

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

RAYMOND T. SEELEY

California State Assemblyman, 1970-1974

July 18, 1990
Whittier, California

By Enid Hart Douglass
Claremont Graduate School

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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California State University, Fullerton

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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.



RAYMOND SEELEY

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

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Interview Time and Place

July 18, 1990
Mr. Seeley's daughter's home, Whittier, California
Morning and Afternoon Sessions of 4 hours

Editing

The interviewer/editor checked the verbatim manuscript of the interviews against the original tape recordings and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed.

On September 15, 1990, the edited transcript was forwarded to Raymond T. Seeley, who made only minor emendations and added some additional information in writing. He returned the approved manuscript September 26, 1990.

The interviewer/editor prepared the introductory materials.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the Oral History Program Office, Claremont Graduate School, along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are deposited in the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Raymond T. Seeley was born on March 2, 1912 in Cibola, Arizona. His father moved the family to Blythe, California when Raymond Seeley was four years old and began to raise and feed cattle on a ranch. Raymond Seeley was educated in the Palo Verde Valley public school system and graduated from Blythe High School in 1930.

Raymond Seeley enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles in the fall of 1931 but had to drop out when he lost all his money in a bank failure. He returned to Blythe and worked for a year before attending Riverside Junior College. In 1934, when the cattle market collapsed, he was forced to return to work on the family ranch. Mr. Seeley remained in cattle ranching and within a few years his ranch began to prosper. He married Emma Jean Freeman in 1936, and they had a son. After her death he married Ruth Bailey in 1978.

In 1940, Mr. Seeley was elected constable, a part-time law enforcement position for Riverside County. He was then appointed brand inspector for the State of California to check the ownership brands of out-of-state cattle. In 1941, Mr. Seeley was appointed deputy sheriff of Riverside County and remained in that position for ten years. In 1966, he was elected to the Riverside County board of supervisors and served one term, the final two years as chairman, before running for the state assembly.

Mr. Seeley was elected to the state assembly in 1971 and served two terms. While in the assembly Mr. Seeley served on the Agriculture, Water, Criminal Justice, and Local Government Committees. He carried bills pertaining to animal husbandry, fish and game, geothermal resources, and local water districts.

In 1982, Mr. Seeley was appointed to the California Horse Racing Board and served two four-year terms. He has also been the district governor of Rotary International for District 534 in southern California. He is retired and lives with his wife in Blythe, where they continue to breed horses.

[Session 1, July 18, 1990]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

DOUGLASS: You were born in Cibola, Arizona in 1912.

SEELEY: That is correct.

DOUGLASS: Why was your family living there?

SEELEY: My grandparents moved to Cibola from Ventura County in 1900. My dad was just a young man at that time. He was married over in California, but he took his wife over there. And they were developing that area at that time.

DOUGLASS: Were they ranching there?

SEELEY: Yes. And raising cattle.

DOUGLASS: That must have been fascinating.

SEELEY: It was pretty prehistoric.

DOUGLASS: Was he from Cibola?

SEELEY: He had lived in Cibola since 1900.

DOUGLASS: Because he married he went to Cibola?

SEELEY: When he got married, he went back to Cibola and stayed there until 1916. I was just four years old when we moved across to California.

DOUGLASS: Do you have brothers and sisters?

SEELEY: Yes. I had one brother. He was killed in World War II. My sisters, I have three. I have a sister-in-law, the wife of my brother who was killed overseas.

DOUGLASS: Where were you in the family? What number?

SEELEY: I was the second. I have one sister older than I by about a year and a half. I was number two in the family.

DOUGLASS: So your father was ranching in Cibola.

SEELEY: That is right.

DOUGLASS: What kind of ranching would that be?

SEELEY: My grandfather spent a lot of money developing that to a farming area. That was before the dams in the Colorado River. It washed it all out, a fortune that he had put in there. It just went down the drain. So then he got into cattle, thinking that would be better. But they put in a lot of purebred cattle and they went down the drain at the next overflow. So then he went back to the native cattle, and that seemed to work out all right.

DOUGLASS: Exactly where is Cibola, Mr. Seeley?

SEELEY: Cibola is actually about twenty-five miles south of Blythe. It is on the Arizona side of the border but within the same valley, the Palo Verde Valley, which Blythe is in.

DOUGLASS: All right. You were just a little boy and your family moved where in California?

SEELEY: We moved, actually, to the Neighbor's area, four miles southwest of the city of Blythe. At that time, there was not very much in the city of Blythe. It was an old-fashioned place. Dirt roads. A lot of the land wasn't developed at that time.

DOUGLASS: Was your father's plan to be a rancher there?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Cattle?

SEELEY: Cattle for a period of time and then more farming. He did raise cattle, feed cattle, in that area for a long period of time.

DOUGLASS: As a boy you went to the Palo Verde schools?

SEELEY: That is right.

DOUGLASS: Was this a small school?

SEELEY: I started out at a Neighbor's school, two miles from my home. There were no means of transportation at that time, except foot or

horseback. So my sister and I went there. My next sister started there too. Later on, we were transported to Blythe in the way of schooling when they started using buses. My last two years of grammar school were at the Blythe school.

DOUGLASS: The high school was in Blythe.

SEELEY: The high school was in Blythe. I went there for four years.

DOUGLASS: How big a school was that?

SEELEY: It was very small. My graduating class just had fifteen students.

DOUGLASS: Was there anything you were particularly interested in in high school?

SEELEY: Not necessarily. I just went through the general things they had to offer. There wasn't anything special at that time.

DOUGLASS: As I understand it, you started out at Riverside Junior College.

SEELEY: I went to UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] first. I had every intention of going to UCLA and graduating, but I had a pretty rough time of it. I stayed out of school. I graduated in 1930 and stayed out until the fall of '31 and worked all of that time and saved all

of my money. Unfortunately, the bank where I had had my deposit went broke just before I was ready to go to college.

DOUGLASS: You were a double victim of the depression.

SEELEY: I certainly was. I had enough to have gotten started on, but, unfortunately, I had to start out working right from the outset. And it wasn't easy to get a job. The man that I had worked for was high up in the cattle business. He got me a job at Wilson Packing Company, to start with. I worked there for about two months. The first check that I got bounced. I had already spent the money buying material for school. So then I had to make that good. This friend of mine, [Hubbard] Hub Russell from Russell Brothers Cattle Company, he is the one who interceded on my behalf and did get my money for me, but it took a period of time.

DOUGLASS: Where were you living at this time when you were working and buying your books for school?

SEELEY: Actually, I lived out in Westwood.

DOUGLASS: Where was the Wilson Packing Company? Was it in Los Angeles?

SEELEY: In Vernon.

DOUGLASS: When did you enter UCLA?

SEELEY: The fall of '31.

DOUGLASS: How long were you able to stay in school?

SEELEY: I stayed there for the first semester. Then I had to drop out. I just wasn't making it. After working for Vernon Packing Company, then I worked for Wilson and Company. I had to work almost full time there. I would go to work at six o'clock in the evening and work until midnight or two or three o'clock in the morning.

DOUGLASS: This was meat packing.

SEELEY: Right.

DOUGLASS: Did you have a major in mind?

SEELEY: Yes. Engineering.

DOUGLASS: How did you get interested in that?

SEELEY: I was always interested in mathematics. I did very well in mathematics all through high school. I knew that engineering required a lot of mathematics, and I thought that that would be a good one to major in. It was something I was interested in.

DOUGLASS: Because of finances you had to give up going on in UCLA. So what did you do?

SEELEY: I went back home and worked for the next semester and saved money again. Fortunately, it

wasn't taken up with a bank failure. I came back to Riverside Junior College.

DOUGLASS: Did you live in Riverside?

SEELEY: I lived in Riverside. Blythe is 165 miles from Riverside.

DOUGLASS: Right. How long were you in junior college?

SEELEY: The full two semesters the next year.

DOUGLASS: Did you get an A.A. [Associate of Arts]?

SEELEY: No. I didn't. I would have if I had finished the full year at UCLA, but I was a little bit short of credits.

DOUGLASS: What did you decide to do at that point, Mr. Seeley?

SEELEY: I had to go back and go to work again. In 1934 is when the cattle market just went to pieces. The government started buying up cattle and slaughtering them for the purpose of bringing the price up. And a lot of that meat was just plain wasted. I could see at that time that was a foolish way to do things because we had hungry people. If nothing more, that meat should have been provided for people who were destitute. That is when I made up my mind that someday I might want to get into politics and try to do

something to preserve things rather than just be wasteful.

DOUGLASS: So the depression had a real influence on your later political aims?

SEELEY: It had a very great influence.

DOUGLASS: That is very true of many people I have interviewed around your generation and older who were catalyzed by their depression experiences.

So you decided to go into ranching which was a childhood experience with your father?

SEELEY: To some extent. After the cattle market came back a little stronger I started buying cattle and selling. I traded in cattle for quite some time. That kept me on the road all the time. When I decided to get married in 1936, I decided that I ought to do something else. So I went to work for Fisher Company down in Blythe, who had both farmed and raised cattle. I worked there for six months after I got married. Then I went out on my own again doing odd jobs.

DOUGLASS: At some point in here, Mr. Seeley, did you acquire some land out there?

SEELEY: Actually, in 1938, I purchased a little piece of land. Later on, in the late forties, I purchased some more land because land was not

too hard to come by, but the money to pay for it was. I did quite well.

DOUGLASS: Was some of it land defaulted on taxes?

SEELEY: No. I didn't get any of the tax land. I could have, but I didn't do that. I bought mine outright from people who had land they wanted to sell.

DOUGLASS: Did you run cattle on that land?

SEELEY: Some. Yes.

DOUGLASS: Did you live there?

SEELEY: Yes. I started living on the land that I bought in 1938. My home is still at the same place.

DOUGLASS: Is it on the outskirts of Blythe?

SEELEY: Two miles out of the heart of Blythe.

DOUGLASS: We are moving up to the war. As I understand it, you were deputy sheriff of Riverside County beginning in 1941. How did that happen?

SEELEY: I was elected constable in 1940.

DOUGLASS: Why did you do that? Why did you run?

SEELEY: Well, it was a paying job. You had to have something in those days. Even though it didn't pay very much, it paid a little bit. It was not a full-time job being constable. As you know, that job is serving civil processes. There is

very little law enforcement as far as the criminal field goes.

DOUGLASS: Would that be a third of your time?

SEELEY: Probably not even more than a fourth because there was not too much civil processes going on that time. But I had plenty of time to do other things.

DOUGLASS: So you could combine that with your ongoing business?

SEELEY: Yes. Then I was appointed brand inspector for the state of California at about the same time. Cattle that was being shipped, I had to inspect them for their brand. The two jobs together worked pretty good. Then they wanted me to become a deputy sheriff, so I had to resign from the other two jobs.

DOUGLASS: That was appointed. Was that appointed by the city council?

SEELEY: The county sheriff.

DOUGLASS: That's right. You were in Riverside County. So the sheriff appointed.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Who was the sheriff then?

SEELEY: Carl Rayburn.

DOUGLASS: Had you known him?

SEELEY: I just knew who he was, as the sheriff.

DOUGLASS: How did he happen to appoint you?

SEELEY: I was a young man, fit and able. There was no reason for not appointing me. I had a little experience being the constable there. So he just asked me if I would like to become a deputy.

DOUGLASS: What were your duties?

SEELEY: Patrol work and enforcing the law. I didn't have very much trouble at the time. But I worked around the clock whenever there was something to do and I was able to do it.

DOUGLASS: Was it a full-time job?

SEELEY: It was a full-time job. In those days, we didn't have any unions. We didn't have any set hours. We just worked when there was something to do. The pay wasn't all that great.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember what it was?

SEELEY: Two hundred twenty-five dollars a month was what I started with. Within six months I had made sergeant, and it raised it to \$295 a month. So that is what I got for the next ten years. I don't know how I kept up with inflation.

[Laughter]

DOUGLASS: But you were also ranching, is that right?

SEELEY: When I started out, my ranching didn't amount to much. It was a small ten-acre piece. Later on, I bought this other land. I bought the eighty acres and then another forty. I was farming on a little larger scale at that time.

DOUGLASS: Was that in the forties when you did that?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Could you make money off the smaller ranch, the ten acres?

SEELEY: No. But it was a place to live.

DOUGLASS: But you had cattle on it.

SEELEY: Yes. I had a few. Just a small amount, of course.

DOUGLASS: Did Blythe stay relatively the same through the thirties and forties? Did you see much change?

SEELEY: There was a big change during the forties. We had an air base just seven miles out of town. We also had a training center for pilots. That prospered, and it brought a lot of people to Blythe. But they didn't overbuild for the purpose of housing these people. Everybody in Blythe practically took somebody in to live in their home, which helped. When the air base closed and those people all moved out, things

went back to normal. It didn't decay like a lot of places did.

DOUGLASS: What would normal have been at that time in terms of size?

SEELEY: Normal would have been about 14,000, total. That wasn't just in the city. It would have been the greater surrounding area. I would say that probably doubled during World War II, then it went back to normal.

DOUGLASS: As far as my record shows, the first time you ran, except for constable, for public office was when you ran for the county board of supervisors. Would that be correct?

SEELEY: That is right.

DOUGLASS: You ran in '66 and started holding office in '67. What had happened? We are jumping from the late forties to the mid-sixties. You might want to comment about your activities in that interim period that would be relevant here.

SEELEY: In 1951, I resigned from the sheriff's office and went to farming full time. I got involved with racehorses just as a hobby. Even during the later years of my term in sheriff's office I had one or two racehorses that I would race on my days off. It started out as a hobby, and

then as it grew it got to be a little bit of a business. After 1951, when I was farming, I worked with racehorses at the same time and raced around the country in Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada and places like that. I could dovetail that with my farming portion.

DOUGLASS: So you were breeding.

SEELEY: I was breeding horses. I would sell some and keep some to run.

DOUGLASS: Did you know somebody else who was doing this? How did you happen to get interested in horses?

SEELEY: I had friends that were in the racing business some. I got interested because I just liked horses. And I liked the competition. My only son, when he got big enough to ride races, he started racing as a little fellow.

DOUGLASS: He did. He was a jockey.

SEELEY: He was jockeying on the bush tracks and in match races when he was just nine years old.

DOUGLASS: Talk about that. When you say the "bush races," where would those be held?

SEELEY: In Arizona and places in California.

DOUGLASS: Small towns.

SEELEY: Small areas. Corona and Redlands in California. Plus Blythe. Then in Yuma and Prescott,

Arizona. Las Vegas, Nevada. Ely and Elko, Nevada. We raced all over Nevada. He was riding at that time. He rode in races until he outgrew it. When he turned sixteen, he still weighed less than a hundred pounds. Then he rode on the larger tracks in Phoenix, Arizona and in Omaha, Nebraska. Then Ruidoso, New Mexico. He rode races there.

He eventually outgrew it. But he came back and rode in California at the Pomona fair.

DOUGLASS: Were you able to make your costs when you did that?

SEELEY: I made more than my costs because I had my own horses and I trained them myself. I would only go to the races during off time when I didn't have to be at home at the farm. But I could train my horses at home. And then when I would go to the races, I would be ready to run.

DOUGLASS: So you would get enough winners.

SEELEY: I had enough winners to pay all the expenses. I was always in the black. I never went into the red any when I was training myself.

DOUGLASS: How did you learn to train horses?

SEELEY: I was around horses all my life. I knew horses, and I knew livestock. It wasn't hard for me at all.

DOUGLASS: It was your own experience. You didn't have somebody help you?

SEELEY: No. I didn't have anybody teach me. Of course, as time went on I learned more about it.

DOUGLASS: As the opportunities grew, your sophistication grew?

SEELEY: That's right. As I got more big time, naturally, I knew more about it by that time.

DOUGLASS: That's fascinating. That was happening in the fifties and the sixties.

SEELEY: Yes. Fifties and sixties.

DOUGLASS: Your focus during that time was running your ranch and the racehorse business. Would that be correct?

SEELEY: That is right.

DOUGLASS: When did you start to be active in community affairs?

SEELEY: It would be pretty near all my life. I was one they would call upon to do things. In 1938, for instance, they wanted to start an alumni association in Blythe. The superintendent of

schools came to me and asked if I would take care of that.

DOUGLASS: This is the high school?

SEELEY: Yes. I had been out of school for eight years, but I did activate the alumni association, which is still active. I served as president of that for two years. Then I worked in it for several more years.

DOUGLASS: Were you active in the Farm Bureau?

SEELEY: I belonged to the Farm Bureau. We had a portion of the Farm Bureau in Blythe. I never did hold office in that.

DOUGLASS: When did you begin your active participation in Rotary [Club]?

SEELEY: I joined the Rotary in 1955. I was active in other things at home. My dad was president of Rotary that year. So I joined the club and immediately I got active. In 1961, I served as club president, '61-62, which was just a short time after joining. I stayed active, so the following year I was elected president of the Desert Council, which was Riverside County, the eastern portion of the desert.

DOUGLASS: Was that district governor?

SEELEY: No. That was the district council.

DOUGLASS: That was '63?

SEELEY: That would have been '62-63. Then, in '63-64, I was governor of the entire district.

DOUGLASS: What would have the district encompassed?

SEELEY: It encompassed all of San Diego County, all of Imperial [County], all of Riverside [County], and we had four clubs in San Bernardino County.

DOUGLASS: That is a large area.

SEELEY: It was a very large area.

DOUGLASS: How did you even attempt to cover that?

SEELEY: I had my own airplane. I started flying in 1960, so I could fly from one place to another.

DOUGLASS: So you learned to fly in the sixties?

SEELEY: Actually, I learned to fly in the forties. I used to fly with a captain from the air base, in small planes. He taught me all the fundamentals of flying, but it was no legal time. When I bought my first plane in 1960, a crop duster who had been an instructor at Norton Air Academy during World War II, he gave me lessons and taught me to fly. Later, I took ground school. But I just started flying. I only had three hours of training until I started flying off by myself.

DOUGLASS: How small a plane was it? An eight passenger [plane]?

SEELEY: No. My first plane was just a four-passenger plane. It was a Cessna 182 Skylane. It was a nice trim plane. That was my initial plane.

DOUGLASS: So that is how you got around the Rotary tour.

SEELEY: Yes. However, when I got into Rotary, I had gone a little further. I had a Beechcraft airplane by that time, a Bonanza. That is what I flew all over the district.

DOUGLASS: In terms of your economic well-being, it sounds like you had come a long way from the depression by this time.

SEELEY: I had. But it still wasn't anything to write home about.

DOUGLASS: A Cessna is not a cheap item.

