political gimmick they could to get that water.

REINIER: Well, it's still an issue now in 1987, isn't it?

LOWREY: It is. But I think they have raised the limit now way above the one hundred sixty acre limitation. I haven't followed it closely, excepting to know that the large growers and the conglomerates that have large acreages are doing their best to evade acreage limitation.

REINIER: In order to obtain cheaper federal water.

LOWREY: That's right. Really it's subsidized water is what it is.

REINIER: And benefiting the large growers then at the expense of the small farmers?

LOWREY: Well, I don't as it's hurt the small farmers so much, excepting that if the large growers can get the cheap water, they can produce because of their size for less money per unit than the small grower can. So it does have an economic effect on the small grower from that point of view.

REINIER: And in effect it's a federal subsidy to the large grower.

LOWREY: That's right.

California Water Plan

REINIER: Well now, of course a very important issue that you were very much involved in was Pat Brown's water plan [State Water Project] in 1959. Were you opposed to Pat Brown's water plan?

LOWREY: I personally had told Pat that I would not take an active part in opposition if he would accept an amendment which would provide for moneys for scientific research for the whole project by competent scientists before the project was started. Also I favored and insisted that we take into consideration before the project was started, the elimination, the proper elimination of drain waters. Because, to me, unless the drain water situation was taken care of before the project was started, sooner or later, many large acreages, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley, would not be agriculturally feasible to farm because of the salt and the other chemicals that would pollute the soil.

REINIER: That's the situation that is evident now at the Kesterson Reservoir.

LOWREY: There's little question of doubt about it. The fight is still on as to how that water is to be eliminated. Fortunately, the drain that I favored building wasn't completed. Otherwise the Carquinez Straits would be filled with that highly polluted water now. But I put amendments in on the research because I tried to

explain to the members of the legislature that if you took an arid and semi-arid environment and changed the humidity of the atmosphere and also changed the temperature, even a half a degree's variance, that it would effect the microbes, the bacteria, the viruses, all plant and animal life. That research should be completed so that we would know what the effects were going to be in the distant future. But, other legislators and the water experts said that the only reason I was taking that attitude was that I was against the whole water project as such, which was partially correct. But I still said that I would go with them if they would do the proper research beforehand.

REINIER: So your amendment was defeated.

LOWREY: Oh, yes. Every time I introduced it, it was defeated. When the proposition came up for a final vote, it was so close that if I could have convinced the Republican assemblyman from Orange County to vote against the bill--I had three other Republican votes in southern California that would vote against it--we would have defeated the bill. As this fellow from Orange County finally told me Pat had offered him a judgeship if he voted for the bill. He had always wanted to be a judge, and if he were a judge, he would have financial security for himself and his family. Regardless of

what was right or wrong, he finally told me that he was going to vote for the bill. And so it passed.

REINIER: Do you think that the crucial issue in getting that bond issue [the State Water Project] through the legislature was that one man's vote?

LOWREY: I've always felt it. That's my personal feeling, because we would have had five votes if he hadn't decided to go along with Pat's offer of a judgeship.

REINIER: Did he get the judgeship?

LOWREY: Well, he finally got a municipal judgeship. He had a little difficulty getting it, but Pat finally gave it to him. After he served as a municipal judge for some time, he finally was promoted to superior court judge before his retirement from the court.

REINIER: Did that kind of thing happen often in the legislature?

LOWREY: I would say it was routine.

REINIER: In all administrations?

LOWREY: I think so. On a crucial bill or crucial piece of legislation, it wasn't uncommon. I think it still isn't uncommon to give special privilege to those that will support the governor's position. As far as I'm concerned, human beings being as they are, it will never be prevented, never be stopped, that's human nature.

REINIER: Well now, to get the water plan through not only did it

have to get through the legislature but then it was presented to the voters as a bond issue in 1960. Do you remember methods that were used to persuade the voters in that election?

LOWREY: I'm confused now, but I do recall large amounts of money were spent supporting the passage of the bill. There was a strong group supporting it, including the California Farm Bureau.

REINIER: Any other groups involved in raising that money that you can remember?

LOWREY: I'm quite sure that the large growers and particularly the oil companies that had large agricultural holdings in the San Joaquin and on down to Bakersfield all through the south, they put a lot of money into the campaign.

REINIER: Do you think that the northern farmers that you have represented in your career have been damaged by the passage of this water plan?

LOWREY: Up to the present time there apparently hasn't been too much damage done excepting the seepage and erosion, which has...

[End tape 4, side A]

[Begin tape 4, side B]

REINIER: We were just speaking of seepage and erosion which has been caused by the water plan [State Water Project].

LOWREY: The Sacramento River is now used as a transportation

canal to move water from the north to the south which has resulted in bank erosion and seepage to adjacent or contiguous land areas along the Sacramento River. I think the crucial problem has not yet shown itself, but will come in the future when the demands of the south for more water, now that the water plan is in effect, and with the preponderance of political voting power in the south, is going to eventually have its effect upon the northern part of the state as far as I'm concerned. As two members of the Metropolitan Water District [of Southern California] told me one evening here just a few years ago, when Los Angeles and the south absolutely had to have water, they would take it. They have the money and the political power to usurp that water. I have always felt that sooner or later, probably much later, this would transpire. We're approaching the year right now, where water is the determining factor of population growth in the state of California.

REINIER: And as population shifts to the south, do you think northern California will be less able to prevent the flow of water southward?

LOWREY: That's always been my fear. I feel that it's bound to happen sooner or later. That was one reason why I opposed. Another reason is that ecologically, environmentally, to interrupt nature's operation on

this planet over many, maybe hundreds, thousands or a million years, would change the whole complex of the area. I'd like to see the environment and the ecology, plant and animal life, pretty much stay as we know it today.

REINIER: And you've always been involved in conservation issues.

LOWREY: Very definitely. And will be as long as I'm able to speak and stand on my two feet.

IX. CONSERVATION ISSUES

Dams

REINIER: Now, in the legislature what conservation issues do you think were particularly important that you participated in?

LOWREY: Well, of course, this water issue is one of the prime propositions, which involves dams. For instance, right here in my own locality if I hadn't been able to stop the building of a dam five miles below where I now live, this part of the valley would be covered with water. Where we're now sitting would have been eleven feet under water. And, I have always opposed the Dos Rios project over at Covelo. Even took the only, as far as I know, the only interim committee that's ever held a hearing over in that area over the mountain from Willows so that the legislators could see actually what

the Dos Rios dam would do.

Fire Control

So, I have been interested in conservation. In fact, I introduced the first legislation to permit controlled burning or a reforestation program, back in the early '40's. I have consistently supported a program where large areas of fuel, such as we lost down in Santa Barbara and every year we have those huge fires down in the Los Angeles area, and my fight has always been to checkerboard the area so that we could better control the fire situation and protect the environment.