SEELEY: No, but I worked hard. When I bought my first Cessna airplane, it was from a company in Phoenix, Arizona. The fellow who had it, he bought it new. He was a farmer in Blythe who farmed on a large scale. He leased land and raised melons and lettuce and high-priced crops. He did well. He flew this plane for a little bit over a year then he wanted to step up to a Bonanza. So it was for sale. The fellow who

instructed me in flying and still a crop duster there, he said that they were going to take that plane over to Phoenix, and why didn't I buy it. I said, "Well, I will try to buy it. I don't know what they want for it."

When the fellow delivered the Bonanza to [John] Johnny Norton, the man that was farming in the valley, they came out to the ranch where I was baling hay, early in the morning. It was about 6:30 in the morning and said that that plane was already there and would I like to come up and look at it. I said, "There is no need for me to look at it. I have seen it lots of times. But I will talk to the dealer." The dealer asked me, "Are you really interested?" I said, "Yes."

It was kind of interesting because he said, "How do you want to pay for it?" It was to be \$12,000, which at that time was quite a bit of money. I said, "Well, the only way I know to pay for anything is just pay for it." He said, "You don't want to buy it on time?" I said, "I don't want to buy anything on time. If I don't have the money to buy, I don't want to buy it." He said, "Well, how will you give me \$12,000?"

SEELEY: I said, "I will write a check for it." He looked over toward Johnny Norton, and Johnny shook his head that my check would be all right. That is how I bought my first plane.

DOUGLASS: So you had saved some money.

SEELEY: I always have had money in the bank. Since I started in business, I always have kept a bank account. Years and years ago I quit buying anything on time. If I can't pay for it, I don't buy it.

DOUGLASS: How common was it for ranchers or people in the Blythe area to have a small plane at that time?

SEELEY: There were quite a few people. And there are yet today quite a few people because Blythe is quite a ways away from anywhere else, and they travel by airplane a lot.

DOUGLASS: Any other comments about that period that led up to your running for the county board of supervisors?

SEELEY: During my time as Rotary governor I quite naturally became acquainted with a lot more people. Rotary is the outstanding service club. All of my Rotary district in Riverside County encompassed the area that my District Four that I ran for would encompass.

DOUGLASS: Was there a seat open?

SEELEY: Yes. There were five candidates. I was probably the last one to file, but there were four others. The incumbent chose not to run because one fellow had started a real districtwide campaign.

DOUGLASS: That was William W. Cooke from Palm Desert.

SEELEY: He was the supervisor, but he chose not to run. So this fellow that started this campaign, his name was [Robert] Dresler, and he didn't live in the district. He lived out here around Covina. His start was a triangular banner which said, "Three cheers for Bob Dresler."

DOUGLASS: He couldn't have lived in Covina and run in Riverside County.

SEELEY: He did. He got an address, but he didn't really live there. He lived out here [Covina-Whittier area]. A campaign promoter is the one who talked him into it. He said, "You don't have to appear at anything. I will get you elected. I once got a dog elected for president of a college somewhere." [Laughter] I just remember vaguely about that.

DOUGLASS: Did Cooke become discouraged to have to face that kind of competition?

SEELEY: Evidently.

DOUGLASS: Cooke had been in office since '63. He had been in only one term?

SEELEY: He had been in one term. That is right.

DOUGLASS: Did you know him well?

SEELEY: I knew him as our supervisor. I didn't know him personally well.

DOUGLASS: So he decided to withdraw and not to run.

SEELEY: Yes. He wasn't going to file to run again.

DOUGLASS: So what caused you to decide to run?

SEELEY: My friends in Rotary came to me and asked me if I would. At first, I wasn't interested at all. Then I got to thinking that my [Tony Seeley] dad had been active in politics on the local level.

DOUGLASS: Had he? What had he done?

SEELEY: He had been on the irrigation district board for a number of terms and also on the school district board. He had served his terms, but they were all within the area. I thought, "The country has been good to me. Maybe I should try to do something for my country."

DOUGLASS: Were there other contenders?

SEELEY: There were five of us. Had I worked a little harder, I probably would have won in the

primary. I just missed it, just by a few points.

DOUGLASS: So you had by far the plurality.

SEELEY: Oh, yes. But the fellow who was second worked for the school district in Indio. He was closer to the center of population. Neil Anderson was his name. He felt that he would pick up all of those votes that I didn't get and maybe some more. Take some away from me. He worked real hard at it during the summer. I didn't work all that hard, but I was better known than he was, even though he was there.

DOUGLASS: The Rotary exposure probably helped you?

SEELEY: Yes. I was well known through the Rotary.

DOUGLASS: So District Four was Blythe, Palm Desert. Was it a large area?

SEELEY: [Laughter] It was almost half of the entire county.

DOUGLASS: Because of low population and high acreage.

SEELEY: It took in Palm Springs. It came almost to Banning, the pass area. It was all of the desert area.

DOUGLASS: Yes. I am looking at the people who were elected from other districts. One came from Arlington, one from Riverside, one from

Beaumont, and one from Hemet. Did you have a campaign manager? Who ran your campaign?

SEELEY: You may have heard of the man who ran my campaign. Frank Bogert from Palm Springs. He was the mayor there. He had an advertising firm. He and two others, a lady and another man.

DOUGLASS: You had known him before?

SEELEY: I had known him for years.

DOUGLASS: Did you use a lot of volunteers?

SEELEY: They were all volunteers. I didn't spend much money. That was one thing I didn't like about running for public office. I couldn't go out and just flat ask somebody to put money into my campaign. I financed most of it by myself. I got a few contributions from people. I didn't feel good about that. That is one reason why I wasn't interested in staying in the state legislature. It was getting bigger and bigger all the time. People were asking for campaign money all the time. I didn't feel right about that.

DOUGLASS: Tell me, did Dresler just drop out too? He wasn't the number two contender?

SEELEY: I had the highest, and Neil Anderson was second. And Dresler was third.

DOUGLASS: What was the competition between you two highest ones?

SEELEY: Anderson was high of the other four, but there wasn't too much difference between them. Besides Dresler there was a fellow from Palm Springs who was a wheeler and dealer. But too many people knew him, so he didn't get along too well.

DOUGLASS: What I am trying to get at is the final election. It was the two of you, right?

SEELEY: Yes. Just the two of us.

DOUGLASS: What kind of campaign did Anderson put on?

SEELEY: He worked hard, but he didn't have the finances. He had to do it mostly door-to-door. Which I didn't do, because in an area that is that big, you would wear yourself out going door-to-door and not make too much of an impression.

DOUGLASS: Did Frank Bogert use mailers?

SEELEY: He used mailers and pamphlets.

DOUGLASS: Were there local meetings where you and your opponent were on view?

SEELEY: A few. Not too many. There were more in the primary than there were in the final.

DOUGLASS: Was the board of supervisor membership at that time something of high interest in the county?

SEELEY: It wasn't a high-paying job so it didn't attract too many people.

DOUGLASS: What I meant was it of high interest to the electorate?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Because you have small towns.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Was there any burning issue at the time?

SEELEY: No. I wouldn't say there was any burning issue. After I became supervisor, there were some things that came up that were burning issues. Mainly, they were growth, land use, development, and such as that.

DOUGLASS: The chairman was William [E.] Jones, who was from Arlington when you went on. Was this a rotating chairmanship?

SEELEY: No. The board themselves elected the chairman.

DOUGLASS: I noticed that Floyd McCall was the '68 chairman from Hemet. And you were the '69-70 chairman.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: How much of your time did this take, Mr. Seeley?

SEELEY: I would say it took pretty near all of my time. My district office was in Indio. The board

office was in Riverside. I had to commute between Blythe and Indio every day until I finally set up a residence in the Palm Desert area.

DOUGLASS: Did you have a home there?

SEELEY: I rented a place. I didn't invest in anything.

DOUGLASS: Did you use your plane a lot?

SEELEY: All the time. I would use my plane always to go back to Blythe. Quite a bit of the time to go into Riverside, I would fly.

DOUGLASS: Were land issues the biggest issues you faced as a board member? Were there fiscal issues? What were the biggest issues on the menu at that time?

SEELEY: There were fiscal issues too, but I would say that land use was the primary one. That is the one they were the most ardent about. The fiscal issue, naturally, the taxpayers wanted us to keep the prices down. The employees wanted us to raise everything. Our manager there, the chief executive officer of the board, he was inclined to go along with the raising of salaries at all times.

I objected to the fact that they would just want to raise a certain percent. If the cost is

higher, a loaf of bread costs the same for a man who is at the bottom as it does for the man at the top. So instead of giving a percentage raise, why don't you give a certain amount of money to each one? Well, that didn't go over very well. I didn't get that through. I always felt that would be more justified because the upper echelon gets further away all the time.

DOUGLASS: The gap widens.

SEELEY: The gap widens as you go. I would not vote for the budget the way it was because of the increases. So our administrative officer asked if we didn't put that into effect, if would I go for it later. I said, "No." Because if it is later in the year, that is the figure they will go by the next year. You don't gain anything by doing that. I was a very conservative individual and tried to keep things right. I didn't have anything against the employees either. I felt they were entitled to something. But I couldn't help remember my time as a county employee, deputy sheriff. I worked for ten years with only one raise, and that was when I was promoted in rank. There was never any automatic raise. There was never any overtime.

That is the way I felt about things. I felt that anybody is entitled to a cost-of-living increase if that was really an increase of the cost-of-living. But just say it was a cost-of-living increase, I couldn't see that.

DOUGLASS: Was Riverside County beginning to get the growth surge that increased and increased, and we are seeing now? A very high growth rate. Was that why there were land-use questions? Was this the beginning of it during that period?

SEELEY: Not necessarily. So many people would like to have kept things just as they were, not make any changes. But in my district people were complaining constantly about the wind blowing the sand and the problems that it caused. And it was a big problem. I had a place there myself in Palm Desert Country Club. When the wind would blow, it would fill the patio with sand three-feet deep. There was no such thing as sweeping it out; you had to shovel it out. I could see why.

My theory was that if there were some buildings out there, it would stop a lot of that. Cover it over with grass, concrete, a home or an office or something. But people

didn't want that. They didn't want any changes. I said, "All right. Just put up with the sand. You have to have one or the other." So finally we got some changes made, and they started to do some building. Even my own secretary was opposed to my approving some of those contracts.

DOUGLASS: These would be for housing or business buildings?

SEELEY: Yes. Or hotels or country clubs. Something to that effect.

DOUGLASS: How did you like being chairman of the board? Did that increase your time commitment?

SEELEY: Very much so. I was the first chairman that came from the Fourth District. Nobody ahead of me had ever been chairman of the board. But when they elected me chairman, I worked hard at it. I put in more time. Prior to that I had not worked full time. Then I started working full time or even more.

DOUGLASS: What was your compensation at that time? Do you remember?

SEELEY: It was about \$900 a month in take-home pay. It is quite a bit more than that now.

DOUGLASS: I am quite sure. You also had been active in the statewide supervisors association.

SEELEY: I was only there for four years, but I did participate. They call that CSAC [County Supervisors Association of California].

DOUGLASS: Unless you have any other comments about your period on the board of supervisors, we will move into the period when you made a decision to run for the state assembly.

SEELEY: There is one comment that I would like to make that was quite controversial at the time. [] Jack Garner, who lived up in the mountain area. Garner Valley is still there. He came to the board with a request for an agricultural preserve to lower his taxes some up there. But they voted that that was not prime agricultural land, so they wouldn't permit it. He said, "In a case like that, I will have to develop it." The board said, "Good luck. Go ahead." Everything went fine. The planning commission approved it. The board approved it. There was nothing wrong.

Then some of the environmentalists got active in it and didn't want this to take place. I supported it. We had two supervisors who didn't support it. Three of us did. Then there was some campaign funds given. One fellow was

running for congress. The one from Hemet, Floyd McCall, was running for his seat as a supervisor. I was running for the state assembly.

My campaign treasurer, who was a banker in Palm Desert, he accepted two checks that amounted to \$750. At the time, I asked him who they were from. He said, "They came from anonymous. We don't know who they are from." I said, "We've got to know who they are from." He said, "No. We can put it down as 'anonymous.'"

As time went on, there was a big investigation. Somebody found out that it was from this firm that was going to do the development in Garner Valley. So that caused a lot of problems. So I said right away, "I am going to demand a grand jury investigation." And the grand jury did investigate us. The fellow running for congress was indicted. Floyd McCall wasn't. They dropped his, and they dropped mine. I never did have any fear about it because I had not done anything wrong.

DOUGLASS: In other words, you were in the campaign for the state assembly. And the charge was that Garner had contributed to your . . .

SEELEY: Not Garner. The firm. They were out of Florida.

DOUGLASS: The firm developing the property for him had contributed to your campaign. Your contention was that you didn't know.

SEELEY: I didn't know. I had no idea who it was from. When my treasurer had told me that we had received two checks, one for \$400 and one for \$350, and they were both cashier's checks. They didn't say who they were from, and we had no way of finding out.

DOUGLASS: And in those days there weren't the laws that said you had to keep that kind of record?

SEELEY: You had to state where it came from. But in a case where you don't know where it came from you just put it as anonymous. Actually, I thought it came from a couple of judges in the area.

DOUGLASS: What eventually happened to the Garner property?

SEELEY: It is still sitting there as it was. There have been some developments but haphazard. That development would have been real good if it had gone through.

DOUGLASS: Was his goal to eventually have it become a preserve still, or did he just give up entirely and devote it to development?

SEELEY: He has had to develop it helter-skelter. There are people who have homes up there. The biggest objection to that, which was just plain stupid, was that there wouldn't be the water for it. There wouldn't be schools. I never had any intention of it being for year-round living.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about why you had decided to run for the state assembly. Had you had the assembly in the back of your mind?

SEELEY: Not at all. [Assemblyman] Victor [V.] Veysey was our assemblyman at the time, and he was moving on to congress. The seat was open, and some people from his area down in Imperial Valley came to me in my office right there in Indio and asked if I would be interested in running for the seat which was going to be vacant. I said, "I will give it some thought." I did.

I felt it was a good chance to be elected. I wasn't trying to oust anybody because Vic was leaving voluntarily. If he had stayed on, I wouldn't even have given it a thought about running. My interest in politics was not the greatest in the world by any means. If I could have been just elected as an individual and leave out the politics, I would have liked it better.

DOUGLASS: You didn't like the process.

SEELEY: No. I still don't.

DOUGLASS: Did the Veysey people offer to help you?

SEELEY: Oh, yes. However, there wasn't too much help from them because they had a campaign of their own, which was a very difficult campaign. It cost a lot of money. It was hard for them to spend very much time working with me.

DOUGLASS: Did you essentially use the group that had worked for you when you ran for supervisor?

SEELEY: Pretty much so.

DOUGLASS: Was Frank Bogert still helping you?

SEELEY: Frank Bogert still helped me.

DOUGLASS: Of course, this is a bigger challenge. This is an assembly seat.

SEELEY: Much bigger.

DOUGLASS: Again, you have the question of the large area to cover.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: You had name identification from the Rotary and from your being on the Riverside County board of supervisors.

SEELEY: That name identification as a supervisor was very important. It had given me a step into politics. However, it was not a partisan office. Supervisor.

DOUGLASS: Right. You had always been a registered Republican?

SEELEY: Always.

DOUGLASS: Had you been active in the party?

SEELEY: No. I had never been active in the party. Even as a supervisor I was not active in the party. After I ran for a partisan office, I had to be more or less active.

DOUGLASS: Did you get much help from the party people other than the Veysey people, who had their preoccupation? There are Republican organizations in the two counties.

SEELEY: Naturally, they helped me. But in the primary they didn't endorse me. Barry [D.] Whittlesey was their choice.

DOUGLASS: What was his background?

SEELEY: I don't know what his background was, but at the time he was working for [Senator] Gordon Cologne.

DOUGLASS: He was a staffer?

SEELEY: He was a staffer for Gordon. He knew all of the answers. When we appeared in Riverside before the Republican group, I had a lot to learn and he always knew it. However, I didn't feel he was going to be too much competition. There are lots of them that do, that step up from just being a staffer. A lot of those people have

never made a living for themselves. They have just worked for a legislator. The fact that they know it all, they learn all of the bad as well as the good.

DOUGLASS: He probably had some pretty good skills about how to run a campaign, just having worked for Cologne?

SEELEY: I am sure he did. It didn't seem to take much effect. He didn't make any impression at all in the primary. I beat him real easy.

DOUGLASS: That wasn't a real stretch for you. You won by a little over 2,000 votes in the primary. That wasn't a big hurdle. Did Veysey actually endorse you or was he staying out of it at that time?

SEELEY: He didn't endorse me until after the primary. That is more or less expected, though. You don't endorse somebody when there is more than one running. After the primary, then you can do it.

DOUGLASS: After you defeated Whittlesey, you were running against Susan Marx as the Democratic candidate.

SEELEY: That wasn't too easy. She had both name identification and money. She was from the area that was much more populated. She had support

from a lot of movie people, and she took advantage of that. They had fund raisers for her in Hollywood. She spent a lot of money. But she was a little overconfident at all times.

DOUGLASS: She was the widow of Harpo Marx.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: She had done a lot in the community?

SEELEY: Yes. She was very active in the community.

DOUGLASS: But had she ever held an elective office?

SEELEY: She was on the school board.

DOUGLASS: You knew you were in a fairly tough campaign?

SEELEY: I did.

DOUGLASS: What was your strategy?

SEELEY: It started back during the primary. We had meetings and gatherings where all the candidates started. I told Susan--I became quite well acquainted with her--I said, "Susan, I hope that you will be the candidate from the Democratic side. I can't see any of these others being my assemblyman. I hope it will be you so in case I am defeated in the general I'd rather it would be you than somebody else."

DOUGLASS: So you built bridges with her that early.

SEELEY: To some extent, yes. I was sincere about that. I said, "You will probably beat me because you

are better known and come from a much larger area than I. Nevertheless, I intend, if I am elected to represent all the people. I am not going to represent Republicans by any means. My office will be open to all of them." She was so confident that she said, "You don't have to worry about that. Let's face it, you have problems." I said, "OK. I will take my chance with that."

DOUGLASS: Why did she feel so sure of herself?

SEELEY: She is that type of a person. She is a very confident person. She never has been able to understand how I beat her. She has been very, very opposed to me ever since. Anytime I am involved with anyone. . . . For instance, I was involved on a campaign of [Patricia] Corky Larsen running for supervisor. She had been very friendly with Corky Larsen up until Corky said that I was on her campaign. She just turned against Corky then. Which was ridiculous. I was just helping her to get elected.

DOUGLASS: This was later.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: It was interesting, in terms of the outcome. You barely lost in Riverside County, which was where her strength was.

SEELEY: I didn't lose in Riverside County when Susan was running against me.

DOUGLASS: You lost by thirty-seven votes, and you won in Imperial County. Take a look at this. The statement of vote. There was a thirty-seven vote difference in Riverside County, 29,929 to 29,893. But you won by over 2,000 in Imperial County.