REINIER: What do you mean by checkerboard?

LOWREY: Well, you would burn the excessive fuel in say a half mile square, a mile square, six hundred and forty acres, or various plots. Not have one huge fire, but have several what we call control burns. We changed the name from control burns to range improvement because it sounded so much better. It's been difficult because of the insurance provision and the influx of population into the brush covered mountainous areas of this state to put in a proper fire control program as we tried to do then. To a certain extent, in the last year or two the forestry is again trying to institute such a program.

REINIER: Now, politically who have been your primary opponents on these conservation issues?

LOWREY: Well, for a long time people in forestry, trained foresters, opposed the program. My very close, personal friend, [DeWitt] Swede Nelson, who was State Forester, and I used to go 'round and 'round over this issue. We finally were able to compromise our stand. Then the United States Forest Service originally was opposed to the program, but we were able to get them to alter their thinking and remember what the Native Americans used to do, the Indians, as well as nature with her electrical storms. We do have, at the present time, more support for this type of conservation than we had when I first went to the legislature in 1942 [1940].

REINIER: Well now, on other environmental issues, did you have different political opponents?

LOWREY: Well, so many of the legislators were not particularly interested in environmental matters. They were interested in urban problems where there were more votes. We now have, in this present time and era, many conservation organizations functioning. But in those days there were very few. Conservation to many people was a bad word.

REINIER: Why would that be?

LOWREY: Well, I guess a lot of people thought that conservationists, to use the vernacular word, were a bunch of "kooks." I think we're now beginning to

realize that we must protect our environment. We have not only rural but urban areas supporting the concept.

Governor Ronald Reagan and Conservation

REINIER: Well now, although you supported Ronald Reagan briefly, was conservation one of the issues that severed that relationship?

LOWREY: Absolutely! In my estimation, he did everything he could to destroy conservation in California. The State Soil Conservation Commission, the moneys for state forestry, the promises that were made to me when I supported his election--soon after he became governor, he forgot that he had made any such promises to me personally.

REINIER: Promises about conservation?

LOWREY: Promises about conservation. Because, he apparently, from his statement: "If you've seen one redwood tree, you've seen them all." I know he said it because I had introduced him to about five thousand people when he made that unfortunate statement from the rostrum, which embarrassed me to no end.

REINIER: Where was that?

LOWREY: That was up in Lake County, where a woman asked him a question. He didn't know the difference between the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada, because a woman asked him about a water project in the Coast Range and he started to talk about the Oroville Dam project.

This elderly woman criticized him for not knowing the difference between the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada.

X. EXPERIENCES WITH VARIOUS STATE LEADERS

Governor Ronald Reagan and Casper W. Weinberger

REINIER: What's your overall impression of Ronald Reagan?

LOWREY: I think he's a menace to the safety and well being of the United States and perhaps the whole world today.

REINIER: Do you consider him a highly gifted individual?

LOWREY: I consider him a man with a very mediocre mind. He was not endowed with the brain capacity that his Secretary of Defense possesses, Cap Weinberger, who is one the smartest men I have ever known and has been one of Ronald Reagan's close advisors over the years since he's been governor and president.

REINIER: Well now, in the state of California, do you think Weinberger had quite a bit of influence over Reagan?

LOWREY: I know he did. He exerted from behind the scenes extreme power in selecting the appointments to the heads of departments, like finance, agriculture, water, you name it--the cabinet appointments. He had a profound voice in Reagan's selection of those appointments.

REINIER: What was their relationship?

LOWREY: Very close! Cap at the time did not come out, he

worked a lot behind the scenes. I know that because I was one of two Democrats on the committee that was to make recommendations to the governor for his cabinet appointments. Cap used to call me aside and say, "We must have this individual appointed," or "That individual can't be appointed because for this reason or that reason." That went on until he eventually was selected as Director of Finance by Ronald Reagan. As far as I'm concerned, Cap was really the governor of California instead of Ronald Reagan. He told him what to do and how to do it.

REINIER: Was there anybody else that had that much influence in the Reagan administration?

LOWREY: There may have been. The financial interests told Reagan that he could or couldn't, that he had to do this or do that. I am, allegedly, quite sure in making such a statement.

REINIER: Financial interests?

LOWREY: Well, I'd say Bank of America, PG & E, Southern California Edison, Sunsweet, growers, large financial interests in the San Joaquin Valley, they dominated, they really dominated the Reagan administration as governor.

REINIER: But you were willing to support him even though so did a lot of people who were political opponents of yours.

LOWREY: He had promised me faithfully that he was interested in

only one term as governor and was positively not interested in attaining higher office, including the presidency. I put the question to him quite positively that I wouldn't support him if he was using the governorship for promotion to Washington. He promised me, I recall faithfully, "My only interest is trying to be a good governor for California for one term." I should have had brains enough to realize that politicians will do and say almost anything to get your support.

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr.

REINIER: Were you pretty disenchanted with Pat Brown's administration?

LOWREY: I was unhappy with Pat Brown's administration for one reason. I was, and always have been, a strong opponent of drugs. When Pat was attorney general, he would not support an increase in the narcotics force that I was attempting to get through the legislature, was unsuccessful in doing. Then as governor we had our difficulties on water. In many phases of activity we didn't agree. I occasionally supported him, as I told him that the law of averages would cause him to have some good pieces of legislation, which I supported. But on the other hand, there was so much of the legislation that I felt was inappropriate that I didn't support him and his administration. He told me

personally that I was a maverick who could never be depended upon. And I said that was the kindest remark I'd ever had made in my favor in the entire twenty-two years I served as a state legislator.

REINIER: So you never considered yourself a real party man?

LOWREY: Well, when I first went to the legislature I considered myself definitely a strong party man. But I soon learned that if you put both parties in a gunnysack and shook them up, you couldn't tell what was coming out, one from the other. I think I'm still a Democrat, for a lot of reasons. But I am not a strong party man, and will cross party lines if the opponent is honest and truthful.

REINIER: And you opposed elimination of cross-filing, is that right?

LOWREY: At first I did. Yes, I knew I shouldn't, but I did. That's one time when I went along with Pat Brown.

REINIER: And supported the elimination of cross-filing.

LOWREY: That's right, supported the elimination of cross-filing. Because, well, in my case, I had crossed-filed without opposition for many years. It turned out that for me personally it didn't make any particular difference because I still had bipartisan support. But I still think now that cross-filing should be returned to the state of California.

REINIER: On what other issues were you at odds with that

Democratic administration, other than water?

LOWREY: I was, and still am, a supporter of the death penalty. Pat Brown and a good share of the Democrats were, and I guess they still are, opposed to the death penalty. I also was in favor of more severe penalties for crime violators. I do not respect violators of crime, perhaps being ultra-conservative in that respect. Generally speaking, a lot of the Democrats were in favor of legislation which would protect the criminal rather than the person that was persecuted.