SEELEY: That might be so. I never paid too much attention.

DOUGLASS: It is interesting to look at the counties in your various elections. Imperial County became key, the way I read it, for you being elected. You did very well in Imperial County. Thirty-seven votes is a tie. But it is interesting. I wonder if you could account for why you did so well in Imperial County.

SEELEY: Because I was a farmer and a rancher. That area down there is much more that type.

DOUGLASS: They probably didn't know her particularly?

SEELEY: No. She would go down there. They were not impressed with her.

DOUGLASS: And you had this visibility with Rotary and other activities.

SEELEY: And that covered Imperial County too.

DOUGLASS: On the night of the election, how did you feel? Did you think you were going to win or she was going to win?

SEELEY: I didn't have any feeling one way or another. They had a gathering in several places in Coachella Valley, one in Indio, one in Palm Springs, one in Palm Desert. They all wanted me to come to a victory party. I said, "I am going to stay home and go to bed." [Laughter] That is what I did.

DOUGLASS: Did you get any assistance from the state party on up to [Governor Ronald] Reagan in the general election? Reagan beat [Assemblyman Jesse M.] Unruh in that election.

SEELEY: Yes. In that election Reagan was running his own campaign against Unruh. That's true. Yes. I did get some help from the assembly people in the Republican portion. Different ones came down and spoke on my behalf. [Assemblyman Robert T.] Bob Monagan was probably the biggest help. He was the speaker of the assembly at the

time. That was the time when the Republicans had a majority, but it was a bare majority.

DOUGLASS: Talk about Bob Monagan. He did come down. Did he speak for you and help raise money?

SEELEY: He wasn't helping in the way of raising money. However, they had a little money. They assisted me some in the campaign.

DOUGLASS: Had you met him before?

SEELEY: Yes. After the primary, I met him. I had not met him before the primary.

DOUGLASS: So there was some attempt to assist you in the general election. But not much money?

SEELEY: Not much money.

DOUGLASS: Also, Victor Veysey won the congressional election. He had the same general area. He had a lot of visibility in Imperial County. Do you think there was any coattail effect for you between Reagan and Veysey?

SEELEY: Vic was a good friend of mine. He would continually say that he wanted me to be elected because there would be a reapportionment vote up again. He wanted to be sure that we looked after reapportionment. Unfortunately, it didn't work that way.

But I didn't ever want to use that as a tool by any means. I wanted reapportionment to be an honest reapportionment, not to benefit Republicans or Democrats. I thought it should benefit the area and let it go at that. I used to challenge Victor on that to some extent. I said, "Let's not figure I am being elected just for reapportionment." It would include, naturally, the congressional districts as well.

DOUGLASS: It sounds like you were not particularly into the strategy of party politics.

SEELEY: I wasn't. [Laughter] I never was. As a matter of fact, in some of the deals where they would be asking me questions, I would go against what they wanted me to do.

In education, for instance, certain people interested in education wanted me to be on the spot by saying that I would do this and do that for education. I said, "No. I would not want to commit myself to that. I am perfectly willing to go along with what is right. But if you just want everything to go to education, I would suggest that you vote for my opponent. That is what she is saying. She is going to see that everything goes to education."

DOUGLASS: It sounds like even within your party you might have been what we call a maverick.

SEELEY: I was.

DOUGLASS: Did that ever cause you some difficulties during the four years in the assembly?

SEELEY: I don't think so. The lady that they sent down to assist me. I can't remember her name now. She was a character. She may have known her business real well . . .

DOUGLASS: To assist you from the state party level?

SEELEY: From the party on the state level. She would come down to my office in Indio. The first thing she would do was to get on the phone and call back to Washington to talk to somebody there. She wasn't charging it to my phone, but she was paying for it with a credit card which was provided to her by the Republican party. She was calling people back there.

I always felt that was for the purpose of trying to impress me with her importance. I couldn't see that she was that important to help me in an area like the Seventy-fifth Assembly District.

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about the nature of your district. How would you describe it? I know it was a huge

area. Were there particular problems to be solved? Was there an agenda for you going into the assembly?

SEELEY: No. I served on the Local Government [Committee]. We could request what we wanted. I wanted Criminal Justice [Committee] because of my experience as a deputy sheriff. At that time, nobody had served on Criminal Justice except attorneys. I didn't think that was quite right. I thought that they should have a layman on that. I wasn't appointed to Criminal Justice the first time. They reneged on that. But they did give me Water [Committee], Agriculture [Committee], and Local Government, all of which I was interested in.

DOUGLASS: To back up just a minute. You were basically representing an agricultural district. Ranchers, farmers.

SEELEY: Yes. That was the biggest portion of my area. I did have Palm Springs, which was a tourist area.

DOUGLASS: There was no particular problem or item that you needed to address when you went to the assembly that you felt was a mandate from the people in

that district that you should do something about?

SEELEY: No.

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about entering the state assembly as a newcomer. How did you feel? Were you given a decent office? Were you well treated?

SEELEY: Well, to start with, I had Vic Veysey's office. I was there for a period of time. They don't move you. They leave you where your district is for a period of time. Then when they got around to it, they put me on the sixth floor. I remember very well, 6007. But I wasn't the only one. Of course, they were all Republicans because we got a Democrat as speaker right away.

DOUGLASS: It changed.

SEELEY: [Assemblyman Robert] Bob Moretti was elected speaker of the assembly. That was all cut-and-dried, even with a lot of Republican help.

DOUGLASS: Your committee assignments the first year were Agriculture, Efficiency and Cost Control [Committee], Government Administration [Committee], and Local Government. You would have liked to have been on Water right away. You didn't go on Water until '73. You felt you

were fairly well treated by Moretti in terms of what you requested?

SEELEY: Well, this one of Efficiency and Cost Control was a misnomer. It was efficiency maybe, but cost control, no. Right away, they wanted to make trips around the United States, seeing how other things happened. About the only one who went was the chairman of the committee and his wife and his consultant. Maybe one or two of the others went. I wouldn't go. It was too expensive. It was going to cost the state a lot of money. I didn't see where they were going to gather any information that was of any value, which they didn't.

DOUGLASS: This was to be efficiency and cost control in running the state government.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Bob Monagan was the minority floor leader, so you had met him in the campaign.

SEELEY: I supported him for minority floor leader. There was another person trying real hard to get that.

DOUGLASS: I thought it would be interesting to go over your freshman class that entered with you. I have a list here, and I wondered if you had any

particular comments about any of these people. I would be interested in your first impressions of them and whether those were enduring relationships.

SEELEY: I remember all of these people quite well. They more or less appointed me the head of this group because of my age, I assume. I was the oldest one. When they wanted to have a freshman picture, they asked me to get the group together. Of course, they said, "There is no way anybody will ever get the group together because you won't get them all. You might get most of them, but you won't get them all."

One of the fellows was [Assemblyman Richard D.] Dick Hayden who really wanted that picture. When it came time for the freshman class picture, he was the one who didn't show up. He had gone over to the Derby Club. We just waited. I kept them together. The photographer waited. When he came back, I said, "Dick, are you going to get into this picture?" He said, "I didn't think you would get them all together." So we did have a picture of the entire group.

[Assemblyman Peter R.] Chacon was from the San Diego area. I had a group come up from the Coachella Valley that were supporters of Cesar Chavez, but they didn't like the way he was doing things. They had worked real hard to get him to be their leader and then they weren't satisfied. They wanted some legislation.

So I went to Chacon and asked him if he would meet with them and talk with them. He said, "No. I can't do that. I would have to ask the leader of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations]." I said, "Why would you have to ask him?" He said, "Because he is the one who got me elected." I said, "I can't imagine you saying that, even though that happened. If I were you, I would have left that out." That is the way Chacon was and still is. Labor is what keeps him in office.

[Assemblyman Kenneth] Ken Meade was a kind of a renegade down here. He was an attorney, but very, very liberal.

DOUGLASS: How about [Assemblyman] Dixon Arnett?

SEELEY: He was married to a very lovely lady and had a nice family. I thought that he was pretty good. He even bought a little place up there out of Sacramento a ways. I thought he would be a good one, but he wasn't as strong as what I thought.

[Assemblyman Robert C.] Cline wasn't exactly what I liked either. Hayden had a very safe district. He didn't have any trouble getting elected.

[Assemblyman Jim] Keysor was from here in the Los Angeles area, San Fernando Valley. He was a Rotarian and was pretty active in Rotary as far as attendance and things like that were concerned. But there aren't too many Democrats in Rotary. He was a knife-and-fork member.

[Assemblyman Kenneth L.] Ken Maddy was my favorite of the entire bunch. He and I hit off real good.

DOUGLASS: You were impressed with him from the beginning?

SEELEY: I was very impressed with him because he would tell it like it was. He wasn't afraid to meet with the press.

[Assemblyman Alister] McAlister didn't go with us on our tour of the state. We had a tour of the state put on by lobbyists. Everywhere we

landed or stopped, we would have a congregation there from the press and media, questioning us. Most of them were afraid to talk to the press. Why, I don't know. But Maddy was never afraid. He would speak up.

DOUGLASS: How about you?

SEELEY: I didn't have any trouble at all. I would tell them like it was. It never did bother me. Meade didn't go. McAlister was a very good man. He was an honest man. He too was supported by the unions, but he wouldn't tell them about it. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: He was from Santa Clara County.

SEELEY: Yes. That is where he was from. He was a very good man. He was defeated for a statewide office, but I figured he was an outstanding type of individual that could stand up with a lot of them.

DOUGLASS: Had you known any of these people before?

SEELEY: No. I really didn't know any of them until after I was a candidate. After the primary, I got acquainted with a few of them.

DOUGLASS: Among that group, are there one or two you retained a relationship with? During the

legislature or beyond that? Some kind of permanent tie.

SEELEY: I have a permanent tie with Ken Maddy. He is in the senate now. I can call him anytime I want to and he will return my call. I never bother any of the rest of them. Of course, Arnett is out. Chacon is still there. He is the only one that is still there other than Maddy. Maddy is in the senate, and Chacon is still in the assembly.

DOUGLASS: It is an interesting group. Let's talk about the '70 session, which was your first one. Just to refresh your mind, or perhaps you remember, there were a couple of issues on the table. There was a state budget deficit which forced the governor to accept what was called the largest tax increase in history. On the bargaining table in the process of resolving that he finally agreed to a withholding tax. Did you have any participation in this fight or what do you recall about any of the things that happened in conjunction with it?

SEELEY: From our portion in the assembly, [Assemblyman Frank] Lanterman and [Assemblyman] Willie [L.] Brown [Jr.] were the ones who argued on that all

the time. Frank went along with it. When it came time to vote on it, I had to vote for it because we had to balance the budget. I could not see us getting deeper and deeper into debt. It wasn't that I favored it. I voted for several things that I didn't favor but that I felt had to be done.

DOUGLASS: Did you have any particular feeling about the withholding part of it?

SEELEY: No. That didn't bother me. I know that if you don't withhold from wages, it probably isn't there when you get ready to pay.

DOUGLASS: That is something that Reagan didn't want to do.

SEELEY: He definitely didn't want to. But I felt you had to be realistic and go along with it. There were too many people who made the money and when it came tax time, they didn't have it.

DOUGLASS: It was also in August of '70 that the Serrano-Priest decision about the schools came down, saying the existing financial system was unconstitutional, not equitable. The state had to rethink the way it financed the schools. Did that affect you particularly or your district?

SEELEY: I was not involved with those arguments.
[Assemblyman] John Stull was the one who

represented our area the most on that. I assumed that John had a lot more experience than what I did. I looked at it this way. If it was something that I was very knowledgeable of, I would step forward and participate. If it was something I wasn't, I would depend on somebody else. Because there is so much stuff going on up there you can't keep track of everything.

DOUGLASS: There were people who you would defer to for their judgment. What people would they be? Would they tend to be people you knew from your area?

SEELEY: Other people in the assembly that had been there for a period of time or long enough to know the business and the portion that they were actually involved with.

DOUGLASS: Perhaps we can go over the bills you carried your first year. It reflects what kinds of things were going on in your district. There is Chapter 986, A.B. 2161.¹ This had to do with mobile home parks. Was there a particular problem in your district about that?

SEELEY: There were a lot of mobile home parks down there. This comes from my district.

¹A.B. 2161, 1971 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 986.

- DOUGLASS: Was this a matter of how the standards were enforced? Was it because there was a growth in mobile home parks that you had a district interest?
- SEELEY: It wasn't my interest. It was the interest of the people, the constituents. I would meet with them on this and get their feelings. Of course, there are two sides of every argument. There were some people who wanted it and some people didn't. I was trying to figure out what was the best. That is how I got involved in that. I agreed that I would go ahead and carry it.
- DOUGLASS: The next one below is a pretty typical one. I remember in going through legislation with Victor Veysey, this business of all the fine points of regulating farm vehicles was always on the table.
- SEELEY: That was a difficult one because most of the people are from city areas. They didn't even know what we were talking about when we would try to do this. It applied to implements of husbandry which needed to be handled. I had a tough time trying to get this through to where they would understand it.

DOUGLASS: This had to do with taking these vehicles on public roads. Is that right?

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: It referred to, in this case, implements used for harvesting agricultural products and how fast they could go and what the length of them could be. So this wasn't a glamorous item for people who weren't from agricultural areas?

SEELEY: They didn't understand it. They didn't know we needed it.

DOUGLASS: It is interesting because Veysey had a lot of similar bills. That would be a typical bill for an agricultural district.

SEELEY: Right. Veysey had carried this same thing before and had never gotten it through. It needed to be gotten through. I understood just exactly what it was about because we have the same problem up in my area. So I knew what it was before I got involved.

DOUGLASS: Was the problem that they were not legally allowed to be on the roads?

SEELEY: They weren't until we got the bill through.

DOUGLASS: The problem was that they weren't legal on the roads and you were correcting that.

SEELEY: They were using them, and sometimes they would get caught and sometimes they wouldn't.

DOUGLASS: Another one you carried several bills on in your four years was this geothermal resources bill. A.B. 2162.¹ Perhaps you could talk about what the geothermal resources bills were.

SEELEY: I can't talk much about it because I didn't ever know much about it. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: But they were something that existed in your district?

SEELEY: They thought it existed there. They felt that this was real good one to jump on. Some of my friends in the legislature said, "Boy, you ought to really blow that up." I said, "Well, I don't know what to blow up. I don't know just what it is." There was a chance that there was geothermal--underground heat--as an energy source, but I don't know that. I am not going to get up and wave my arms and say, "This is the best thing since Santa Claus," because I don't know that it is. I never did and it never has developed.

¹A.B. 2162, 1971-1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1213 (1971).

DOUGLASS: But you were sort of getting in place. You were trying to get the codes in place? There are other bills. A.B. 890 is another one on geothermal resources.¹ This has to do with regulating the land.

SEELEY: I remember this. This wasn't introduced from my pressure. It was brought to me to carry because it involved my district.

DOUGLASS: That's true of a lot of bills.

SEELEY: Absolutely.

DOUGLASS: You were carrying it for a reason that was an interest of your district. Can you explain this one particularly? It was to exempt certain wells. I guess there were defined geothermal resource areas on a map.

SEELEY: I will be honest with you. I can't remember too much about this. It is another one of those where I wasn't too sure that a lot of effort should be put into that. Some of those things are very expensive. I wasn't convinced in pushing something I didn't know about.

DOUGLASS: Again, there was another. A.B. 3554,² definitions of what low-temperature geothermal

¹A.B. 890, 1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1102.

²A.B. 3554, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1069 (1974).

wells are. There was enough interest in your district that you were being asked to carry legislation.

SEELEY: The supervisors in Imperial County are the ones who were interested in geothermal. The board of supervisors.

DOUGLASS: It authorizes the supervisors to authorize drilling of low-temperature geothermal wells but prohibits them within fifteen feet of a public road. That sort of thing.

SEELEY: They thought they had all the information that was necessary and asked me to carry it.

DOUGLASS: You were asked to do housekeeping legislation.

SEELEY: Somebody has to do it. So they came to me.

DOUGLASS: Go back to '71. There is one of interest. A.B. 1168, which had to do with the line of the Colorado River.¹

SEELEY: That is an interesting one. This bill was introduced on the senate side. Gordon Cologne was the senator. He introduced this. He got it through the senate without any trouble. But by the time it was to come over to the assembly, here are the troops that were opposed to it.

¹A.B. 1168, 1971 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 447.

Some of the people came to me and asked me if I would introduce the same bill on the assembly side. I said, "Why should I do that if they are opposed to it. Is there any good reason?"

Then I had to learn all about it. A lot of the people came up there. Gordon Cologne, [Assemblyman W.] Craig Biddle, and I met with these people. It is one of these things that you are never going to satisfy everybody. After we met for a period of time, Gordon Cologne said, "I think it would be better to put it over for a while until the people could get together." I said, "Gordon, you have done that. I am not going to do that. That could be put over from now on, and it is never going to satisfy everybody. I had already gotten it through the assembly. It comes up in a senate committee tomorrow morning and I am going to take it up."

[Senator] Ralph [C.] Dills was the chairman of the committee, and I did take it up. He asked me if there was any opposition. I said, "I don't know, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday there was lots of opposition. Those same people are here today. If they have guts enough to stand

SEELEY: up and tell you what they tried to tell us in a small group yesterday, maybe there is a lot of opposition. I doubt if they even have the guts to stand up and tell this because they are asking for something unreasonable." Not a soul stood up. The bill went on through, and it was signed by the governor.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember the substance of it, Mr. Seeley?

SEELEY: Yes. It was to give title to accretion land along the river. That river used to meander back and forth. I am well aware of that because I worked on that river as a kid with my dad. There is no reason when the river was finally defined that those people shouldn't be given title to that land so they could do something with it. They were paying taxes on it all the time. I felt very strongly about this particular item. I did by carrying of the bill, but I would fight for it.

DOUGLASS: What was the opposition to it? What was their reasoning?

SEELEY: The sports people. Department of Fish and Game. They said that that land should remained titled to the state so there would be no development

along there. It would be better for fishing and hunting.

DOUGLASS: OK. That was important.

SEELEY: They even went back to a fellow who was involved in that. He was just one of the landowners, but a big one. He didn't participate in any of the action at the state level. But they went back and found out that he had made a contribution of \$100 to me when I was running for supervisor for the first time.

Well, they made a big to-do about that. He was a friend of mine. He didn't even know that this was ever going to come up at that time. He didn't even know I was ever going to run for the assembly. But when I was running for supervisor he donated \$100. You know, politics is dirty. They won't try to live by what actually happens. They want to make a mountain out of a mole hill.

DOUGLASS: Unless you see something else on the list, the only thing that might be of slight interest is the second from the bottom. This had to do with littering or shooting firearms on public highways. Was that a problem in your area or was that just a general item?

SEELEY: No. That was in my area. We had a lot of trouble out there. It wasn't as much the shooting as it was the littering. People would pick up their trash and haul it somewhere and just dump it on a vacant lot. It might be right next to somebody's home. It was property that was owned by an individual, but he maybe wasn't there or didn't live there. But it was still his property, and he was the one that would have to clean it up. I don't know if you read the bill, but it was for the purpose of giving a reward to somebody.

DOUGLASS: Rewarding an informant.

SEELEY: Yes. Rewarding an informant. I remember when I got that through the assembly, Gordon Cologne said, "Is this a bounty hunter bill?"

DOUGLASS: All right. Anything else about the first year, which was '71?

SEELEY: The way I felt about it was there was so much waste of time in government and my only interest was when I got there was when time was set for the assembly to convene, I was always there. Every day during my full time in the assembly I was always there on time. Maybe I was the only one. Maybe there were two or three others. But

they would always have to put a call of the house on and wait until they all arrived. It could be an hour later or as much as two hours later. That time was just wasted.

The ones that were late coming said, "I had stuff to do in the office and I don't want to go down there and waste the time." I said, "If everybody had been there on the time that was set, then we could all go back to our offices. And the ones who go in there on time, our time is certainly wasted." I never did like that.

I never liked the ghost voting. From the day I got there, I didn't like somebody voting somebody who wasn't there, with the machines. I fussed about that an awful lot.

DOUGLASS: Yes. I read an article in the Los Angeles Times about that. You were very angry about it.

SEELEY: I always was angry about it.

DOUGLASS: In fact, I believe in that article you at first maintained that it was probably a felony.

SEELEY: I had been told that it was a felony. I got into trouble later on at a meeting. I said, "I made a mistake by believing what I read in the paper."

DOUGLASS: But you did check with the Legislative Counsel.

SEELEY: The Legislative Counsel told me that it wasn't a felony. But I had been told that it was. At any rate, it was certainly wrong.

DOUGLASS: That article makes the point that [Assemblyman Leo T.] McCarthy, who was then speaker, said that it was something that ought to be addressed in the next session. You raised the visibility of the question.

SEELEY: It has been addressed. It is better now than it was when I was there, but it still isn't right.

DOUGLASS: Did you pretty quickly master the rules of the house and how to handle things on the floor of the assembly? There is a certain strategic value in being able to maneuver on the floor.

SEELEY: I learned that very quickly. I never had any fear of anybody. Ken Maddy tells this to this day, that I didn't ever care about who it was I took on, even the speaker.

When Bob Moretti was still the speaker, an initiative was passed that we were to disclose all of our holdings. This was before it was passed, Bob Moretti was speaking in favor of it that we should certainly support that because it was great. I rose on the occasion, and I said, "Just this morning I read where you had

disclosed all of your holdings. You are thirty-eight years old. If I was thirty-eight years old and had not accumulated anymore than you have, I would have been ashamed to tell it."

[Laughter] Of course, the house just roared. I was saying that for a good reason because I knew he had more than that. He wasn't disclosing everything but he said he was.

DOUGLASS: How did Moretti take that? [Laughter]

SEELEY: I know he didn't like that, but what could he do? Bob Monagan was elected speaker two years before I ever got there. He appointed Moretti head of Government Organization [Committee].

DOUGLASS: What they call a "juice" committee.

SEELEY: That's right. He was the head of that. He gave him several real good committees. He had an opportunity to raise money hand over fist and then defeat Bob Monagan. Of course, when they won the election, they were defeated anyway. So it might as well have been Moretti. These were the kind of things that I didn't like.

The Republicans tried to be fair. At least Bob Monagan did. I didn't go any further back than that. I know that he tried to divide it up with people who were knowledgeable.

DOUGLASS: You mean the committee assignments.

SEELEY: Yes.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

DOUGLASS: We were talking about the party line with Moretti.

SEELEY: We were talking about the party lines. It is typical in politics that you reward those that helped you. That is what he did. I didn't expect anything because I certainly didn't do anything for Moretti. He had to give me certain committees, so I had to take whatever was given to me. I didn't ask for anything.

But when he ran for governor, he had to withdraw. At that time there were two people who were running for speaker. It was Leo McCarthy and Willie Brown. You would be surprised at the number of people in our caucus, the Republicans, who were going to support Willie Brown. He was much more liberal. Much more. But he promised them things. Leo didn't.

As a matter of fact, Leo was trying to cut down on expenses and was going to eliminate some of these committees that Bob Moretti had made up just so he could appoint somebody.

DOUGLASS: Moretti had enlarged the committees.

SEELEY: Leo was anxious to cut some of them down so as to be a little more conservative. When we

caucused on this subject, I took some of our members to task. I said, "Why? Why would you support Willie Brown? I know that he has promised you things, but we are supposed to be the conservatives in the legislature. Why do we want to support somebody who wants to spend more money just to benefit our personal wishes? I just can't believe you are a good Republican or a conservative at all when you talk like that." I shamed enough of them into it that they supported Leo instead of Willie.

DOUGLASS: So you think you were key.

SEELEY: I know I was. And Leo knew it.

DOUGLASS: Is that why Leo replaced [Assemblyman John V.] Briggs with you as chairman?

SEELEY: Yes. Well, Leo wanted to give me a committee. I said, "You don't owe me anything. I just did this because I felt you were the better man." He said, "I am certainly going to do something for you. What would you like?" I said, "I don't think it would hurt anything if you gave me the chairmanship of the Ag [Agriculture] Committee because I would be replacing somebody who can't even get his own bills through the committee."

DOUGLASS: This was Briggs.

SEELEY: That was Briggs.

DOUGLASS: He also replaced Willie Brown with [Assemblyman John F.] Foran as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. This happened about June of '74, when Moretti had to resign because he was running for governor in the primary.

SEELEY: We insisted that he resign because he could not do his job properly.

DOUGLASS: He put in Foran as chairman of Ways and Means and [Assemblyman] John [J.] Miller as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. So he did make some moves right away.

SEELEY: He made several moves.

DOUGLASS: Let's go to the '72 session. It was at the end of that year the two-year session for the legislature was created. You had sessions that went '73-74.

SEELEY: Originally, when I first went in, they were one year at a time. Then they put two years together.

DOUGLASS: That's what I mean. How did you feel about that? Do you think that was an improvement?

SEELEY: I didn't know enough about it to see whether it would be any value or not. They went to the

makeup of the house in December, assigned the committees and things like that. They were supposed to be able to go to work right after the first of the year without having to waste any more time. But I didn't see that it improved matters any.

DOUGLASS: The same thing was going on.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: In that year, the reapportionment struggle moved along. It had been brewing. Reagan had vetoed the legislative plan and it had gone to the state supreme court, which had denied the plan of the legislature because the governor had vetoed it.

SEELEY: We didn't have any. It went to the court to do the reapportionment.

DOUGLASS: When they made the decision, there was not time in which to put a new plan in place. So they left the existing districts in place. The story keeps moving along. Did the reapportionment situation make you nervous at all about your district?

SEELEY: No. It never did.

DOUGLASS: Again, I think you stated your views about how reapportionment should be handled. Did you

think a Masters' [Special Masters to the Supreme Court] plan would be a good way to go?

SEELEY: I am not experienced enough on the subject to know. It should be somebody other than the legislature to do the reapportionment. That is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse. They are not going to do anything except to benefit themselves. I remember the first time when I was asked to go. It was always a Democrat who was in charge of the group.

[Assemblyman Henry A.] Waxman was the one Moretti had appointed to be in charge of that. He showed me the plan and wanted to know if I was satisfied with it. I said, "Henry, I will be satisfied with whatever you give me. Mine is the Seventy-fifth District. And my location is out there next to Arizona. You can't give me any of Arizona. Do all the rest of them and make mine last and give me whatever is left in that area. I don't care." I wasn't interested in reapportionment. It didn't bother me.

DOUGLASS: This wasn't something you spent a lot of time thinking about.

SEELEY: No. I didn't pay any attention to it. I felt that whatever district I was to represent, I

would do the best I could. That is as far as I could go.

DOUGLASS: It was in '72 that the [Philip E.] Watson amendment on taxation was on the ballot and failed. Watson was the assessor in Los Angeles County. This was the beginning of some kind of attempt for property tax limitation. I wondered if you recall anything about that because it was in this period that the state did begin to accumulate a surplus. The withholding tax began to bring in money. Money was beginning to sit there.

We are talking about the precursors to Proposition 13. Did you have any sense during that period that this might become a problem?

SEELEY: I felt it was going to happen sooner or later. I didn't feel the action was going to be taken by the legislature. There are too many people in the legislature that don't want to vote for something that might make them unpopular. However, they will go through the initiative system, which Proposition 13 was, and will get it passed that way. People seem to vote for something that they think might help them. It is unfortunate, and I am guilty of the same

thing. Prior to the time that I got involved in politics, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know near enough about it. I started to try to study it.

I always felt that if it was fair for the majority of the people, it was something I would have to go by. There is no way in the world that you are going to please everybody. That was my interest in all of that. As far as taxation goes, I voted for the things I knew wouldn't benefit me but I felt that they would benefit the majority of the people.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel that the accumulation of a state surplus was eventually going to cause a rebellion?

SEELEY: I didn't think so. I am strong for having a surplus. If [Governor George C.] Deukmejian hadn't set aside that surplus for this year and we had an earthquake up there in San Francisco, what in the world would we have done? Even that wasn't enough. We are still in the hole.

DOUGLASS: During this period, did you have any feeling that perhaps there was inequity developing in terms of property tax? For instance, older

people who couldn't pay their taxes. Did the Watson amendment get your attention?

SEELEY: It did. But I didn't feel that the Watson amendment was that big of a thing. It affected people who were making money. It didn't have too much effect on the retired people. There may have been a little bit. I think all of us have to pay our share.

DOUGLASS: It is also during this period that the death penalty question, which is constantly around, was there because the court had declared the death penalty unconstitutional. Then you have propositions coming through that restore the death penalty. What was your feeling about the death penalty personally and in terms of your district?

SEELEY: I was serving on the Criminal Justice Committee when George Deukmejian introduced this legislation that went through. But it wasn't easy. The chairman of that committee was so much opposed to the death penalty he said that he would never let that bill come out of committee. He had people come in and testify who didn't mind lying all they wanted to.

If you don't mind hearing a little story, this is a true story. Ken Maddy was sitting right next to me. He was also serving on this. This fellow came in. He was a doctor. He was a psychologist or psychiatrist or something. He was introduced and got up to testify. He said that he had been brought into San Quentin prison to pronounce a man dead. It so happened that this man that he came to pronounce dead was a man that I worked on the case when I was deputy sheriff. I was well informed on that. I knew the whole thing from start to finish.

He told about how this man was led in chains and handcuffs and screaming all the time that he wasn't guilty. How five big burly men brought him in there and strapped him down into this. Oh, he was very, very influential to somebody who wanted to listen about how his head snapped back and life was snuffed out of another innocent man.

So the chairman asked if there were any questions from any of the committee members. I just sat and listened for a while. Most of them didn't know anything about the case and went along with what he said.

SEELEY: When it came my turn, I said, "Doctor, I guess you are a doctor. I didn't know they had quacks back in those days. Where was this crime committed that this man was sent to the gas chamber over?" He said, "Let's see, I think it was either Arizona or New Mexico." I said, "Isn't it rather strange that a man would be executed in California for a crime committed in another state?" "Oh, oh, that is where he was arrested."

 I said, "You are wrong there too. I know this case. It just happened that you hit upon a case that I am well informed about. I worked that case myself. I know practically everything that happened. That man was arrested in Mexico. He came back to Blythe, and he kidnapped a deputy sheriff and released him in the desert going toward Glamis. Tied him up and left him in a wash. Then he went back and took the county car and turned on the red light. He went down the dirt road and stopped this car with a Washington state license. He shot the fellow who got out. That is what he went to the gas chamber for. I am afraid you don't have your facts right.

SEELEY: I would like to go a little further. When that man was arrested, he was taken to San Diego and he wanted to get it over with as soon as possible. He didn't want to waste anymore time. But a year had to elapse. All the time he said he was guilty. He told about crimes we didn't even know anything about. That case was definitely [one where] the man was guilty. When the chaplain went to him the night before and he ordered a full meal and ate the biggest portion of it, he told the chaplain there was no need to pray over him because he was guilty and he wanted to pay his debt to society. Now, you have come in here and lied to us right from the outset. If you know anything about the case, you know what you told us isn't true. I can't imagine anybody being brought before this committee to tell a bunch of lies. But that is exactly what you have done.

The next morning he ate a full breakfast and ate it all. When they came to take him to the gas chamber he said, 'Let's get it over with.' They didn't shackle him or handcuff. He just walked beside them. Two men not five. When they set him down in there he said, 'Thank

SEELEY: the lord. It is now going to be over.' I was still on this case at that time. I know what happened. Life wasn't snuffed out of an innocent man. You have just flat lied to us the whole time. I hope that the committee will take that into account when they make up their mind to vote."

DOUGLASS: Did he respond?

SEELEY: Not at the time. But he came to me when we had a recess and wanted to shake hands with me. I said, "I wouldn't shake hands with a liar. I would rather shake hands with a snake." And [Assemblyman] Bill Greene, a black man who is now in the senate--he was in the assembly at that time--he came to me and said, "My goodness, you were unmerciful with that man." I said, "I was telling the truth and he knew it. That is what made it bad for him." I wouldn't shake hands with him. I didn't want any part of it.

Then another fellow got up there and testified. He read everything he had. They didn't declare a recess or give us a chance to question him. I just got up and walked off the committee. He had gone off into the hall. I said, "Listen, I listened to everything you had

to say. Tell me, why you said that? Do you remember Bill Sands?" He said, "Yes. He is the one who wrote the seven-step program." I said, "He believed in the death penalty. How come you are so opposed to it?" He said, "I am not opposed to it. I believe in what Bill Sands had to say. But this is what they wrote for me to read."

DOUGLASS: Who is "they?"

SEELEY: Our chairman of the committee.

DOUGLASS: Is that [Assemblyman] Alan Sieroty?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I gather you think the hearings were stacked.

SEELEY: They are. So many of them are stacked. I don't mind letting something stand on its merits. I will change my viewpoints if I feel it has been honest.

But, in that case, those things that came before the Criminal Justice Committee, they probably would have rather I had not been on the committee because I would say what I thought. If it was something I knew about, just like this case, I felt I had a right to say something and I did. Alan still would not let that out of committee. I told him that if he didn't let it

out, I was going to take it up on the floor and that I had the votes to withdraw it from committee. We didn't have to take that step. I knew it would pass. But then the supreme court ruled it unconstitutional anyway. [Chief Justice] Rose [E.] Bird did.

DOUGLASS: I have the '72 bills on this page. Maybe you can just glance and see if there is something worth discussing. You are a better judge than I am.

SEELEY: A.B. 720 was in regard to citrus fruit.¹ They had a frost down there in the desert area. The purpose was to let them take their fruit to Arizona, where it could be processed.

DOUGLASS: This was an emergency.

SEELEY: Yes. Because otherwise it would be too late.

DOUGLASS: That is perfectly straightforward.

SEELEY: This [A.B.] 1316 was in regard to weights and measures on hay.² I got a lot of opposition on that. I can explain it to you.

DOUGLASS: It wasn't entirely clear to me what the implications of this bill were. What did it do?

¹A.B. 720, 1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 65.

²A.B. 1316, 1972 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 155.

SEELEY: It made them show the original weight on the weight certificate so that the farmer would know what it is. It was to protect the farmer. My being a farmer, I was well aware of what this problem was. It was a lot bigger down in Imperial County.

A truck driver would go get a load of hay from the stack alongside the field. He would take it to the scale. If it was overweight, he would say, "Wait a minute. I have to take off some." He might dump right there. Or might go around behind the scale and take off some hay. Then he would come back and weigh. That was the figure that went on the weight certificate. I said that regardless of whether he took any off or not, they ought to stamp that original weight on there so that the farmer could be protected. Because he wouldn't have any idea of how much hay they had taken from his stack. I had to fight to get that through. Another case where the majority of the people didn't even know what I was talking about.

DOUGLASS: That exemplifies the problems of your district. The amendment to the Fish and Game Code, you included reptiles.

SEELEY: That was the turtle bill.

DOUGLASS: The desert tortoises.

SEELEY: I think that is what it is, including the reptiles within regulations. This entire thing was to give the [Department of] Fish and Game a little more power to protect turtles. That wasn't an easy one either. A lot of people would say, "Why do you want to protect the turtle?"

DOUGLASS: You mean the desert tortoise.

SEELEY: A desert tortoise. I said, "Because those things are on the desert and people go out there and will pick them up and bring them into the city. It isn't just a question of protecting that tortoise. There have been wrecks caused because when people see them, to avoid hitting them, they are liable to go one way or another and hit another car." We had to bring all that out. But it passed without too much trouble after I got it explained.

DOUGLASS: Again, this is having to explain the peculiar nature of your district to a statewide audience.

SEELEY: That's right. It wasn't easy.

DOUGLASS: You did introduce a constitutional amendment which died in committee, which had something to

do with reapportionment. I didn't get the details on that.

SEELEY: I knew it was not going to go anywhere, but I thought I might as well try.

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about the '72 election. You were unopposed in the Republican primary. In the general election, you defeated Alfred Singh, who had been in the primary against Susan Marx. You defeated him by almost 10,000 votes. Was there anything notable about that election?

SEELEY: He was not the most honest man in the world. He would resort to anything. He even went so far as to come up to my office in Palm Springs and take my name off the door.

DOUGLASS: Was he a businessman?

SEELEY: No. He worked for the irrigation district down there. He was a kind of a fluke. There was no problem. I didn't campaign any in that election.

DOUGLASS: That was a very sound victory in both counties.

SEELEY: And even in Imperial County.

DOUGLASS: The '72 election resulted in the most heavily Democratic assembly since '64. So the Democratic majority was increasing and you were

becoming more of a minority. Did that give you any feelings of paranoia?

SEELEY: It did. Very much so. That's why, when the '74 election came up, even with reapportionment done by the court, it didn't hurt me. But it didn't help me. I had nobody on the Democratic ticket in the primary. It had been recommended to me that I try to get a write-in from the Democratic side. It wasn't my idea at all, but some of my Democrat friends in the legislature suggested that I do that.

DOUGLASS: Why did they suggest that?

SEELEY: So as to get it over with in the primary.

DOUGLASS: So you could just win in the primary.

SEELEY: Because there wasn't anybody on there. The only way to get on was to go through a write-in themselves.

DOUGLASS: What did you do?

SEELEY: I sent them out from my campaign office. I made a mistake. I should have had a Democrat friend send it. This fellow sent out a pack of lies. He outpolled me a little bit in that primary. Not very much.