Civil Rights Legislation

REINIER: Were you at odds on civil rights issues in the sixties?

LOWREY: Well, I opposed the [Augustus F.] Hawkins bill, because...¹⁴

[End tape 4, side B]

[Begin tape 5, side A]

REINIER: We were speaking just a few moments ago about your relationship with Pat Brown's administration and you said that you opposed the Hawkins bill and also the

¹⁴A.B. 1970, authored by Augustus F. Hawkins, amended Section 35710 of the Health and Safety Code relating to discrimination in public housing. The bill passed both house of the legislature and was signed by Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Sr. on July 5, 1961. Assembly Final History (Sacramento, 1961), p. 569.

[William Byron] Rumford bill.¹⁵ Is that correct?

LOWREY: That's right. I not only voted against them, I took the floor and opposed them. In the case of the Hawkins bill we in the assembly knew that Senator [Luther E.] Gibson from Solano County when the bill would go over in the senate was going to kill it. So my friends told me, "Don't be foolish. Vote for the bill because we know it's going to be killed over in the senate anyway." And I said, "I'm not that hypocritical. I oppose this type of legislation. Regardless of the political effects, I'm against it." Now in the case of the Hawkins bill, it was a very poor bill anyway. There's no question about it.

But the Rumford bill I opposed philosophically. Byron Rumford was one of our finest legislators, one of my very close personal friends. In fact, it was not uncommon for my wife and I to go out to dinner or to a party with Byron Rumford and his wife. But I opposed the bill because I didn't think then, and I don't think now, that you can legislate racial equality. Legislation never has, and in my estimation, never will

¹⁵The Rumford Act, passed by the legislature in 1963, was named for Assemblyman William Byron Rumford of Berkeley. It declared racial discrimination in housing to be against public policy and forbade owners of residential property of more than four units or of publicly assisted property to engage in racial discrimination in its rental or sale. The law was to be enforced by a state commission. Bean, California, p. 515.

solve the problem. Education should make a big difference. But legislative, you can pass all the bills you want to, but racial prejudice will still prevail unless people are properly educated to live together in a peaceful community.

REINIER: But that must not have endeared you to backers of that legislation in the Brown administration.

LOWREY: Oh. Very definitely not. Very definitely not because when I left the legislature I received none of those accolades such as an appointment to a various commission with a fat salary involved. In fact, I couldn't even get an appointment to an agricultural position where only your expenses were paid and there was no salary involved. In other words I was not one of Pat's team players and because I wasn't, so be it. And that suited me fine.

Speaker Jesse Unruh

REINIER: What about your relationship with Jesse Unruh when he was speaker of the house? Several times in these tapes you've alluded to controversies with Unruh.

LOWREY: We respected each other. I can't recall that I ever voted for him when he was speaker. I told some individual at the beginning of the session that I was supporting him for speaker.

REINIER: Some other individual?

LOWREY: Right. And when I was asked about supporting Jesse or

someone else I said, "Well, my hands are tied. I've devoted myself to one individual and I can't change now that I've committed myself." And in one other case I wasn't on the floor when the vote for speaker came up because I was off the floor trying to convince the fellow who was running against him that he was making a mistake in opposing him. So when Jesse asked me why I didn't vote I told him, "You ought to compliment me because I was trying to get your opponent from opposing you."

I think we respected each other. I respected his ability. I never knew him to break his word if you got tough and forced him to live up to his commitment. But I didn't approve of many of his tactics. I was positively opposed to his building a slush fund to help his friends run for public office, run for the assembly. Of course, when they were elected with his support money, it was a certainty that they had to go along with him. And I felt then and I feel now that that was a very bad feature of political activity that was installed by Jesse Unruh. I also opposed his building a large, he called it a research group of consultants. I did and still favor legislators doing their own work with the least amount of manpower in their office and not be cluttered up with a lot of aides that you don't need wasting the taxpayers' money.

REINIER: Where did he get the money for that slush fund?

LOWREY: From the lobbying groups and the people, the businesses that put money into campaigns. He made many friends. Being one of the state's powerhouses and being the speaker of the assembly, businesses and individuals put money into his campaign treasury legitimately. But they must have had some reason for doing it, expecting they were going to get something back for their money. Although that's only my own personal feeling on the matter.

REINIER: Then did those individuals generally support him on the floor?

LOWREY: Oh yes. Oh you bet. And even some of the Republicans under cover because he would give them special privileges. Being speaker he could appoint them to committees that they wanted to be on or give them interim committees. There's just so many different things that the speaker can do to influence the people to support him.

REINIER: So did he increase the power of the speakership?

LOWREY: In my estimation he increased the power of the speakership terrifically because he's an exceedingly bright individual and was always taking advantage of any opportunity that presented itself to him. While we worked together after a fashion, I wouldn't say...on the surface yes, we were quite good friends, but

basically he had his reservations on me and I had my reservations on him.

REINIER: Were there other tactics that bothered you?

LOWREY: Allegedly taking legislators on weekend trips to Las Vegas. If that happened, I resent it. And, the power the speaker of the assembly has built I feel is not for the best interests of the people of the state of California.

REINIER: Now on this tape you've mentioned two times where you came into direct conflict with Unruh. One was over educational moneys, when you discovered funds that he was allocating to USC.

LOWREY: Well, allegedly. Over a period of many years I had been vice chairman of Ways and Means Committee and chairman of the subcommittee on education which really allocated money in the budget. Allegedly, it came to my attention that an attempt was being made to divert state moneys to USC, which legally, not being a state university isn't eligible for such moneys. And the diversion never occurred. But for some reason the University of California's budget was taken away from me as chairman of the education subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee. I had, and still have, a feeling that perhaps the reason that was taken away from me was because of my involvement in no moneys going to USC. I have felt that, and still think

perhaps there may have been something to it.

REINIER: Were there other tactics?

LOWREY: Oh, we had our differences, but we also had a certain amount of respect for each other. He didn't want to challenge me and I didn't want to go too far and lose my vice chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee either. So, we had more or less of a stand-off.

Retirement

REINIER: Now you retired from the legislature in 1962.

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: What brought about your retirement?

LOWREY: I became mighty unhappy with the way the legislature and state government were being run to the point where emotionally I was so upset that when I'd come home for the weekend, I couldn't sleep and I was brisk with my wife and youngsters. Plus the fact that I felt that I might be getting further away from my constituents whom I had always worked so closely with, because of my extra work with the Council of State Governments. Plus the fact that I figured when you've been in the legislature for twenty-two years and are sixty years old perhaps you should get out and let a younger person take the job. Besides, I wanted to become acquainted with my three boys and my wife.

Marriage to Helen Frances

REINIER: We didn't mention earlier in the tape that you married

Helen [Frances] in 1945.