DOUGLASS: You mean [Tom] Suitt?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I think the case was--verify this for me if you would--that there was a Robert Myer who was going to run in the primary but at the last minute he backed out. So there wasn't time for anybody else to file in the normal procedure. Therefore, it became a write-in situation. Did you know Suitt?

SEELEY: No. He wasn't even a resident. He had just moved down.

DOUGLASS: He decided to make a run for that on a write-in campaign, and he qualified.

SEELEY: But he had help from the Democratic party.

DOUGLASS: You did have [William C.] Schultz, who ran against you in the Republican primary, whom you defeated.

SEELEY: I think this fellow was from Desert Hot Springs.

DOUGLASS: You overwhelmingly defeated him, 43,772 to 5,440. You clearly had the Republican side of things.

SEELEY: Oh, yes. There is no question about that.

DOUGLASS: Suitt gained the Democratic nomination and, apparently, you didn't have enough to say you won it in the primary.

SEELEY: I just missed. Even in this write-in deal. Then, again, I just missed in the final when I

ran against Suitt. If you will recall, that was the Watergate year, and the majority of the Republicans didn't have anything to go to the polls for. I lost a lot of Republican votes by them just not voting.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel fairly confident? Suitt was new. You were an incumbent who had had no trouble being elected. Even as you approached the election, how did you feel about it?

SEELEY: I didn't have too much interest one way or the other. I didn't feel he could beat me. However, the day before the election, all of the newspapers in the area came out with a full-page ad. He told about what I had done, which was a pack of lies and told what he would do. For anybody who didn't know the situation, it was all in his favor. There wasn't anything I could do about it. I certainly couldn't come back and fight that.

DOUGLASS: Was he using the approach that things should be nonpartisan?

SEELEY: No. He was a Democrat from the word go.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But what was his line in the election to the public?

SEELEY: He was pointing out things that I had done which weren't true. I did keep some of them for a period of time and then threw them away. He would try to compare himself with me when he had nothing to compare. He had never been in office. He misrepresented what I had done.

For instance, he said that I had put up a false front up there by having the lobbyists support me by putting on a cattlemen's committee which didn't exist. It was held at the Cattlemen's Restaurant out close to Dixon, west of Sacramento. The group that put it on were friends of mine who were in the ranching business. They invited anybody who wanted to come. It was \$25 a plate. We had a dinner and a dance. I didn't make very much money out of it, but we had a good time. He made a big to-do about that. The lobbyists put this on, which wasn't true. He said that he would never accept money from a lobbyist. That was his comparison. If he didn't accept money from lobbyists, it was because they wouldn't give him any.

I know that one organization did support him. It was PORAC [Police Officers Research Association Committee]. They are a bread-and-

butter group of peace officers. Their only interest is their own welfare. It hasn't anything to do with law enforcement at all.

He pointed out how they supported him. But I was having lunch at Frank Fat's [Restaurant], and this lobbyist for them came to me and wanted me to meet some of his people. The president of his association and the secretary and also the treasurer. There were three of them there having lunch. They wanted to talk to me. They said that they wanted to endorse me and wanted to support me financially. I said, "Well, every little bit helps. I appreciate it." Then they said, "But we want you to support such-and-such a bill." I remember the bill. I said, "No. I wouldn't do that. That is not my way of doing [business]. I don't feel that we should demand that local government pay more than they can afford to pay. I just wouldn't support that bill at all." They said, "We will have to support your opponent." I said, "That's all well and good. You support whoever you want to."

- SEELEY: Sure enough, not only did he get their endorsement, but he got quite a bit of money from them. But I could have had that.
- DOUGLASS: So the bill was to get more benefits paid by local government.
- SEELEY: That's right. It would have forced local government to pay them more benefits than what they were getting.
- DOUGLASS: As you think back on it, are there things you might have done differently in your campaign?
- SEELEY: No. By that time, I could see the writing on the wall. I knew that [Secretary of State Edmund G.] Jerry Brown [Jr.] was going to be elected. I didn't really have that much interest in serving.
- DOUGLASS: It is interesting to look at the figures of the final election. You carried San Diego County, which was an addition in the reapportionment. That was a portion of San Diego.
- SEELEY: It wasn't very much of San Diego County.
- DOUGLASS: It was very close in Riverside. He won by 400 votes. He won quite well in Imperial County. Can you give any rhyme or reason to those differences among those counties?

SEELEY: Riverside County was where people knew me well. They knew I would be reelected. They didn't see any reason to go out and go to the polls. So they stayed home. Real good friends of mine didn't even vote.

DOUGLASS: That is where you could have won that county?

SEELEY: Yes. I could have won it easy if they had just gone to the polls. Imperial County, I can explain that real easy. There had been a wreck of a labor bus coming from Calexico up to my area. Labor people that left there early in the morning and went up there to work in the fields. This is individual harvesting. This bus ran off into a drain ditch. The driver went to sleep.

So [Assemblyman] Jack [R.] Fenton immediately introduced a bill to take \$10 million from the general fund and give to the highway patrol to inspect these buses every six months. I had been around law enforcement enough, and I knew they were already inspected. So I called the commissioner in Sacramento. I said, "Don't you inspect these buses every six months?" He said, "Yes. We always have done that." I said, "Why do you need this bill?" He said, "We don't need the bill, but we will take

the money." I said, "I can't support it." He said, "I don't blame you." I was the only one in the entire legislature to vote against that.

But it was one of those political things. You are supposed to do it if you have any Mexicans in your area because they were all Mexican people. I never thought about it at the time, but it would not have made any difference.

Ronald Reagan called me and asked me why I voted against it. I told him. He said, "You are the only one who had the guts to stand up and be counted to defeat that bill." Of course, \$10 million is not a lot to take out of the general fund, but if you are going to do it for every little thing that comes along, it kind of gets expensive. He said, "Don't ask me to veto it because it will be overridden. This is a political payoff and that is the way it is going to go." I said, "I am not going to ask you to do anything about it. I will just take my lumps." He said, "They will use it against you in the next election."

Sure enough, they used it against me. They put out all these lies down there that I hated Mexicans. That was a big campaign issue. There

SEELEY: are a lot of Mexicans in Imperial Valley. A lot of them probably would have voted for me if they had not made such an issue of this. The newspaper in El Centro endorsed my opponent. In his endorsement, he said that it would not do any good because I would be reelected. But he felt that there should be a change. That I had not spent enough time in Imperial Valley. And I went to Imperial Valley a lot.

One of the things he was opposed to was a bill introduced and they put me on it as coauthor. They didn't even ask me. They just put me on it. It had to do with Cesar Chavez to arrange for some state money to take up where they had had these strikes, to help the counties. Well, they didn't even have a strike down in Imperial County.

I didn't think about it at the time, but they wondered why, later, Imperial County wasn't included in it. Riverside County was. They said, "Why would you leave off your own county?" I made the remark that it was not my home county. It is in my district, but it is not my home county. My home county is Riverside. I

have never lived in Imperial County. [Laughter]
But he made a big issue of that.

DOUGLASS: You got quoted on that.

SEELEY: Oh, did I get quoted. But they took it out of context. I didn't do what they said I had done.

DOUGLASS: Was there a lot of effort poured in by the Democratic party to support Suitt and defeat you?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Yet you were really a sure seat up to this point, weren't you?

SEELEY: They didn't ever expect me to lose at all. In fact, I was on the committee to help other Republicans.

DOUGLASS: I think the California Journal said that was the biggest upset of the year.

SEELEY: Yes. The Sacramento Newsletter said that it was the biggest farce that ever happened. An honest man has been turned out that was always for good government.

DOUGLASS: As you walked up to election day, how did you feel about it?

SEELEY: I felt that I would win it. As a matter of fact, I went out to a party in Los Angeles for [Attorney General] Evelle [J.] Younger. They

had a big party. They asked me if I was going to have a party. I said, "I never have parties to celebrate my winning because I haven't won until the thing is over." Evelle said, "If you don't win, none of us will win." [Laughter] And Evelle didn't win, but he thought that he would win. I wasn't too sure of it.

DOUGLASS: Do you think the Watergate problem also had a terrible effect on turnout?

SEELEY: Absolutely. On all Republicans. Not just me. It really affected me because I was the only one on the ballot that they really felt they should support. But they knew I was going to win anyway.

DOUGLASS: To pick up on a comment you made, you mentioned Governor Reagan. During the time you were in the legislature did you have any contacts with him?

SEELEY: Oh, yes. I knew him beforehand.

DOUGLASS: How did you know him?

SEELEY: When he was campaigning for governor the first time was when I was campaigning for the board of supervisors. We were at the same things a lot of times. I had met him prior to that through

Rotary. He was the speaker at various Rotary events. I got to know him.

DOUGLASS: By the time you came to the assembly, he knew you and you knew him.

SEELEY: Oh, yes. I could go to his office anytime I wanted to. I had no trouble getting in.

DOUGLASS: You had access to him.

SEELEY: I had access to him. I didn't take advantage of it. I didn't try to use that.

DOUGLASS: Would you go to him if you had a problem with some legislation or a problem in your district?

SEELEY: The only time that I really went to him with a request was for an appointment to the court of appeals. A man in my district that had not been a judge, he had just been an attorney, but an honest attorney and a good one. He was in Imperial County. I went to him to try to get him appointed to the court of appeals. He was the only one from my district.

Gordon Cologne had been appointed from the senate to the one over in San Diego. I supported that. I didn't work for it, but Gordon had it pretty well sewn up anyway. But this was really a job in this case because this fellow had not been a judge.

Ronald Reagan told me, "I prefer to appoint somebody that is on the bench because that gives me another appointment. But I will give this some thought." He did. Ned Hutchinson was his appointments secretary at the time. Ned always came to work early in the morning, and I always went to work early in the morning. So we would have breakfast once in a while. I never let this die. I said, "It wouldn't hurt to have a down-to-earth man. It doesn't have to be a judge." That is what I told Ronald Reagan, too. I said, "He would make a very good one." He is still there. He got the appointment, and he is still on the court of appeals.

DOUGLASS: Who was that?

SEELEY: F. Douglas McDaniel.

DOUGLASS: That is one you had to work on a while.

SEELEY: I had to work on it. That was the only reason because he preferred to get somebody who had experience on the bench, plus it gave him an opportunity to appoint another one.

DOUGLASS: You mentioned once that he phoned you. Did he phone you about some things?

SEELEY: He phoned me two or three times on legislation that I voted for.

DOUGLASS: This was after a vote?

SEELEY: Yes. He wanted to know why I voted the way I did on certain things. I would explain to him. On that one particular thing, he said, "Don't ask me to veto it." I said, "I am not going to ask you to veto it. It would be foolish." I was the only one who voted against it. I felt that I owed it to the state to try to protect their money a little bit.

DOUGLASS: Do you recall what the others were?

SEELEY: One had to do with horseracing. I didn't vote for it. I certainly would have voted for the bill. Ken Maddy sat right in front of me, and he said, "Don't you vote for that because they will use that against you in the next election." It was regarding taxes on racehorses. It was to change the system. I felt that it was definitely important. But it was going to go through anyway. So Ken Maddy said, "Don't vote for it." I didn't vote against it. I just didn't vote.

The record shows that I was there. Ronald Reagan wanted to know why I didn't vote for it. I told him why. He said, "Probably a good thing

that you didn't." But they wouldn't have held it against me anyway.

DOUGLASS: In other words, Maddy thought they would hold it against you because you owned racehorses?

SEELEY: I owned racehorses and had been involved in racing.

DOUGLASS: Do you recall another one?

SEELEY: I can't think just off the top of my head of anything else.

REAGAN: Did Reagan help you in the '72 campaign or the '74 campaign?

SEELEY: He helped me just before the '72 campaign. Actually, it was in '71. In December, I had a fund raiser in Palm Springs. He came to it and was my speaker. That was the only time I ever asked him to help me financially. I had a \$9,000 deficit that was out of my pocket, and he said that he would help me. He did. He came down, and we had a dinner and he was the speaker.

I wanted to get Bob Hope to come and introduce him. Bob had to go back East at the time, but he said his wife would do it if I was satisfied. I said, "She would be very good." She was in the hospital with pneumonia. So I

wound up getting Frank Sinatra. But I still had a name person to do it. Frank did a good job. Frank had been a Democrat all the time. He more or less changed about that time and started supporting Republicans more.

DOUGLASS: This was an after-the-election fund raiser? It was a deficit.

SEELEY: It was a deficit from my first election. I didn't use that money to make up the deficit. I just put it in my campaign so that I would have money the next time I ran.

DOUGLASS: A war chest.

SEELEY: A war chest. That's right.

DOUGLASS: We can move to the next session, '73-74, when you had been reelected. I think at that time [Assemblyman] Robert [G.] Beverly had replaced Monagan as the minority floor leader. Moretti was still speaker. Beverly was from the Manhattan Beach area. Do you recall anything about his role as the minority floor leader?

SEELEY: Beverly was a strong man.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

DOUGLASS: You said there was a contender.

SEELEY: [Assemblyman Robert E.] Bob Badham and Bob Beverly that were competing for this minority leader. I had known Badham before I ever got into it. I didn't know Beverly. Badham and [Assemblyman Peter F.] Pete Schabarum used to come down to my place to go hunting during dove season. That is where I got acquainted with him. He had asked for my support. Bob was a good Republican. I had said that I would support him.

When they take the votes, it is by roll call. Seeley is down quite a ways on the list. A lot of those who had promised Badham their vote, they could see it swaying a little bit to Beverly, so they switched and went to Beverly. When it came to my time to vote, I said, "Badham!" real loud. And Beverly turned around and looked at me. I didn't have anything against Beverly.

He came to me later and told me that he really appreciated the fact that I stood up for what I said I would do. Because when they saw it was going the other way, these other guys

were switching. I wouldn't do that. I always stood by my word. He said, "Anything you want me to do for you anytime, I will. Whether you voted for me or not has no merit on it." I said, "I don't expect to ask for anything. I wouldn't have asked anything of Badham either. I had given my word that I would vote for him, so I stood by him." Beverly and I are still friends.

DOUGLASS: Did Beverly hold that against you at first?

SEELEY: No. He didn't hold it against me at all. As a matter of fact, he said that he respected me for it.

DOUGLASS: So you got along fine with the Republican leadership.

SEELEY: Yes. I always did.

DOUGLASS: At that point, you finally did get assigned to Criminal Justice. You were also placed on the Water Committee, which is something, I gather, you were very interested in.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: During this period you had the Local Government Committee, which we really haven't talked about, from '71 to '73. Do you have any particular comments about that committee?

SEELEY: I withdrew from Local Government to give a chance to [Assemblyman William A.] Craven. He is a senator now, from San Diego, but he had been on the board of supervisors from San Diego County.

DOUGLASS: You had been logical to go on that committee because you had served in local government.

SEELEY: I had served on it all the time up until then. They put me on the Water Committee instead of that, which was OK.

As a matter of fact, Bob Beverly asked me if I would like to be on Ways and Means. I told him, "No." He said, "It is a good committee to draw financial aid." I said, "I am not interested in financial aid. I don't care about being on Ways and Means. It is a big committee. I think it is kind of overbearing. I don't know that much about state financing. I would rather other people who are more knowledgeable than me serve on that." I never did.

DOUGLASS: That is an opportunity a lot of people would seize.

SEELEY: When I look back on it, I could have gathered a lot money from that. That wasn't my interest. I didn't ever ask anybody for anything. I

didn't want to do that. I didn't want to get into an area where they felt they needed to support me.

I would like to explain something else to you. Bob Badham and I were invited by Household Finance [Corporation]. A whole bunch were invited, but Bob and I were the only ones that went. We flew back to South Dakota on a pheasant hunt. Household Finance financed all of this. They put us up back there in private homes that people moved out and rented to people during the pheasant season. I was a good hunter and was anxious to go. I did go.

On the way back, I talked to this fellow. I was sitting beside him, first class. I said, "How come you would pick me to make a trip like this? You have never come to me to ask for anything." He said, "You always vote right, anyway. You vote to help business people. Sound business deals, you always vote." I had very few people come to me and lobby me on things like that. I thought it was interesting to ask him. This was just something personal. This had nothing to do with my campaign. But

SEELEY: they were from all over the United States.
Legislators.

DOUGLASS: All asked to go on this trip.

SEELEY: Yes. I met a lot of legislators from other
states.

DOUGLASS: Did they put on a program there of information?
It was purely recreational?

SEELEY: Recreational. It was just a recreation deal.
They never did say anything about what they
wanted.

DOUGLASS: Or even to give information about their
business?

SEELEY: Not a thing. Even on the trip flying back and
forth, they didn't say a thing about it. But
lobbyists from other states that lobbied for
Household Finance. . . . It kind of surprised
me. I thought sooner or later there is going to
be something come up that we are going to have
to listen to. But that wasn't the case.

DOUGLASS: Maybe that is the most effective kind of
lobbying. Low-key.

SEELEY: Most of them didn't have the nerve to go. They
felt that it would be a conflict of interests.
It certainly wasn't a conflict of interest in my
case.

DOUGLASS: You felt you were never asked to do anything by them?

SEELEY: I never had. I never had any problem at all. Another thing that came up--and this is one where I had to turn against my help--the agriculture group wanted a bill to benefit the cling peach growers. The way it was, a lot of people were losing money growing cling peaches. There was an oversupply of them. They wanted a bill where the only way you could get into the cling peach business is to already have it or buy out somebody else. You couldn't start growing cling peaches.

The fellow that was the head of this lobbying group was the one active with the California Growers [Association]. And they had given me money for my campaign. So they came to talk to me about it. I said, "No. I can't support that. That's not the free enterprise system." I had had to suffer with this cotton allotment that the government put on for a long period of time. I was not going to get involved in something like that where you limit who can grow and who can't. When it came up in

committee, he was there and he put on his case. But he lost.

As we were going out he was standing there by the door. I said, "There goes my campaign funds for the next election." He said, "Not necessarily." Within ten minutes he was up to my office. He told me that I didn't have to worry about that. They would support me even more than they did the first election. I said, "I voted against your bill." He said, "Yes. But you told us you were going to. There were other fellows that told us they were going to support it and reversed themselves when they took the vote in the committee." I said, "You will never find me reversing myself without telling you in advance."

They were always good supporters of mine and would still be to this day if I were there. I just don't believe in lying to anybody and then turning it around. I felt I was doing the right thing. The bill finally got through the next time, but Ronald Reagan vetoed it. So it never did become law. I think it was right. Inevitably, it would have boosted the prices on cling peaches which go to the market. They can

SEELEY: them, and they go to the market. The price for the consumer would have been a whole lot higher.

DOUGLASS: That is an interesting story. It was in '73 that Ronald Reagan went for the special election on his Proposition 1, which was the first attempt on tax limitation, and failed. What do you recall of that? Were you particularly interested in that?

SEELEY: I was very much interested in it. I never dreamed that it would fail. I thought that would definitely go through. I remember I was in San Diego the day of the election. I was listening to the results in my hotel. We didn't get the finals until the wee hours of the morning, but I was so upset that I called Ronald Reagan at his home, and I said, "How could that happen?" He said, "That's politics."

The Democrats had really gone out to work hard against that. Moretti was the chief speaker on behalf of the opposition. It just hurt me to think that they made such an issue that I felt would be beneficial for the entire state.

DOUGLASS: There was some comment that possibly Reagan had pushed this ahead in a special election in order to promote his interest in the presidency.

SEELEY: I don't think that was right. I know that was the comment that came out of that, but I didn't think so. I will tell you why he went to a special election. There are more conservative people who turn out for special elections than general elections.

DOUGLASS: That was the strategy. Not to have it fade into the primary ballot or the November ballot.

SEELEY: Had it gone on a regular ballot it wouldn't have had the support it got there. But it didn't work anyway.

DOUGLASS: As you know, it cost the state some money to put on a special election. So that was used.

SEELEY: Oh, yes. I am well aware of that.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we look at your '73 bills. They will be on that list. Again, if anything strikes you that you feel is worth commenting on, please do.

I was fascinated with your Russian thistle problem. A.B. 1706 in '73.¹ There are two bills that you carried in 1973-74 that had to do

¹A.B. 1706, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 592 (1973).

with the ability to have outdoor fires to destroy the Russian thistle.

SEELEY: This was an important bill for my area, as well as a lot of other places in the state. When the wind blows, tumbleweeds (that is the other name) would blow across the highway and cause a lot of wrecks. It is kind of like the desert tortoise, only worse. They would build up along a fenceline. Of course, this was a time when they were trying to prevent all burning of any kind because it caused air pollution. But out in the open burning these dry things didn't cause that much pollution. I got this bill through because it was beneficial.

DOUGLASS: I understand exactly. Again, did you have trouble explaining this to people from other parts of the state?

SEELEY: I did. But when you bring in the part about people trying to dodge something and causing an accident, they can understand that. They didn't understand anything about the pollution portion of it.

DOUGLASS: The two at the bottom are of some interest. This business of vacant school lands being able to be exchanged by the State Lands Commission.

I was wondering if that had anything to do with something in your district.

SEELEY: That was throughout the entire state.

DOUGLASS: Was there something in your district that triggered it?

SEELEY: No.

DOUGLASS: You are just carrying it as general interest. The horse sales one, A.B. 1645 might be interesting to talk about.¹ This had to do with exemption of certain horse sales.

SEELEY: A friend of mine from Fresno carried this legislation to start with. It was never intended to include racehorses. It was for auction horses that were used for saddle horses or brood mares. The people who wanted it wanted to get racehorses involved.

DOUGLASS: It was a regulation about the sales that were set up.

SEELEY: There hadn't been anything to start with. It made it to where horses that went through sales could not be injected with something to make them gentle or to make them look like gentle horses when they weren't. In other words,

¹A.B. 1645, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 1194 (1973).

giving them a tranquilizer. That is what it amounted to. But it could have been a host of things you might want to give them. Something to prevent lameness or something like that. It was a good bill.

But I never felt that racehorses should be involved there. Racehorses are purchased through a sale off of their breeding and confirmation. Not whether they are nervous or not. What brought me to carry this was to eliminate this and put it in the hands of the [California Horse] Racing Board rather than the Ag department [Department of Food and Agriculture]. They had had a sale at Hollywood Park. A man had been killed in a plane accident. He had a bunch of good racehorses. There was a mare that was sold. The price was up to \$7 million, which at that time was a big price. This mare got nervous and went to kicking and kicked through the boundaries, which was soft enough and didn't get hurt. She could have jerked loose and got out through the crowd and maybe got crippled.

That is why I wanted to carry it because there were people who would have paid \$10

SEELEY: million, but they quit bidding at this point because they thought that she might hurt herself. So I felt that should be in the hands of the Racing Board. They could use their judgment as to how it is handled.

DOUGLASS: So this applied to sales on any racing association property, too.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So what you were doing was pulling it out of the other regulatory agency.

SEELEY: Pulling it out of the other regulatory [agency] and putting it over there.

DOUGLASS: Good. That is very helpful.

SEELEY: Let me tell you a little bit more about that particular thing. There was a fellow who was a candy manufacturer or maker in the City of Oakland that is the head of the trail riders group in the entire state of California. He was one who wanted these thoroughbreds to sell as cheap as possible. He really lobbied hard to get that. I got it through my side of the legislature without too much trouble, but when I went to the senate side it got tough. Real tough. They were really trying hard.

They brought a young lady from UCLA to testify about how she had bought a horse at a horse sale and when she got home, the horse bucked her off. She told that. [Senator Randolph] Randy Collier called me over and said, "I think you had better put this off. This girl has these people believing her side of the story is the only one." I put it over for two weeks. Ralph Dills was the chairman of the committee. He allowed that to be put over. But they had that same girl back there two weeks later.

But, in the meantime, I had had a chance to talk to enough of the senators. I could tell them in private better than I could the other way. I knew I had the votes. She testified again just like she did before. I presented my side of the case about as good as I could. When they called time for the votes, there were enough votes to pass it. Ralph Dills said, "The bill is out." This gal had not shut off the speaker where she was sitting, and she said, "Oh, shit." It went all over the house. [Laughter] Of course, everybody laughed. Here we thought she was the all-American type that

SEELEY: wouldn't have said that if she had a mouthful.
That was one of the funniest things that happened.

DOUGLASS: [Laughter] I suppose there are a lot of stories of people not turning off their mikes.

SEELEY: That is true, but that was one of the outstanding ones. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: That is excellent. There is this Colorado River sports fishing bill in '73, A.B. 388.¹

SEELEY: That was one the Fish and Game asked me to carry, increasing the fees for the special stamp.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we do your '74 legislation. These are the ones you carried that became law. The spray residue one, A.B. 2546,² was that peculiar to your district or statewide?

SEELEY: That was my district, but it was anyplace that was agricultural. But my district was strongly agriculture. That is why they came to me to carry that.

DOUGLASS: This would stop it at the harvest point. It said: "Can prohibit the harvest of product

¹A.B. 388, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 343 (1973).

²A.B. 2546, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 97 (1974).

carrying spray residue in excess of established tolerance."

SEELEY: The purpose of this bill was to raise the level a little bit. They had already proved that it wasn't detrimental. What they had before was eliminating an awful lot of the crops.

DOUGLASS: I see. This referred to the standard used. And you made it a less stringent standard.

SEELEY: Yes. We made it less stringent. They could allow the residue to be a little higher.

DOUGLASS: I am glad you explained that. A.B. 1859.¹ That interested me. Was this because you were getting a lot of factory-built housing in your district? It was more of a housekeeping bill in terms of definitions and inspections in the health and safety code.

SEELEY: As near as I can remember, this bill was introduced because a lot of those manufacturers of these mobile homes, they were not being done sufficiently well. For instance, if one had a chandelier, by the time they got it to its destination the thing may fall out. It wasn't even hooked up right. That is the kind of stuff

¹A.B. 1859, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 129 (1974).

that promoted this. The people who were buying these things for mobile home parks were very disappointed in it. This was to give them a chance to inspect these things as they were being built to make sure they were built right. After they are built, it is pretty hard to tell.

DOUGLASS: That is why it authorized the in-plant inspections. The first part you must have been tightening up the definitions. Tightening up the standards.

SEELEY: Yes. But it was to allow the building inspectors to inspect them as they were being built. That was the main purpose of the bill.

DOUGLASS: That had statewide implications, but it was also a specific problem in your district because you were getting a lot of factory-built homes?

SEELEY: Yes. That's right. We had a lot of factory-built.

DOUGLASS: Which can be another name for what we call mobile home parks.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: A.B. 2918 put a ceiling on compensation to members of a water and sanitation district

boards.¹ It specifically refers to the Desert Water Agency.

SEELEY: Yes. The Desert Water Agency controls the water in the Palm Springs area and down through Palm Desert and that area. Coachella Valley Water District picks up the lower part of the valley, but this Desert Water Agency is from the upper part. This was a bill that they requested which applied just to them.

DOUGLASS: What did it do? Set their compensation?

SEELEY: Yes. It set the amount of compensation for serving on the board.

DOUGLASS: That is an interesting topic in terms of water boards, the compensation people get. It has been a very hot one in our area. There is a feeling that people are overcompensated compared to city council members. I was curious about this.

SEELEY: This one, there was no problem with it. The people there felt that they deserved more. It was set through the legislation rather than just them voting their own.

¹A.B. 2918, 1973-1974 Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 228 (1974).

DOUGLASS: Why was there a need for special legislation at the state level for that? To address the Desert Water Agency. Was there something in the nature of that agency?

SEELEY: They weren't within in the county.

DOUGLASS: Multi-county?

SEELEY: Yes. The Coachella Valley Water District comes within the county government. This one comes within the state government.

DOUGLASS: OK. It is like a regional body. The last one on that page, A.B. 3139, interested me.¹ That had to do with the regional occupation program. It sounded as though you were facilitating the cross-fertilization with Arizona, since your district abuts the line.

SEELEY: I don't remember too much about it. I remember carrying it because it had to with two states and I was down there in that area. It was not one that was highly contested one way or another.

One up here, [A.B.] 2970, was the creation of the Fifty-fourth District Agricultural

¹A.B. 3139, 1973-1974, Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 969 (1974).

Association.¹ That was an interesting one because it was my own community in Palo Verde Valley. I had a hard time getting this out of Ways and Means.

DOUGLASS: Can you explain what the Fifty-fourth District Agricultural District Association is?

SEELEY: It is the fair district. It is handled by the state agricultural district. They are called agricultural districts.

DOUGLASS: This delineated the boundaries for that.

SEELEY: It created the boundaries. It was something that was needed. The area down there always had a fair. It was put on for a long time by the Jaycees [Junior Chamber of Commerce]. The rodeo association gave the Jaycees their grounds, just deeded it to them, where they continued to have a fair.

When the highway department came through and built Interstate 10, it went right through the fairgrounds, so the Jaycees went down to another area and bought eighty acres of land. They had more room. They continued to carry on the fair. But it was a private organization and

¹A.B. 2970, 1973-1974, Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 693 (1974).

they had to pay state taxes. Being a small area, they needed some financial help from the state.

When I carried this legislation and it got to Ways and Means, I ran into a lot of opposition. I remember [Assemblyman] John [L.] Burton saying, "Who in the hell would go to a fair in Blythe?"

DOUGLASS: And Blythe was designated in that bill as the fair site.

SEELEY: I said, "Everybody in Blythe would go. And probably a few people from other areas." There had not been a fair district created in a long time. I think I was lucky to have a friend in Ronald Reagan because he signed that into law.

DOUGLASS: So it would be unusual to create a new fair district?

SEELEY: It certainly was unusual. It was a tough one to get through.

DOUGLASS: That means you are pitting the interests of that district against all of the existing ones.

SEELEY: All of the existing ones didn't want any others. The money that came went to them.

DOUGLASS: In other words, they were losing something.

SEELEY: They were going to lose a little bit.

DOUGLASS: So Reagan didn't veto it.

SEELEY: No. I had his support right from the start.

DOUGLASS: I wanted to ask you a question on your service on the Joint Committee on Fairs Allocation and Classification. You went on that in your last year in the legislature. How did you happen to be appointed to that?

SEELEY: Because of my interest in fairs.

DOUGLASS: Was that a seven-member committee, half senators, half assembly members?

SEELEY: I think there were five from each house.

DOUGLASS: What was the responsibility of that committee?

SEELEY: To study the fairs throughout the state and find out the ones that needed state support. To check and see how they were being run. Their directors are appointed by the governor.

DOUGLASS: Each district fair.

SEELEY: Each agricultural district fair. If it is a county fair, they are appointed by the board of supervisors. If it is a state agricultural district, they are appointed by the governor. Some of the members of the legislature want to make it a political plum. If it is a Republican governor, they want to be sure that all Republicans get appointed.

I didn't look at it that way. I felt that if somebody was a director of a fair, even if he were a Democrat, if he were working hard at it and making a little commitment to the fair, putting in his time and efforts, I thought he should be reappointed. I recommended to Governor Reagan who I thought was actually serving. I didn't ask him to appoint just Republicans.

DOUGLASS: Was this committee responsible for the allocation of a certain amount of money?

SEELEY: Yes. Classification and allocation.

DOUGLASS: What would classification mean?

SEELEY: Where they stood in the way of being a district fair. Classified in the top group or second.

DOUGLASS: Within each district, there was a priority list?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So within your district that was formed, the Fifty-fourth, there would be different classifications of state fairs?

SEELEY: No. Naturally, this district was the Fifty-fourth, and it would be at the bottom of the barrel. This wasn't formed until about the time I was going out. I got the legislation through, but I didn't have anything to do with getting

the classification. But it has advanced. It has moved way up the ladder.

DOUGLASS: Within those districts there is a priority list. So you are classified as a certain level of a fair.

SEELEY: That's right. A certain level. And the need is brought into it.

DOUGLASS: Financial need.

SEELEY: Financial support.

DOUGLASS: I think you implied it and I have heard that this might be kind of a plum. In other words, it is possible through this committee for certain districts to do better than others. To get a better slice of the pie. Is that true?

SEELEY: Definitely. If they are providing a service that is valuable to the area, then they could move way up the list.

DOUGLASS: But it pits one fair district against another.

SEELEY: Oh, yes. Absolutely. That is the reason why the fairs didn't support others. However, they didn't object too much in my case because I had been on the fair classification committee and I treated all fairs fairly.

DOUGLASS: You were actually on that joint committee only for the last year.

SEELEY: Yes. But that is when I introduced the bill, too, for my district.

DOUGLASS: The joint committee sponsored a bill that excluded gifts made to fairs as a factor in considering their need for financial assistance. It is A.B. 2733.¹ It had something to do with gifts.

All right. I think we have covered your time in the legislature unless you have some general comments you would like to make about that four-year period.

SEELEY: I don't think so. I think you have covered it pretty well.

DOUGLASS: Did you enjoy the experience?

SEELEY: I enjoyed it. It was very worthwhile. I learned a lot, but I wouldn't want to do it again unless there was a change and be less partisan. I believe in the partisan system. I don't believe there should be one party, either. If you are going to be a partisan system, it takes two parties to be a partisan system. For one party to try to control everything, I just don't think that is right, be it Republican or

¹A.B. 2733, 1973-1974, Reg. Sess., Cal. Stat., ch. 367 (1974).

Democrat. But I have had an opportunity to see how the Republicans would do. I mentioned that Bob Monagan appointed quite a few Democrats to important committees, and it back-fired on him. The Democrats don't give you that opportunity.

DOUGLASS: Was it painful to walk away from the assembly?

SEELEY: No. Not at all. I had a world of friends up there, and I went back after the election. When they were making up for the next year, I went back and walked around and talked to my friends. I can go this day to either house and go out on the floor and visit with the faithful or sit there and take in what is being done. I am always well received.

DOUGLASS: That reminds me. I picked up, through some newspaper articles, that you carried a bill--in fact, Victor Veysey had carried it originally--taking care of the pension problem for [Assemblyman J.] Ward Casey. He had been in the assembly for four years. Apparently, he had collected his money out of the fund and then it turned out later that four years would qualify him. I gather this was a bill to allow him to opt in again.

- SEELEY: He could deposit the money back in. That's true. There was one other member of the legislature, a man from San Francisco [Arthur Connolly, Jr.]. He congratulated me for carrying it. He didn't have any intention of redepositing his money.
- DOUGLASS: Let me ask you a question for the record as to how you feel about the incumbency situation in general but specifically about the legislature.
- SEELEY: I don't think it is justified. I think people spend more time up there than they need to. Incumbents can win the election if they try. Naturally, they have access to lots more campaign funds. They are selling their vote for different things. Lots of times it isn't right. Instead of basing their opinion and voting what they think is correct, they vote for who has given them money. I consider that a conflict of interest. I never would have done that. I do know people that did. Lots of them. They weren't just Democrats. They were Republicans too.
- DOUGLASS: What kind of cap would you put on the terms of assembly members?

SEELEY: I think three terms is probably sufficient. I didn't serve three terms; I only served two. If I had served three, I would have been perfectly willing to step down at that time. Or maybe to run for the senate. It doesn't keep you from running for something else. Of course, I would have had a rough time running for the senate because it would have included a lot more territory. I don't think that would have had any effect. If an opening had been there, I would have had as good a chance as anybody else.

However, we have a very good senator at the present time. But he is thinking very seriously about stepping down after this next time. That is [Senator Robert B.] Bob Presley.

DOUGLASS: So you are in favor of the proposition that is going to be on the November ballot.

SEELEY: Yes. I am very much in favor of it.

DOUGLASS: What do you think that will accomplish?

SEELEY: It will make people realize when they go in that they have a certain length of time that they can be there. They can devote that time more to the business of the state rather than campaigning for their own business. If they do their job well, they will be reelected. The costs of

campaigns have gotten so high that it doesn't make sense to spend a million dollars to be elected to one of those offices.

DOUGLASS: After you lost that election in '74, did you go back to ranching full time?

SEELEY: I went into horseracing.

DOUGLASS: More than you had been.

SEELEY: I had not been in it at all since I had been in the legislature. I went back to actually training the horses myself. This might be an interesting story to you. While I was still a supervisor, my wife trained horses. She had a license in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. I didn't have the time to devote to it. So she would be the trainer. I would help her occasionally and give her some advice. Then when I went to the assembly, I said, "Let's sell off the horses. I don't have the time to help you. I don't think I would want you out by yourself all this time." That is what we did.

I think at about the end of the my first time, the PALS [Protective Association of Lonesome Souls] Club invited her to be a speaker at one of their meetings, and she spoke on horseracing. One of the members of that group,

a senator's wife, came up and said, "Emma Jean, do you know this much about racing or did your husband tell you what to say?"

When I came home that night, she had fire in her eyes. She told me just what had happened and said, "I never did ask you to help me in any way. You sure didn't tell me what to say at this meeting. So I want to go back to training horses. I would like to bring some of our horses up and race on the fair circuit." We were in northern California. I said, "Emma Jean, don't you realize that we sold off all our horses. All we have are some young horses. They haven't even started. They are all maidens. You couldn't even get a stall for them." She said, "You are in the state assembly. If you can't get us stalls on the fair circuit, you don't have much strength."
[Laughter]

I tried it and I got stalls for her for about ten head of horses. They were all young horses. They hadn't even started. By the end of the first year, she had won with all of them.

DOUGLASS: She must have been very good.

SEELEY: She knew the business real well. She was a real good businesswoman. Once in a while she would ask me something. But most of the time she was on her own.

DOUGLASS: This is where she was devoting her energies while you were a sitting legislator.