LOWREY: That's right. She was receptionist up in the Department of Finance. Being up in the department quite often as I went in there I always had to meet with her first. I finally had one of my old college friends who was a civil service employee in finance make a date for me. And, from there it went on until I was able to take her away from the Department of Finance.

REINIER: You told me earlier that you found a lot of business to do at the Department of Finance!

LOWREY: That's right. Well, I was on the joint committee that [A.] Alan Post operated. Working very closely on the Ways and Means Committee and studying the budget, I quite often found financial difficulties that should be corrected in state government.

REINIER: So it wasn't just to see Helen.

XI. TACTICS OF AN EXPERIENCED LEGISLATOR

LOWREY: Oh, well, as one example, I became aware that they had put slot machines in the national guard armories in California. Fred Lynx in the Finance Department didn't want that spread in the newspapers. Well, that was just one example. Then, oh, there were so many occasions as I was studying the budget I would see where money was being wasted or unusual, well, too many

employees or not enough employees. So I made it a point to go up and discuss it with people in the Department of Finance.

REINIER: Then would they be able to correct the situation?

LOWREY: Oh, in many instances yes.

REINIER: Without legislation?

Use of The Interim Committee

LOWREY: Right. Most of it was done without legislation. Occasionally, I'd resort to an interim hearing. If it got too rough, I always used the interim committee approach which civil service people and the governor's office don't like, to have legislators staging interim committee hearings where the public is involved.

REINIER: So that's a strategy for cutting out theft...

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: ...financially.

LOWREY: Or getting correction. Like we couldn't get meat inspection and brand inspection corrected through the Department of Agriculture so we just had a interim committee, a joint interim committee with the senate [Joint Interim Committee on Agriculture and Livestock Problems, 1949-1959] to urge the state to clean the thing up.

REINIER: You mentioned that earlier. How did you have to clean the thing up? What was the problem?

LOWREY: The problem was in meat inspection. You should have

uniformity throughout the state. Also we had some federal inspection. We had many county warehouses at the time, I think I had three in my district. The state was requiring ridiculous corrections to the buildings or requiring them to do certain acts that cost extra amounts of money or just was an attempt to eliminate the warehouse. And in brand inspection we just weren't getting the proper brand inspection. We had an intercounty movement of cattle or livestock and we had the involvement of the state highway patrol and there were so many angles to this whole thing that needed to be cleared up.

REINIER: Well now, there's also a financial angle to meat inspection, isn't there? It means a great deal to the farmer...

LOWREY: Oh, absolutely.

REINIER: ...how the meat is inspected?

LOWREY: That's correct, because if you get choice stamp it means one thing, but if you get the common, it will cut the price way down.

REINIER: Was there corruption in the way that meat was being inspected?

LOWREY: I alleged that there was, with certain individuals. We, I think, were able to take care of them.

REINIER: With the interim hearing device.

LOWREY: Yes. That's right. That didn't require legislation

and it gave the local slaughter houses an attempt to present their side of the issue.

Use of the Press

REINIER: Were there other devices that you used to handle problems without resorting to legislation?

LOWREY: Oh, where problems existed, well, particularly in adoptions. I handled several cases where youngsters should not go back to the mother who was a prostitute or alcoholic or well, just the child was in a bad environment. Well, I quite often became involved with that activity.

REINIER: How so?

LOWREY: Well, if we couldn't get decent results, I often resorted to the use of the press to expose what was going on.

REINIER: You leaked information?

LOWREY: I didn't leak it, I just took it over and gave it to them. The bureaucrats don't like that, they don't want this thing spread in the press. For instance, in one instance this woman wanted her child back because this truck driver wouldn't marry her unless she got the youngster back, so that they could get child support. And, she was absolutely no good and he had a record. I recall that I talked to a certain individual from the department who was flying to Los Angeles on a plane, and I said to him, "Unless this thing is cleared up

tomorrow..."

[End tape 5, side A]

[Begin tape 5, side B]

LOWREY: "If that young lady is given to this couple, this thing's going to be spread all over the state and the press." And I was able to stop that one. Incidentally her stepfather is now dead, but she lived with this couple and is now, I guess, supporting her stepmother. And one other instance I was involved in, I wasn't able to stop it. I didn't have a prostitute and an ex-convict involved in the suit. So I was always mixed up with a lot of these things.

REINIER: Now did you have certain individuals in the press that you could count on in a situation like this?

LOWREY: Oh, generally speaking, I hit it off quite well with the press. Yes, and then there were a few people that I really liked and I would try to give them a break so that they could get the headlines with it first. Depending on what it was about, would depend on which ones I would go to. I had a lot of special friends at the press.

REINIER: So you have a pretty favorable feeling about the press?

LOWREY: Generally speaking, yes. Of course, you can't always depend on what the press was going to print, but I got along exceedingly well. I would say I worked very

closely with the press. They appreciated having a legislator tip them off under cover to something they should check on. That was one of my real tactics that I used a lot.

REINIER: Any other instances when you used that effectively?

LOWREY: Oh, I am quite sure that I did. But many instances when I could use it effectively, there were always many times when it didn't work, too.

Tactics of Effective Legislating

REINIER: How about other undercover tactics?

LOWREY: Well, I can't think of any off hand. I was always trying, generally speaking, to legislate, not just for the present, but to legislate for the future where you could anticipate the problems were going to develop. And I learned that from watching [Senator] Oliver [J.] Carter, who became a judge, a very fine federal judge. He taught me how to start simple legislation that didn't mean very much but could be amended so that eventually it would have effect on future problems.

REINIER: Was he your mentor in the legislature?

LOWREY: Oh, he was a good friend. No, I wouldn't say so because I was always watching him to see what he was trying to pull. You'd have to go over and ask him what he was trying to get away with. We came to consider that more or less of a friendly joke between the two of us. It was never divulged out to the public though.

- REINIER: What he was trying to get away with?
- LOWREY: He was basically one of our soundest legislators whom I respected.
- REINIER: So the idea is that you start with simple legislation and then add amendments to it? That was the tactic that the two of you used? What's the principle behind that, that it's easier to get amendments through than the original bill?
- LOWREY: Well, you get the statute on the books. Then you may amend it several times in different sessions until you arrive at where you want to go. Most legislators aren't interested in following details of legislation like that. So legislation you might not have been able to get passed if you introduced it originally, slides right through without any opposition.
- REINIER: What particular measures did you slide through like that?
- LOWREY: Oh gosh, I can't off hand think of, but in the field of water projects, perhaps some points in agriculture, flood control, oh it was just...
- REINIER: Any other tactics that you learned to be particularly effective during your twenty-two years in the legislature?
- LOWREY: Well, one session, I decided that no new legislation or practically no new legislation should be introduced, that it was a waste of time and money. The

legislators should be more careful of wasting the taxpayers' money. So I devoted the session to bills which would eliminate archaic bills that should be taken off the statute books, or making corrections, not changing the bills particularly but to make corrections. In other words, I tried to have no legislation but that which was noncontroversial. I became completely frustrated. The bills which should have gone right through because they're just making corrections, I discovered that in many instances some of the lawyers didn't want the corrections made. They wanted them! They didn't want the legislation definite. They wanted to leave it the way it was.

REINIER: Why?

LOWREY: Well, they could use that in their legal methods in their law offices. I learned my lesson. I never tried to help clean up the statutes again as long as I was in the legislature. It was frustrating and wasn't at all successful.

Cutting Governor Earl Warren's Budget

REINIER: Any other tactics of this sort?

LOWREY: Oh, I can't think of any.

REINIER: Or discoveries?

LOWREY: I can't think of any. There were so many things that transpired. Well, I perhaps told you about how over a period of years in Earl Warren's governorship two or

three of us from the assembly met with senators over in the senate side and decided how the budget would be put together. Until Herb Phillips, the political editor of The Bee, wondered why at times we weren't on the floor voting and put a man out to check on us. He found us coming out of a senate office over on the senate side and revealed what had been going on as far as the budget was concerned. And that ended that tactic. But, what we were doing was cutting Earl Warren's budget down to reasonable limits and not wasting the taxpayers' money. That was our attempt.

REINIER: Was this a bipartisan group?

LOWREY: Absolutely. Democrats from the assembly and Republicans in the senate.

REINIER: A self-appointed group?

LOWREY: Yes. Because we had been friends for so long and we knew each other quite intimately. We worked together on the joint water committee and also on the joint agriculture committee. I think all of the senators were on the Finance Committee over in the senate. They really controlled the senate. The Republicans controlled the senate in those days. So we just worked as a unit.

REINIER: Would you give yourselves a label on the political spectrum?

LOWREY: No.

REINIER: A mixed group?

LOWREY: Absolutely, very definitely. No one suspected what was going on until, well, I think we held the budget up on three different occasions. Kept it from passing until we got it cut down to where we thought it should be. And Earl wasn't very happy about it. But he didn't know what was going on because some of those fellows on the committee that was meeting were supposed to be staunch Republicans.

More on Vice Chair of Ways and Means Committee

REINIER: While we're talking about different tactics that you used in the legislature, I think that your position as vice chair of the Ways and Means Committee for eighteen years was a very powerful position. Could you tell me a little bit about how you used that power?

LOWREY: All legislation involving appropriations had to go through the Ways and Means Committee. So, it was possible for me to review all the state's expenditures for finances which I felt was very important to any individual who was really trying to represent the people. Also quite often, particularly when there was a hot political issue involved, in various pieces of legislation, the speaker would have me conduct the hearings. He would find other assignments that kept him busy away from the committee so that he wouldn't have to be directly involved. All in all, I felt that

being vice chairman of the Ways and Means Committee was the most potent assignment that I had in the state legislature.

REINIER: How could you influence the budget allocation in that position?

LOWREY: Because I studied the budget very carefully. When proponents and opponents appeared before the committee my questioning was well known and at times resented by both the speaker and some members of the committee that didn't want full discussion of the details of particular pieces of legislation brought out to the public.

REINIER: And you would bring those details out?

LOWREY: Absolutely, and many times we'd be able to either cause the legislation to be passed or to be held up or to be amended. Many bad pieces of legislation could be killed that way.

REINIER: Now as vice chair of the Ways and Means Committee you were chair of the subcommittee on education?

LOWREY: That's right. And, when I was a teacher I had my difficulties with the state education association and I decided that they weren't going to get any special privilege. They would have to earn and prove their points before their legislation would be approved. Of course, being chairman of the committee on education in the Ways and Means, I had powerful control over

allocations of money to the various phases of state education.

REINIER: So you were able to kill funding that you didn't like.

LOWREY: In some instances absolutely. I did my best to prevent the state teachers association from dominating procedures as they usually tried to do.

REINIER: Were there other groups that you didn't favor?

LOWREY: I don't particularly remember any. It was only when somebody tried to get a special favor because they controlled, politically, supposedly a lot of votes. Legislators had a tendency to go along with the association whether or not their position was correct. At least that was my feeling.

REINIER: So what kind of educational spending did you favor?

LOWREY: I favored most educational appropriations that would benefit the students. I didn't support the Department of Education wasting, as I considered it, money on the way they conducted their business. I was always a strong supporter of developing a program, a better program, of vocational education. A majority of students who were not in college or really weren't the best candidates for a college education, give them the vocational education so that they would be well employed. I've always been a strong believer in vocational education and we need it more now than we did when I was in the legislature.

REINIER: Did you favor the state scholarship program that was enacted in 1955?

LOWREY: As I recall I did. In fact, I supported most education appropriations and tried to augment them, because I felt that money spent on education was the proper expenditure of the taxpayers' funds. Rather than seeing money, in my estimation, being wasted on various programs that some legislators always had for their own particular district, that I felt were not really beneficial for the people of the state.

REINIER: Well, by the 1960's education was about forty percent of the state budget, wasn't it?

LOWREY: That's right.

REINIER: So that was a sizeable chunk of money.

LOWREY: And, I thought then, and I still think, that money spent on education is perhaps the best use of the taxpayers' money.

Role of Friendship in the Legislature

REINIER: You know as we've been talking just now, several times you've talked about friends in the legislature. What was the role of friendship in the legislature?

LOWREY: When I was a member, personal friendships developed that carried weight that had much more value than political expedience. Many of us developed personal friendships across party lines that have carried on even after we have long been out of the state

legislature. So naturally, with those close, personal friendships developing we were able to work together across party lines to accomplish what we felt were projects for the best interests of the people of the state of California.

REINIER: So you think friendship really helped to mitigate party differences?

LOWREY: When I was a member of the legislature that's absolutely true.

REINIER: And it seems like many of the secret arrangements that you were able to make, like for example when the three of you joined together to try to break the power of Artie Samish, those seem to have been really started through friendships.

LOWREY: I would say friendship which developed trust and faith led to the final expulsion of the power of Artie Samish in the state legislature, very definitely.

REINIER: So the trust and faith was that you could keep things secret?

LOWREY: That's a very difficult procedure to follow, but in a few instances we were able to do that. But leaks were common, were and still are common, and there are those you can trust and those that have what some of us call a noisy tongue. And we didn't use them in our various maneuvers.

REINIER: So you learned whom you could trust?

LOWREY: Absolutely.

REINIER: Were you ever really disappointed in a friend?

LOWREY: Yes. And...

[End tape 5, side B]

[Session 5, May 26, 1987]

[Begin tape 6, side A]

Ostracization in the Legislature

REINIER: Mr. Lowrey, at the end of the last tape we were talking about the role of friendship in the legislature, and you said that there were friends who did let you down.