SEELEY: Yes. We enjoyed it. It gave her something to do. It was there close enough that I could go see her regularly.

DOUGLASS: You said, not on the record, that you bought a townhouse in Sacramento.

SEELEY: Yes. I lived there all the time we were in session. The first two years, she spent most of her time there with me. After that she was out on the racing circuit, unless she was racing on Cal Expo [California Exposition], which was in Sacramento. Or even down in Stockton. She stabled in Cal Expo. When she would get a horse in, she would haul it down to Stockton. So that way she could stay at home during those times.

DOUGLASS: Your district was particularly remote in terms of getting back and forth from Sacramento.

SEELEY: That is why I had to fly.

DOUGLASS: Did you fly your own plane to Sacramento?

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: At least you could get out of there and home to Blythe when you wanted to.

SEELEY: I could be to Ontario quicker after a meeting than the ones on commercial flights. They would have to go out to the airport [Sacramento Metropolitan Airport], and I would just drive my car up to Executive [Sacramento Executive Airport] and pull my plane out of the hangar, put my car in, and get in and take off. Pete Schabarum used to ride with me every once in a while, and I would let him off in Ontario. It was a little bit out of my way to go to Ontario, but Pete was a good friend.

DOUGLASS: You would go to Ontario and then Ontario to Blythe?

SEELEY: I would leave there and go to Blythe. If I didn't have to stop in Ontario, I would go over Big Bear [Lake] or Lake Arrowhead and straight on to Blythe.

DOUGLASS: You renewed your interest in horseracing when you went out of the assembly. Were you running cattle on your ranch?

SEELEY: No. I didn't have any cattle then. I had disposed of all the cattle.

DOUGLASS: So horseracing was your focal point.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Were you involved in any political activities during this period, locally or statewide?

SEELEY: I was involved in [Patricia] Corky Larsen's campaign for the board of supervisors. She was running for the same office that I did. The fellow who was running against her was the fellow who had defeated me. Suitt.

DOUGLASS: He didn't last long in the state assembly then.

SEELEY: He stayed there two terms. [Congressman] Al McCandless, who is now our congressman, ran against him the next term. I told Al what he would do, and Al didn't pay any attention. He had let it go. He got defeated pretty bad.

[David G.] Kelley ran the next time. I told Kelley, "If you will listen to me, you can beat him. I know what he is going to do." Sure enough, he went back to that same thing, of comparing his record with somebody else's record. He didn't mind lying about it. He would say whatever he wanted to. A lot of people, when they read it in the paper, they think it is true. It doesn't have to be true by any means. But Kelley beat him pretty soundly. Kelley had reserved his space in the paper and

had great big bold headlines, "Suitt Lies Again." [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: So he had a strategy and it paid off.

SEELEY: Yes. It paid off. It was because Kelley would listen to me.

DOUGLASS: Then Suitt decided to run for the board of supervisors in your district.

SEELEY: Yes. He ran a tough campaign. It is not a partisan office. That area was strong Democrat at that time. He was really playing it to the hilt. But Corky won. She is a good supervisor. She has just won her third term, which I think that will be her last one.

DOUGLASS: She is still in office.

SEELEY: She is still in office. She was just reelected at the primary. She is going to serve another four years. She is studying law, and she is getting ready for that.

DOUGLASS: She sounds like a high-energy person.

SEELEY: She is definitely a high-energy person.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

DOUGLASS: I would like now to move on to your appointment to the California Horse Racing Board, which was made in '82. How did you happen to be appointed?

SEELEY: While I was in the assembly, the legislators that were serving with me knew that I was knowledgeable about racing. They had recommended to Jerry Brown that I be appointed.

When I had left and Ronald Reagan was still in office, he asked me if there was anything I wanted to be appointed to, and I said, "The only thing I would be interested in is the Horse Racing Board. It is a nonsalaried position, but you have three good men on the board. There are only three men on the board. I won't ask you for anything. I will just go back and take care of my own business."

Jerry Brown had appointed a labor man. Richard Gruix was his name. He was a real strong labor man. His ideas were always influenced by the labor unions. Jerry wanted him appointed very badly because the union was going to give him a lot of money for his run for the U.S. Senate seat. That was part of the

deal. The senate would not confirm this man. He was serving on the board, but he had never been confirmed as yet. He could only go as far as the end of that year.

He asked the senate what he could do. There was another opening. "What can I do to get this man confirmed? I have to do that." They said, "If you will appoint a man that we recommend, then we will confirm your man." I was that man. So Jerry Brown called me. He said he remembered my name, but didn't remember me too well. I said, "No. You didn't come around too much. You were involved with your office. You didn't come to the assembly chamber; in fact, very, very seldom. So I didn't have a chance to get acquainted with you."

DOUGLASS: This is when he was secretary of state.

SEELEY: That is when he was secretary of state. Yes. He said, "It appears you have some pretty good friends in the industry." And I said, "Yes. And I have some pretty good friends in the senate, too." I knew he was stuck. I knew the whole thing. He said, "I have never asked you to endorse me." I said, "It is just as well you

didn't because I wouldn't have done that. As a matter of fact, I have already endorsed Pete Wilson for the seat you are running for. I have contributed \$1,000 to his campaign."

DOUGLASS: We are now up to '82. He was going out of office.

SEELEY: Going out as governor, but, you remember, he was running for the U.S. Senate. He said, "I am not going to ask you to endorse me." I said, "That's OK." He said, "But I am going to appoint you." I said, "That's at your free will. I didn't ask you to. But I know what the situation is already. You don't need explain it to me." He said, "I am going to appoint you today, and you will be getting a call tomorrow about your confirmation."

Sure enough, I got a call the next day from the secretary of the Rules Committee of the senate, asking me when I could come up there. I said, "Well, whenever you want me to." In a couple of days, they had me up there to confirm my appointment. One man in the senate didn't vote for me until such time as this other fellow came on.

DOUGLASS: The basis for this, it sounds as though, is the fact that there was a law passed that [Assemblyman Frank] Vicencia carried which expanded the board in 1980. It increased it to seven members.

SEELEY: Prior to that, though, it had been increased to five.

DOUGLASS: Wasn't it only three at one time?

SEELEY: Three when I was in the legislature.

DOUGLASS: When you had the offer by Reagan, there were just three spots. Then it became five when?

SEELEY: Not too long after that it went to five.

DOUGLASS: Then it went to seven in '80.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: The seven would have two additional members appointed by the governor. That would be up to four appointed by the governor?

SEELEY: All of them. All of Reagan's appointments had run out before that.

DOUGLASS: All seven members were gubernatorial appointments by the time you went on.

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: What kind of compensation went with being on the Horse Racing Board?

SEELEY: They just had a \$100 per diem.

DOUGLASS: For the meeting?

SEELEY: Per day.

DOUGLASS: Just per diem?

SEELEY: They paid our expenses up to a certain extent. Actually, the per diem should have never been figured as a salary because even that didn't make up for what your expenses were for your travel expenses.

DOUGLASS: You were paid \$100 per day for every day of the meetings you went to and you had some expenses covered. What kind of commitment of time did this mean?

SEELEY: In my case, it was a labor of love right from the outset. I spent much, much more time than what I got paid for. I got paid for the meetings I attended. But I was at the racetrack many times going over things that were important to the Racing Board.

DOUGLASS: Could you give a fairly succinct definition of what the responsibilities of the Racing Board are?

SEELEY: The biggest responsibility is allocating dates to the racetracks. That is more or less routine. If the legislature provides for them to have fifteen weeks of racing, they just

figure out the time space and give each of the tracks their fifteen weeks allocated by the legislature.

DOUGLASS: That is passed by law. Is there so much time given to harness racing?

SEELEY: That's right.

DOUGLASS: Is that set by the legislature or by the Racing Board?

SEELEY: That is set by the board. Harness racing is generally night racing because all of the days have been allocated to thoroughbred racing. Quarter horse racing is also night racing. They had to divide the time between the quarter horses and the harness horses. That is where I got into some trouble because harness racing wanted to have twenty-five weeks because the board had allocated twenty-five weeks to harness racing in southern California. Which was a mistake. It never should have been done. It is too much time. But they had also allocated twenty-five weeks to quarter horse racing. That is too much time for them. It should have been a lesser amount of time.

DOUGLASS: Why is it too much time?

SEELEY: In the first place, by the time you take out for the fairs, you don't have that much time to get twenty-five weeks in for this breed. There has to be an overlap. They tried an overlap, but it didn't work out.

DOUGLASS: They have to overlap, which makes for contention.

SEELEY: The quarter horses drew a little better in attendance. The handle was quite a bit better. So anybody putting on a meet would rather have quarter horse racing.

DOUGLASS: When you say the "handle," what do you mean?

SEELEY: Pari-mutuel handle. The betting on the races.

DOUGLASS: Would you control regulations for jockeys? Can you name some other things that the board has supervision over?

SEELEY: The board has the final say on anything. They appoint the stewards who work the racetracks. Naturally, they appoint their staffs that license the various categories involved in racing. Like the owners, trainers, grooms. Almost anybody who has anything to do with racing, they have to carry a license. The Racing Board furnishes the personnel for that. However, this goes back to the same thing about

terms being limited. We had an executive secretary who had been there a long, long time.

DOUGLASS: Was this Leonard Foote?

SEELEY: Leonard Foote. He more or less owned the Racing Board. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: He was full time, and the board was part time. The board didn't have too much to say. None of the others worked at it like I did, that come and make investigations and really work to find out what was going on. They would just go to the meetings. None of the rest of them were racehorse people. There was one lady who was put on the board after I was that had a son who was a trainer. She had owned some horses at one time. Rosemary Ferraro.

DOUGLASS: From Downey.

SEELEY: She is the one.

DOUGLASS: Would you receive and handle complaints? Say someone felt that something was handled wrongly at a certain event or within the horse racing industry, would complaints come to your board?

SEELEY: We would definitely get complaints. But the board would not handle them. We had a referee.

DOUGLASS: An outside referee?

- SEELEY: He was on the staff. He would hear these complaints. Once in a while, somebody would request somebody from the board. I have personally sat in judgment of four or five cases where they requested that somebody from the board sit on them. I didn't mind doing it. It was part of my work.
- DOUGLASS: Explain what horse racing associations are? They seemed to be an integral part of this system. What is a horse racing association?
- SEELEY: Are you referring to the tracks themselves?
- DOUGLASS: I am not really sure. I keep reading, in the law and other places, references to horse racing associations. What are they?
- SEELEY: I think what you are referring to is the tracks. Santa Anita, for instance.
- DOUGLASS: That would be an association.
- SEELEY: That would be an association. Hollywood Park is an association. At Santa Anita, they also run the Oak Tree Racing Association. They have a short meet. Del Mar has a short meet down at Del Mar. Seven weeks.
- DOUGLASS: An association, part of the definition is that it is at part of particular physical site? Santa Anita has its own association.

SEELEY: They have their own grounds.

DOUGLASS: But another association that doesn't have its own grounds could come in and use the Santa Anita Racetrack?

SEELEY: If they can work a deal with them. Which is what Oak Tree Racing Association has done.

DOUGLASS: It doesn't have its own site.

SEELEY: They don't have their own park.

DOUGLASS: This sounds like it could get pretty complicated.

SEELEY: It was very complicated. But when they are granted fifteen weeks of racing, you have to try to work it out to where it all fits in.

DOUGLASS: You become kind of an arbiter?

SEELEY: Yes. But they don't argue too much. Santa Anita gets fifteen weeks. Hollywood Park gets fifteen weeks. Del Mar only gets seven weeks. Oak Tree gets seven weeks. That takes up all of the time. Then there is time out for the Pomona Fair. It fits in between Del Mar and Oak Tree. There is no more time. It is all used up. All other racing has to come with the night program. Los Alamitos was the only place that had any night racing for a period of time. Then

Hollywood Park has lights, so they can have night racing. Pomona can have night racing.

DOUGLASS: I gather one of the qualifications might be knowledge and experience in horseracing. But is the other side of it that you could be in a position of conflict of interest because you owned racehorses?

SEELEY: I was racing horses, and I owned racehorses. I still own some racehorses. I haven't been involved in thoroughbred racing for a long period of time. I used to when I was working at it.

DOUGLASS: But at the time you went on the board, you were not. Is that what you are saying?

SEELEY: When I went on the board, I was not racing. I wasn't training. I did race some quarter horses, but I had a public trainer that took care of them. I have not been involved with thoroughbred racing at all.

DOUGLASS: I was curious because this woman from Downey, Rosemary Ferraro, had some experience.

SEELEY: She did, by being an owner and having a son who is a trainer.

DOUGLASS: That doesn't put her in conflict as a member of the board unless a specific case comes before the board that involved her?

SEELEY: She disposed of her horses when she went on the board. She was told by one of the members that is what George Deukmejian wanted. He wanted people that weren't actually involved in racing. He didn't ever tell me that. He didn't tell her that either. It was a member who told her that.

DOUGLASS: These are four-year terms.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So you came up for reappointment under Deukmejian.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: You came up for reappointment in '86. You went on in '82.

SEELEY: I went on in '82 and was reappointed in '86.

DOUGLASS: You mentioned to me that you had gotten to know George Deukmejian while you were in the legislature. He was then a state senator. Why don't you comment on how you got to know him in the legislature.

SEELEY: He was a senator. I carried bills that went to the senate. I got acquainted with him through

association that way and through some of the social things.

DOUGLASS: You mentioned the Derby Club.

SEELEY: The Derby Club was one of them. He belonged to several of them. We had another one, the Top of the Cosmo, where we went to lunch every Thursday.

DOUGLASS: It sounds as though you liked to go to mixers.

SEELEY: I liked to go to mixers because I had an opportunity to get acquainted better. It wasn't just for the lunch. It certainly wasn't for the drinks because I didn't drink anything. They had plenty of drinks. You could participate all you wanted.

DOUGLASS: I know you said you were not a drinker at this time. I believe you also commented that you thought the socializing and drinking became a general problem in the legislature for some people. You could see evidence of that.

SEELEY: We would have lunches almost every day of the week where they served liquor. Some of our important members would reach the point of incapacity during the lunch hour and didn't even return to the floor in the afternoon. I thought that ridiculous. I thought they were elected to

do a job. They should have been there. At that time, I was not a teetotaler. I saw all of these things happening, so I just decided that I wouldn't drink anymore at all. I haven't had a drink since.

DOUGLASS: To get back to your reappointment by Deukmejian, you and he knew each other at that point. Was this a pro forma reappointment?

SEELEY: There was an effort to try to keep me from being reappointed. This was a guy who was out to see what strength he could make. He wrote a letter to the governor and tried to keep me from being reappointed.

DOUGLASS: Was this somebody in the legislature?

SEELEY: No. I don't know what his capacity is, but he goes to all the racehorse board meetings. He calls himself a representative of the people, defending the public.

DOUGLASS: He is a Horse Racing Board gadfly. He is a person who goes to the meetings and follows them?

SEELEY: He enjoys them, I guess.

DOUGLASS: Was this any kind of a serious problem on the reappointment?

SEELEY: No. George called me. He said, "I have word that you are favoring Hollywood Park all the time." I said, "George, if you are referring to when the board made the decision whether Hollywood Park could buy Los Alamitos, I cast the deciding vote. If I am guilty on that, I am guilty as hell." He said, "No. This is something just recently." I said, "There hasn't been a thing come up recently that has to do with anybody making any decisions for Hollywood Park, other than their dates and that has been taken care of. I don't know how anybody could say that. But do you want to listen to those bastards' lies or do you want to hear the truth from me?" He said, "I see you haven't changed any." [Laughter] Anyway, he said, "Good luck," and I was reappointed.

DOUGLASS: And you were glad to continue doing that.

SEELEY: Yes. At that time I was. At the end of my next term I wrote to him that I didn't want to be reappointed.

DOUGLASS: That just happened. You have just gone off.

SEELEY: In December. I went off in January. I served until he appointed somebody else. I told him I would.

DOUGLASS: Who replaced you?

SEELEY: A fellow named [] Jack La Follette. He has a wife who serves in the assembly. He is an attorney and a very good man. I thought it was a good appointment myself. I don't know who recommended him or how he happened to get involved, but I think he is a good man.

DOUGLASS: You were chairman of the board in 1985.

SEELEY: I was elected chairman in '83 and went to '85.

DOUGLASS: Is it a two-year term?

SEELEY: No. It is at the pleasure of the board. Recently, it has been an election each year. But when I was there, there wasn't any election until they wanted to replace you.

DOUGLASS: Does the chairman have to do a lot more work?

SEELEY: There is a lot more to being a chairman, yes.

DOUGLASS: You work closely with the staff probably then.

SEELEY: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Was Leonard Foote still staff then?

SEELEY: Leonard Foote, all the time I was there, he was there. He went off by about the time I went off.

DOUGLASS: So that heightened your activity in the board. You had to do a lot more traveling.

SEELEY: Yes. You have to do a lot more studying. Every item that comes up, you have to be very knowledgeable about it.

DOUGLASS: I guess there was some kind of a difference of opinion between you and Mr. [Benjamin] Felton at this time.

SEELEY: You must have read that. [Laughter] Yes. There was. Felton was already on. He was appointed by Jerry Brown the night before Deukmejian was sworn into office. It was at a social thing. It wasn't anything that had accumulated in the past. Felton told me that himself.

DOUGLASS: He was from Sherman Oaks. What did he do for a living?

SEELEY: He is an attorney. But he told me himself that he and Jerry Brown were talking. He served on the Little Hoover Commission [Commission on State Government Organization and Economy] at the time. He told Jerry that he would much rather serve on the Racing Board. He said, "If you will give me a resignation from the Little Hoover Commission, I will appoint you to the Racing Board."

DOUGLASS: Why did he want to be on the Racing Board?

SEELEY: I can't tell you. Maybe he thought there would be a little more glory in it. I don't know.

Anyway, he told me himself that is the way that happened. I didn't think it was fair. I didn't think it was just. Deukmejian had already been elected, and he was being sworn in the next morning. If it had been me, I would never have told that. I just would have let it go by. I didn't see where it enhanced his position at all. He didn't know that much about racing. I think he had some racehorses in his wife's name. He just wanted to get involved.

DOUGLASS: This led to your being replaced just before the end of your term as chairman by Felton.

SEELEY: There was no term involved. Paul Deats is the one that caused that.

DOUGLASS: He was from Santa Ynez.

SEELEY: He wasn't at that time. He was from Long Beach. He moved to Santa Ynez later. He had worked on Deukmejian's campaign from the time he first ran for the assembly years ago. He knew him quite well. I thought it would be a good appointment because Paul knew a little bit about horses, not horseracing. At least he knew about horses. He turned out to be quite a flop because right away he wanted to be the chairman. He told the other board members this. "It is always the case when

a new governor makes his first appointment that man becomes the chairman." That is not true at all. He just made that up.