LOWREY: One in particular who, when we were voting on the Samish issue, left the chambers in a rush rather than record a vote. It so happened that he left his jacket in his rush to leave and had the sergeant-at-arms come and get his jacket for him. When I saw what was happening, I went to the sergeant and told him to put the jacket back so that the individual would have to come back and retrieve his jacket himself. Now this fellow was ostracized from the important activities of many of the legislative procedures. In other words, he was chastised. He knew that he had done wrong, never complained. He took his punishment beautifully and eventually was able to win his way back to the graces of the majority of the legislators. In fact, we eventually made him speaker and I consider that he was one our finest speakers that I worked with in the state legislature.

REINIER: Was that common practice to leave the room when you

didn't want your vote to be recorded?

LOWREY: Oh, yes. There were several individuals that used that more or less as a common practice, which many of us resented.

REINIER: So not everybody used it?

LOWREY: Oh, no. Very few. And then many of those individuals who we considered weaker would only do it when it was one of the more important pieces of legislation which had great political weight.

REINIER: What did it mean specifically to ostracize somebody?

LOWREY: It meant that he might lose chairmanships of committees and might be taken off of important committees and put on minor committees and would be given only minor assignments. In procedures on the floor he would have difficulty getting his legislation presented.

REINIER: So, it would be hard for him then to be effective as a legislator.

LOWREY: Oh, he wouldn't be very effective as a legislator when he was found off-base, so to speak.

REINIER: Who decided this?

LOWREY: Usually it didn't have to be discussed, it just seemed that honesty and truth is a divine virtue. Then the speaker would perhaps exercise his various prerogatives, which are quite extensive.

REINIER: Can you remember other individuals who were

ostracized?

LOWREY: I can remember two. One, a very prominent attorney who definitely had promised my seatmate that he would vote for his bill. But when the bill came up for a vote, I was watching this individual and he quickly got up out of his seat and went out into the post office. I followed him out there and reprimanded him for actually sneaking out, and not keeping his word. Well, he didn't come back. He never did come and vote. That individual, it became known to all the legislators what he had done. Instead of being one of the most prominent and powerful legislators on the floor, he didn't run for office again, because he was more or less ostracized. Now, as far as I know, it wasn't discussed among the legislators, generally speaking, but most everyone knew that he had broken his word. In those days if you broke your word, you lost your prestige in the state legislature.

Now, there was one other fellow from the southern part of the state that also broke his word. I forget whether he was defeated or just didn't run again. As I recall, he eventually committed suicide. So in those days your integrity meant a lot as far as your effectiveness on the floor of the legislature was concerned.

REINIER: Are there other unwritten rules of that sort?

LOWREY: There used to be, but I'm wondering if there are any rules written or unwritten that are followed by many of the legislators that are now in Sacramento. I'm speaking of the professional legislators that are in the legislature by profession, and not necessarily as representatives of the people.

XII. CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATURE AND CALIFORNIA POLITICS

Campaign Funds

REINIER: Do you think that's the way that the legislature has changed?

LOWREY: I very definitely feel that that's a fact.

REINIER: How do you account for that?

LOWREY: One, the increase in salary, the special privileges that have been allocated. The speaker of the assembly and the speaker in the senate now have huge million dollar, what I call slush funds, that they use to try to put their friends in office. As far as I'm concerned, that's one of the worst things that was ever instituted in the state legislature.

REINIER: When do you think those changes began?

LOWREY: Well, I don't know I guess the senate just followed the assembly, but, Jesse Unruh, as speaker of the assembly, is the man that instituted the procedure. He made a statement to the effect that money was the life milk of political activity.

Growth in Staff

Also he brought in huge staffs for the legislators to do much of the work that I always felt was the obligation of the legislator himself to perform.

REINIER: How did you do that work when you were in the legislature?

LOWREY: I had a secretary and one assistant. The three of us seemed to cover the bases quite well.

REINIER: Where did you get information that you needed?

LOWREY: Believe it or not, a lot of the information that I acquired was from lobbyists, other legislators. On special occasions, I would have my assistant do some bird-dogging. My secretary, who proved to be one of the most efficient ones in the state capitol, always kept her ears open and was bringing me valuable information.

REINIER: What was her name?

LOWREY: Mary Nicholas. She, after I left, was eventually employed by Jesse Unruh in his office, but she stayed there only a very short time. Then went to work for an assemblyman from southern California who is now City Councilman [Peter S.] Schabarum [actually, County Supervisor, Los Angeles County] from Los Angeles. She was efficient, bright and was respected both in the assembly and in the senate.

REINIER: What role do you think the staff plays now?

LOWREY: I think that, generally speaking, as I've been told by

people who are in and around the legislative chambers almost constantly, the staff, particularly the consultants, are really the legislators at the present time.

REINIER: How so?

LOWREY: Well, the lobbyists tell me that they give the consultant bills and the consultants take them down to the Legislative Counsel and have them put in proper form. Then they either write the arguments or have the lobbyists write the arguments for the particular bill and convince the legislator that he should introduce that particular piece of legislation. In many instances it seems to me that the consultant or executive secretary, call him what you will, is really doing the major portion of legislation.

REINIER: How do you account for that kind of change?

LOWREY: Because of the huge staff that has been built up. I go back to the theory that we now have professional legislators who are more interested in building large funds or spend most of their time preparing for their next election.

Campaign Spending

REINIER: Well, it costs a great deal more to be elected now than it used to, doesn't it?

LOWREY: Much, much more. Unbelievably more. In fact, that's one of the reasons why I joined Common Cause. Common

Cause is trying to get legislation passed that will prevent excessive costs for legislative campaigns. People running for public office now seem to think that the only way they can be elected is by spending huge amounts of money. Of course, television has been a great factor in this type of procedure. But my feeling is that if you have to buy your way into office, you'd better forget it.

REINIER: Does the legislator then have an obligation to the people who gave him campaign funds?

LOWREY: In my estimation, there is no other way to interpret the gift of PAC [political action committee] funds, the huge amounts of money that are put into campaigns. Now there are exceptions, but generally speaking, when you accept these large donations, call them what you will, you become obligated to the person that contributes to your campaign.

REINIER: And you think that kind of an obligation has increased?

LOWREY: I am quite sure of it. It even comes down to the election of district and county officials now. Much larger sums are spent on elections for those minor offices than I was willing to spend in running for office as a state assemblyman.

REINIER: Now this kind of spending was an issue when you ran for congress in 1962, wasn't it?

LOWREY: It was to me. In one instance I was offered eighty-five thousand dollars or whatever amount was necessary to be elected. I said to the individual with whom I met to discuss the issue that over the years I had opposed the position of the people who wanted to give me that money. I said, "What do you expect?" He said, "Nothing, all we want is an honest legislator." Well, the eighty-five thousand dollars would have easily elected me, but I knew that if I took that eighty-five thousand dollars that I was going to be obligated to that particular group. I refused to accept it.

REINIER: What would have been the nature of that obligation?

LOWREY: I assume it would involve legislation on water that I had always opposed. If I had accepted that money, then I would have been expected to vote with them instead of against them as I always had.

REINIER: So do you think funding was the crucial issue in that election campaign?

LOWREY: Oh, it was. It was for me because I spent in the whole election around eight thousand dollars perhaps. My opponent told me that he spent thirty-five thousand dollars in the last six weeks when he got scared. But I also have been offered money by many of the lobbying groups that I have never supported. I felt if I had to buy my way into congress, if the people wanted someone

that would buy his way into congress, then I wasn't the individual that should represent them.

REINIER: But is that how you get elected for congress now, to buy your way in?

LOWREY: Generally speaking, I would say yes. But, one legislator from Sacramento whom I had supported, in fact, he ran for congress many years ago when I wasn't interested in running. I went up to his office when he happened to be in Sacramento and asked him why he wasn't supporting me. And he said, "We knew that you have turned down a lot of money that you could have had. You didn't accept it. You can't expect us to support you when you refuse those funds from PACs and lobbying groups." I said, "Well, after all, I have a conscience. I'm not going to be obligated with money. Besides, I think in many instances it's dishonesty." He said, "There's an easy way to handle that. He said, "You set up a finance committee and those individuals handle all the money. You never know who contributes, who doesn't contribute. If anything goes wrong, you're not responsible because you don't know anything about it." And when he said that, I used some very strong vernacular and told him what I thought of him as an individual, walked out of his office and I've never seen him since.

REINIER: So you think that's the way it usually works?

LOWREY: I'm practically positive that that's the way it operates now.

REINIER: But would he then have an obligation to the people who gave him the money?

LOWREY: He says no, I say yes. My philosophy of honesty may be different than that of the modern politician. That is, you buy your way into office now by hiring smart manipulators and paying them a large fee. Incidentally I had none, I didn't even a publicity person.

REINIER: Are those PR [public relations] people the smart manipulators?

LOWREY: They are, that's right. And, they build your image and tear down your opponent when you should be discussing nothing but the political issues or the important factors of government that you support. The smart campaign manager goes on building a picture of the individual and in many instances attempts to stay away from involvement in important issues.

REINIER: What does this mean for the political system?

LOWREY: That it's badly in need of a change, as far as I'm concerned. That the voting public, by some educational method should be taught to once again be...

[End tape 6, side A]

[Begin tape 6, side B]

Decline in Voter Participation

REINIER: Do you think then that participation on the part of voters has declined since you were in the legislature?

LOWREY: Quite definitely. For example, when I was in the legislature, I was constantly being contacted by people in the district on various issues. And I must admit that I did my best to promote that activity by the voters of the district. But, I find now in talking to, carrying on conversations with individuals, that they have lost faith in their legislators. They feel that it's a waste of time to contact a legislator because he won't follow through when you present a problem to him. In other words, they've lost faith in government, both state and national. And this not only irritates but causes great apprehension on my part because government by the people has functioned so well for so long that the present attitude, I think, is not promoting better government.

REINIER: How might this be changed?

LOWREY: Partially, by eliminating the unlimited expenditures of money on campaigns. Perhaps also by limiting the term of office for individuals. Now I, of recent date, have heard many people indicate that they would favor legislators being limited, elected officers being limited to the time they could serve, so that they would be more interested in representing the people than they are now in getting reelected. I don't know,

there are arguments for and there are arguments against that. But, at least, that is the thinking of more and more people today.

Decline in Legislators' Responsiveness to Voters

REINIER: Are there other ways that you find the legislature significantly different now than it was when you were there?

LOWREY: Well, I know that when I was in the legislature, when local citizens contacted the legislators or wrote them or telephoned them or went to see them personally, that the legislators at least attempted to answer their questions. But my personal experience is that it's a waste of time for me to attempt to get a response from a legislator now. Legislators are not responding to either my personal requests, telephone calls, or written communications. And I think that's terrible. And that applies both to our congressmen and to our state legislators. In fact, I've given up trying to get answers to issues from our state representatives and that is a most unfortunate situation.

REINIER: Even with all the staff you're not even getting replies from staff members?

LOWREY: Well, I have been insulted by one of the senators staff, by saying my request for a Legislative Counsel opinion was ridiculous. When I know that it involves a very serious legal question. An individual that is not

an attorney might feel that they know the answer. In legal terms you have to have it written down in definite legal language before you can say a certain condition controls, exists, or that it doesn't. And it's such a simple thing. Over the years, when anyone asked for a legal opinion, we took it to Legislative Counsel and in little or no time we'd get a written answer. The present legislators have refused to follow such a procedure.

REINIER: Do you think sheer size makes it more difficult for the legislators to be responsive to individuals than they used to be?

LOWREY: They don't particularly care. They're professional politicians now. Their chief interest is in being reelected. They're not particularly interested in answering individual questions.

REINIER: Well now, after you retired from the legislature in 1962 did you consider becoming a lobbyist?

LOWREY: I thought about it. But I knew that I would never be able to contact, honestly contact, all the legislators. Because if I didn't respect and didn't approve of the methods employed by certain legislators, I just wouldn't feel it proper for me, or I just wouldn't go and contact and try and get their votes. If you're a good lobbyist, you don't let your personal feelings I assume, interfere with your attempt to get

all the legislators to agree with the point of view that you're trying to present. In other words, I have always felt that truth was a divine virtue and if I were to go and try and influence or hold discussion with some members of the legislature that I would lose my self-respect.

REINIER: So you never did work as a lobbyist then?

LOWREY: Never did.

XIII. RETIREMENT: 1962 AND AFTER

REINIER: After your retirement from the legislature, we know that you continued for a while to be active in the Council of State Governments and we know that briefly you supported the Reagan candidacy in 1966. What other political activities did you engage in after your retirement?

LOWREY: Unfortunately, I became an active supporter of [James W.] Jim Nielsen for senator the first time he ran and endorsed him and really campaigned for him after having checked his record with many of my friends in Yolo County who had nothing but praise for him. His being associated with agriculture, I felt that we needed someone to represent agriculture from our district. His first four years I thought he represented us quite well. And I even endorsed him for a second term. Then he became, in my estimation, a pure politician, became

professionalized and no longer represents the interests of the people the way he did in his first term.

Outside of that, I have attempted to pretty well refrain from political activity.

Native American Issues and Culture

REINIER: But you've spent a great deal of time in studying your interests in paleontology and archeology. And I understand that those were interests that you came to very early in life.

LOWREY: That's right. And, I still maintain, try to keep myself advised as to political issues and world affairs by joining various organizations, one of which is Common Cause, and several others and magazines which keep me advised as to national and world affairs. In addition to that most of my time is devoted to studying archeology and natural resources conservation.

REINIER: Now when you were in the legislature, you were very active on Indian issues, weren't you?

LOWREY: I always felt that the Indians had been improperly treated by the white man. I tried to have my office be a meeting place for Indians, native Indians who wanted to come to the legislature to discuss issues and have questions answered.

REINIER: And wasn't that interest stimulated by some of your experience as a very young boy right here on this ranch?

LOWREY: That's absolutely true, because when I was a youngster there were perhaps, possibly up to a hundred Indians living in the reservation just north of where my present home is, where we're sitting today. The Indian Service decided that even though that had been an Indian reservation dating back to pre-Columbian times, the white fathers in Washington decided that wasn't a proper place for the Indians to live. They moved them off the property which the Indian Service said belonged to my dad. My dad said maybe in American legal terms it was our property, but the Indians were there first. Rightfully it was theirs as long as they wanted to live there, it was theirs to continue as they had in the past. But, they were moved off and eventually that Indian civilization has almost completely disappeared. They've lost their culture guided by the hand of the white father, the Indian Service in Washington.

REINIER: So, when you were a boy here in the Capay Valley not only did Colonel Pickens tell you stories about the Indian fighting of his youth, but you actually grew up with Indians who were still following their ancient way of life on this very ranch.

LOWREY: That's absolutely true. And as a youngster I used to enjoy watching some of what they called their pow-wows, which usually lasted for three days and three

nights, particularly when there was a death. They had a definite cultural, religious ceremony in those days that they followed, but which was lost when they were disrupted from their ancient tribal lands.

REINIER: Was there any specific legislation in California regarding Indians that you remember participating in?

LOWREY: Well, I think there was some, but I can't recall specifically what it was. I remember that the Indians that used to live out west of Willows were moved by the army over the mountain, physically moved, over to a reservation in what's known as Round Valley by Covelo. And when the state wanted to build the Dos Rios Dam if it had been able to build that dam there, the Indians who had been moved from their ancient site in the valley over to Covelo would have been moved again because their area would have been under water. I used that, and I'm still using that argument to preserve the Indian reservation in Round Valley, that we not flood them out, and again move them from the area where they've been for the past hundred years.

REINIER: Your life then has really spanned almost the entire twentieth century in the state of California.

LOWREY: Well a good share of it. I hope it spans it.

Future Plans: University of the Americas

REINIER: What are your plans for the future?

LOWREY: One of my plans is to see a University of the Americas

developed, built in Costa Rica, to be paid for by white men or people of European extraction who came over here around 1500 and started destroying the culture and the civilization in Central America. I want to see those native Indians, the children of the old Mayans, properly educated so that they can rebuild, at least in part, their civilization and develop the brain power which I know they have and once again become, let us say, rulers or the guiding lights of the government in taking the power away from the military and the pinca owners. Pinca owners, incidentally, are plantation owners who keep those bright young individuals from receiving the proper education. That's perhaps my chief goal at the present time.

REINIER: And this is a project that has been stimulated by your trips to Central America to study Mayan culture.

LOWREY: That's right. And, studying their government and talking to the natives themselves and government officials and having had experiences with the military and the government we should, instead of sending arms and supporting the rich, devote our funds to establishing an educated proletariat.

REINIER: So you're still interested in making sure that the money gets spent for education.

LOWREY: That's very true. Money spent for education is not money wasted, in my estimation. In fact, I would like

to see the money that's going for munitions in the United States being expended for education and teaching people to live together peaceably. Education, proper education, is much more important and over the long expanse of time will be much more fruitful than being a military power. I think of Costa Rica, where their constitution, which was set up in the 1960's, provides for no army. Eighty percent of the people have an education. They have a fine educational setup. I'd like to see that spread to the other Central American nations. In fact, I wish we could get some of that same sentiment here in the United States.

REINIER: So you'll be working actively toward promoting this university?

LOWREY: I hope so. I have made one trip recently to Costa Rica, but I didn't contact government officials because they were in the midst of a presidential campaign. I knew that the contestants wouldn't be interested in discussing education when they're running for political office. So I hope to go back again before too long.

[End tape 6, side B]

INDEX

American Medical Association, 44
 Associated Farmers of California, 60-61
 Bank of America, 91
 Brown, Governor Edmund G., Sr., 8, 56, 74, 78, 83-85, 94-98
 Burton, Congressman A. Phillip, 55-56
 California Water Plan, 82-87
 Collier, State Senator Randolph, 76-77
 Carter, State Senator Oliver J., 108-109
 Central Valley Water Project, 79-80
 Chavez, Cesar, 59
 Collins, Speaker of the Assembly Sam L., 38, 41
 Common Cause, 123-124, 132
 Cook, Assemblyman John B., 15
 Council of State Governments, 69-76
 cross-filing, 8-9, 78, 95
 DeWitt, Lt. Governor John L., 21
 Dos Rios Dam (proposed), 88, 134
 Douglas, Congresswoman Helen Gahagen, 62-63
 economy bloc, 39
 Farm Bureau, 53-54, 60, 81, 86
 Gannon, Assemblyman Chester F., 18, 51
 Garland, Speaker of the Assembly Gordon H., 11, 13-14
 Gibson, Assemblyman Luther E., 97
 Ickes, Harold, 80
 Kennedy, President John F., 72-73
 Kesterson Reservoir, 83
 Lindsay, Assemblyman Frances C., 41
 Lyon, Speaker of the Assembly Charles W., 41
 Matsui, Congressman Robert T., 22
 Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, 80, 87
 Mosk, Attorney General Stanley, 12
 Nelson, DeWitt, 90
 Nicholas, Mary, 122
 Nielson, State Senator James W., 131-132
 Olson, Governor Culbert L., 10-12, 13
 Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 47, 79-81, 93
 Phillips, Herbert L., 40, 111
 political action committees, 124
 Post, A. Alan, 103
 Reagan, Governor Ronald, 61-64, 91-94
 reapportionment, 75-78
 reforestation, 89
 Rumford, Assemblyman Byron William, 97

Samish, Arthur H., 34-37, 38, 39-43, 116-118
Schabarum, Peter S., 122
Silliman, Speaker of the Assembly James W., 37-38, 41-42
Southern California Edison Company, 80, 91-92
Southern Pacific Railroad, 35, 44, 46-47
Tenney, State Senator Jack B., 16, 50
"The Three Horsemen", 39
United States Forest Service, 90
Unruh, Speaker of the Assembly Jesse, 9, 29-30, 71, 74-76, 98-
102, 121-122
Warren, Governor Earl, 21, 32, 33-34, 38, 73-75, 77
Weinberger, Secretary of the Defense Casper W., 62, 92-93