He saw that wasn't gathering any weight, so he convinced some members of the board, Gruix and I were on the outs an awful lot, and, of course, he had his vote. He had Felton's vote. I never dreamed that he was going to support Felton. Felton was smart enough. He said, "I will go along with you. Make me chairman first, I have been there a period of time. Then we will make you chairman." That is the way it worked out.

DOUGLASS: This was in April of '85. You were no longer chairman, and Felton was chairman. Was Deats chairman when you went off the board?

SEELEY: No. His term had been up. He became chairman after Felton. They served two years.

DOUGLASS: This is sort of bad blood over this?

SEELEY: Felton and Deats were both down on me. They resented the fact that I had pretty good support from the racing people and from the legislature. Nevertheless, before it was all over, they both came to me and admitted that I had done a good job.

DOUGLASS: In fact, I think it was at that time you nominated [Leslie M.] Liscom. I suppose there is a month every year when the board reorganizes.

SEELEY: When we reorganized, we were electing a chairman every year.

DOUGLASS: So when he came up for reelection, you nominated Liscom, but Felton was reelected.

SEELEY: He was elected. But there were only five members. We were lacking two. There was a vacancy, and one of the later appointments wasn't there.

DOUGLASS: How did you and Felton get along, aside from this problem? Did you tend to agree?

SEELEY: We agreed on some things. If I didn't agree with him, I said so. He knew I was outspoken. That I would say what I think. I felt I had a right to. People got a little upset with me.

DOUGLASS: You were more outspoken than the rest of them perhaps?

SEELEY: I was much more outspoken than anybody else on the board.

DOUGLASS: You were the more experienced senior person.

SEELEY: I knew much more about the business than any of them did, and they didn't like that.

DOUGLASS: During the time you served on the board are there any particular issues you think are worth talking about here?

SEELEY: Yes. The Medications Committee.

DOUGLASS: That is one of the subcommittees of the board.

SEELEY: Yes. But I served on that. I never did think it was justified for some of the things that are being done.

DOUGLASS: The medicating of horses.

SEELEY: The medicating of horses.

DOUGLASS: Could you give some examples, Mr. Seeley?

SEELEY: If you ever go to the races, you will find that in some cases every horse in the race is on lasix. Lasix is the diarrhetic given as an anti-bleeder. It helps. There is no question about it. But, it has been proven that these veterinarians can mix a mixture with that that has some stuff in there that will hop a horse. As long as it is a mixture, there is not enough of any one thing to pinpoint. They can't make it hold up in court.

DOUGLASS: With chemical analysis it is not possible to detect?

SEELEY: There is not enough of it.

DOUGLASS: As a nonhorseracing person, is having something that prevents bleeding an important thing to have in a horse that is racing?

SEELEY: That is very true. I have always supported that. If they would leave it to just lasix, I would have no objection whatsoever.

DOUGLASS: Why is that?

SEELEY: Pulmonary exhaustion. The blood pumping through the lungs. A horse that is running real hard has a tendency to rupture something in there and bleed. Sometimes it is just internally, but a lot of the times the blood just gushes out of their nose and mouth. I have seen horses die from it right on the racetrack.

DOUGLASS: This is standard to give a horse that medication?

SEELEY: Where it is allowed. Our board allowed it. You can give it on race day. That is the only medication you can give on race day. When you start letting the vets mix in stuff with it that are stimulants, I lose interest. I'd just as soon see it eliminated.

DOUGLASS: You either have to go to one extreme or the other. To not give lasix is your option, if you can't detect other things in it?

SEELEY: Senator Maddy is carrying a bill right now that any medication given on race day be given by the state vet. But our board was allowing the vets to make the decisions. I said, "That is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse. They are going to do whatever they want to do." That is wrong.

DOUGLASS: The vets would make what decision?

SEELEY: The decisions of the board to allow them to go ahead and do these things. They would come in and make recommendations. They hired a medical director out of the University of California, Davis that is a veterinarianian himself, and he didn't accomplish a darned thing. He would just side with the vets on everything that came up.

DOUGLASS: But you think if the state should directly hire people--in other words, they work for the state of California and are qualified to give the shots--that would solve the problem.

SEELEY: That is better than what we have now. I recommend that they hire people as security people to watch these barns. Maybe not all of them at the same time, but places where there is some idea that there is something false going on. Go there and watch them and see.

Anybody who has been involved in law enforcement and horse racing as much as I have knows what is going on. They said, "Why don't you apply for the job?" I said, "I'll guarantee you that if I were a young man, I would. And I would accomplish what needs to be done."

DOUGLASS: If you had somebody watching the barns, they still couldn't tell if the vet who came in to give the lasix was mixing something else with it, could they?

SEELEY: They could take what he is giving and have it tested.

DOUGLASS: But you said that testing doesn't always detect it.

SEELEY: But that is after it has gone through the horse.

DOUGLASS: I see. A urine test.

SEELEY: A urine test or a blood test. If you take the original [you can test it].

DOUGLASS: It is complicated, isn't it?

SEELEY: It is very complicated.

DOUGLASS: Do you think this is one of the major problems to solve in horse racing now?

SEELEY: It is the major problem as of today.

DOUGLASS: Would that be from the viewpoint both of the safety and welfare of the horse and of the fairness of the betting public?

SEELEY: Definitely. It affects both. It affects the safety of the horse because some of these horses are injected with too much of a stimulant and some of them die on the racetrack. They cite that they died of a heart attack. It might have been a heart attack, but, nevertheless, it is the owner who pays the bill.

It used to be that the trainer paid all of the bills and would just bill the owner for the training. But now the vet bills the owner for everything. And they get a big fee. There is a group of trainers which more or less runs the HBPA, the Horseman's Benevolent and Protection Association. The owners don't pay too much attention to what goes on, but the state allows a lot of money out of the pari-mutuel portion to go to this organization, the HBPA. They are supposed to use that for the betterment of racing. Instead of that they are using it for attorneys' fees to fight not only the racing board but the stewards and racing associations. There are all kinds of things wrong.

DOUGLASS: Does the Racing Board have a great deal of control over the pari-mutuel end of this?

SEELEY: Yes. They are in charge of all of it. They are in charge of the stewards. They are in charge of the employees that are hired.

DOUGLASS: When you say stewards, stewards are the ones who work out with horses?

SEELEY: The stewards are the ones who watch the races and make the decisions to disqualify a horse.

DOUGLASS: And about who wins?

SEELEY: Yes. It amounts to that. Maybe a horse that wins has committed a foul along the line somewhere.

DOUGLASS: Sort of like referees.

SEELEY: Yes. About the same as referees.

DOUGLASS: The betting end is a whole separate operation. The pari-mutuel end.

SEELEY: The pari-mutuel wagering is betting on the race itself. The general public does that. But there are certain people that are ruled off that can't come to a racetrack. It is up the racing board to uphold that. If a racing association kicks somebody that is a known gambler or known bookmaker or something to that effect, illegally, he can file a complaint against the

association and that comes to the Racing Board. However, the referee handles it all the time. It is strange to me that if it is somebody that had enough money, they would get their way. But if it is some little guy, they would always rule against him.

DOUGLASS: I am interested in the betting end of it. If there are any charges of irregularities on that end of it, is that under the racing board?

Complaints come directly to the board?

SEELEY: Complaints come directly to the Racing Board.

DOUGLASS: And you have a staff to investigate it. How big a staff does the Racing Board have?

SEELEY: They must have over a hundred employees.

DOUGLASS: They are out at various race tracks. They are investigators, attorneys, referees.

SEELEY: We don't have attorneys. We only had one referee. The attorney is furnished by the attorney general's office. We have to pay him for his time. He doesn't do very much except attend the meetings.

DOUGLASS: Can you offer anymore about this? I am not knowledgeable to ask some of the questions.

SEELEY: It is unfortunate that most of the people involved don't know enough about it. It just

happens that I have a lot of experience and lend a lot of support to what was right. Right away when I was appointed to the board, I was also selected for the national association executive committee. I served on that too for a period of time until I got tired of traveling and was not making enough headway.

DOUGLASS: What years was that?

SEELEY: I went on right away in '82.

DOUGLASS: Was it '82 through '84?

SEELEY: I went through '86. I served there at least four years.

DOUGLASS: That must have been interesting because you learned.

SEELEY: Yes. I learned a lot. I also found out that in almost every state it is a political appointment. Some of these states have people who don't know anything at all about racing. It is unfortunate that it is that way.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel there was political pressure on the governor or the legislature about decisions that you, as a racing board member, were making? In other words, what were the politics of the situation?

SEELEY: I don't recall other than my reappointment that time, this fellow writing in and accusing me of favoring Hollywood Park, and I never favored Hollywood Park.

DOUGLASS: So you personally didn't feel any pressure?

SEELEY: No.

DOUGLASS: Do you have any suggestions now, in view of your experiences, as to how you might change the charge to the Racing Board? Is there more they should be given responsibility for or something they shouldn't be given responsibility for? The basic charter of the board.

SEELEY: Some have said that you should not appoint anybody that is connected in any way. You can't be appointed if you have any interest in a racing association, like Santa Anita or Hollywood Park. If you have any stock or anything. I think, and I would tell George the same thing, it would be better if he would pick out people that had some experience with racing. There are a lot of them. But it is pretty hard to find somebody that is truly honest all the time. Most everybody has a little bit of larceny in their soul.

DOUGLASS: Vested interested is there. So as to the number of members and composition, you might favor a little more knowledge on the part of board members as they come on?

SEELEY: Yes. I think it would be much better.

DOUGLASS: Do you think the basic role of the board is pretty well set up now?

SEELEY: It is unruly by having seven members. It makes it that much harder to find seven competent people.

DOUGLASS: Do you think the board adequately covers the problems that are out there? In other words, should you have more responsibility, should you have less responsibility, or do you think it is fine the way it is?

SEELEY: The board has taken the responsibility on themselves, which they can under the present setup.

DOUGLASS: They have a good deal of leeway under the charter to the board.

SEELEY: Absolutely. They could do it, but they prefer to leave it up to the staff to do this. Leonard Foote has resigned, and they still don't have a permanent executive secretary as yet. I talked to Rosemary Ferraro just this morning. Dennis

Hutchinson is the acting executive secretary.

He may eventually be appointed.

DOUGLASS: So it is coming up through the ranks.

SEELEY: He didn't start out with the racing board. He had been with the Department of Finance for a period of time. He knows state government well, He doesn't know anything about racing. He is learning, but it is not easy for him. He was brought up under Leonard Foote, and I never did feel that Leonard Foote should have stayed there for as long as he had. That is another case that somebody should only stay for a certain length of time.

DOUGLASS: So you think staffers in state government should have limited service?

SEELEY: I think it would be better if they were replaced now and then.

DOUGLASS: Did you see that in the committee staffing for the legislature as a problem?

SEELEY: Yes. You see, in the legislature if somebody wants to be the speaker of the assembly, he would give a fellow a bigger position. That gives him more staff. I never could figure the advantage of having a lot more staff except for having a lot more people working for you. I

know some of those girls that were hired were there for purposes that didn't pertain to state government at all.

DOUGLASS: What I meant was that is the tenure on committee staffs too long? Do you think it is the same kind of a problem? You said that Leonard Foote was in place too long. Would you enlarge that to include the staffs of the committees?

SEELEY: No. I wouldn't say that the time is what would be involved there. I would say the competence of the individual would be much more important than the time of service.

DOUGLASS: Do you feel you were able to keep an adequate staff as an assemblyman to serve your purposes?

SEELEY: I had two girls working in the district. One in El Centro. And one in Palm Springs. In my office in Sacramento I had two girls in my office plus a consultant. An AA [Administrative Assistant], we called him.

DOUGLASS: That is about standard, isn't it?

SEELEY: Yes. That was plenty for me.

DOUGLASS: All right. What have we not talked about that we should have?

SEELEY: I think you have covered things pretty well. I was surprised you came up with the number of

bills that I worked on or was part of. I think if you made a real research, you would find that I very, very seldom was coauthored on any bills.

DOUGLASS: I didn't check that with you because I find that coauthoring bills or signing on to bills not to be a productive exercise because it doesn't represent the central interest of the legislator.

SEELEY: I know that people who were coauthors that voted against the bill when it finally came out. So I just wouldn't go that route. If somebody asked me to be a coauthor, I said, "That is your business. You go ahead and handle it any way you want to." I didn't ask people to be coauthors on bills that I carried.

DOUGLASS: You were not just putting your name on bills.

SEELEY: No. That is just publicity to send back home. I hear all the time about guys being a coauthor. The only time I ever was a coauthor it got me in trouble.

DOUGLASS: Yes. It gets out of control, doesn't it.

SEELEY: Yes.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

DOUGLASS: What were your impressions of Willie Brown when you were in the assembly?

SEELEY: As I went into the legislature, Willie Brown was already there. It didn't take me long to learn that he was probably the most gifted man, both gift of gab and gift of brilliance, of anybody in the assembly. I had to work with him all the time. He was an attorney, and he had a wonderful approach to things. He could stand and make a speech. The only thing that ever bothered me was the noise around me where I couldn't always hear everything he had to say. He always referred to me as "a good listener, but I always didn't vote right." [Laughter]

But I enjoyed hearing him talk, and it is not that I agreed with him all the time, sometimes I did. But I didn't always agree with him. At one point, I was still breeding horses, and I asked him if he had any objection if I used his name to name one of my horses. He said, "Why would you want to name a horse after me?" I said, "If I could get a horse that can run as fast as you can talk, I have got a winner." [Laughter] Then he asked a few more

questions. He wanted to know if the horse was black. I said, "No. But his momma was." So I have always had a good relationship with Willie, even though I don't agree with his way of doing things.

DOUGLASS: He took this in good spirits.

SEELEY: Yes. He always did. I can talk to Willie yet today. I can go on the floor and make comments any time I want to about anything that I want to. Willie Brown will always give me that privilege. I worked against him for being the speaker because he is too liberal.

DOUGLASS: You preferred McCarthy.

SEELEY: I preferred McCarthy. Of course, I was criticized for preferring either one of them. I said, "Why not take the lesser of two evils."

DOUGLASS: Anything else about Brown?

SEELEY: No. I would say that Brown, to this day, is real sharp. You will never find him getting caught up in a deal like [Senator Joseph B.] Joe Montoya did. There is a lot of people up there who will get caught. But Willie is too smart for them; they will never trap him.

DOUGLASS: What about Jesse Unruh? What were your impressions of him?

SEELEY: Jesse Unruh wasn't serving. He went out the year I went in.

DOUGLASS: He went out of the legislature.

SEELEY: That is when he ran for governor. So I didn't have any experience with him. I kept hearing about Big Daddy. I went to a ball game one time that was Republicans pitted against the Democrats. A softball game. Jesse Unruh was the umpire. The Republicans just won that ball game going away, and Unruh was cussing the Democrats. He said, "By God, even with me being the umpire, you can't win." [Laughter] I knew him, but that is just about all.

DOUGLASS: Were there any other personalities at the time?

SEELEY: I recall Jack Fenton. Jack was an assemblyman from Montebello. That whole area that Joe Montoya went into later on. He was defeated by a Democrat in the primary later on. That upset him no end. Jack Fenton still hangs around Sacramento. I think he does a little bit of lobbying. He was in the assembly so long. They changed the system. Now they have to pay for their refreshments. Each member puts in some money. Jack Fenton will still go in there and

eat just like he owned it. At the time I was there that was all furnished by lobbyists.

DOUGLASS: He was the majority floor leader under Moretti. Was Fenton good at the raw politics of handling things on the floor?

SEELEY: Fenton, to my estimation, wasn't good at all. He would insist on other people abiding by the rules, and he would break them all the time himself. He was the one making a trip to Italy one time, and he came in and got on the roll at six o'clock in the morning and went on to the airport. Which is not right at all. Nobody is supposed to be on the roll that is not there when the assembly takes up.

Consequently, they were ghost voting him that day. And it was [Assemblyman] Wadie [P.] Deddeh, who is now a state senator from the San Diego area who was doing it. That was because he was his seatmate. I went over to Wadie and said, "Wadie, I have noticed you have been voting for Fenton all day. There hasn't been anything come up of any consequence, but there is one coming up that is going to be controversial. And if you vote for him, I am going to call it to the attention of the house.

I just want to tell you that." Wadie thanked me for it and said, "I certainly won't. As a matter of fact, I am going to go up and take his name off all of the votes today." He did, and Fenton missed his per diem.

DOUGLASS: It was in this period that in the state senate [Senator] Peter [H.] Behr attacked the voice vote that was used in the committees of the senate. This was when the committee chairman would simply decide that something was won or lost on his judgment.

SEELEY: They went to a roll-call vote after that.

DOUGLASS: You were attacking the voting-for-another-person issue at about the same time. I think it was '72.

SEELEY: Peter Behr was in the senate, and he didn't want to hear all of them calling at the same time. They changed that system without too much of an argument.

DOUGLASS: They are similar kinds of problems. For the record kinds of problems.

SEELEY: I knew Peter Behr pretty good, not real good. I thought he had the right idea about a lot of things.

DOUGLASS: That is still possible, isn't it, the ghost vote in the assembly?

SEELEY: The sergeant locks those machines now.

DOUGLASS: If the assemblyman isn't there?

SEELEY: But the key is right there. If somebody wants to violate it, they can open his desk and get the key and unlock the machine.

DOUGLASS: It is an overt act.

SEELEY: It is pretty rough now to get away with it if anybody wants to challenge it.

DOUGLASS: It was a commonly accepted courtesy at the time you were there that they would do this?

SEELEY: I didn't have any objection if the man was on the floor. But I didn't even like that roaming around the floor all the time. But it might be that he was working on something that had a call of the house and had a reason to be going around somewhere else and when a vote came up, he would raise his hand and wave to his seatmate to vote for him. I never objected to that, at least he was in there. But these guys who were wandering the house. . . .

When I brought it up to Bob Monagan the first time, I said, "This is terrible. We should remedy it." He said, "Would you be

willing to go to the speaker and talk to him about this?" Moretti was the speaker. I said, "I have no objections." He and I went to the speaker. Bob said, "Would you mind addressing that at a caucus of the whole?" That is both parties. I said, "No. It would not bother me." I knew he thought I would back down and wouldn't face it. Fenton was the first one who spoke up. He criticized me for even bringing it up. He said, "Very, very important that they are able to do that."

DOUGLASS: What was his reasoning for that?

SEELEY: To help get the vote out quicker. That was his only reason. The next one who stood up against me was John Burton. He is a very boisterous type of individual. He started criticizing me, and I said, "Just a minute, John, before you go too far. You are the one who caused me to bring this up. I have seen you roam all over the house, just voting anybody and everybody. You even vote some Republicans once in a while."

DOUGLASS: Sometimes it wasn't prearranged?

SEELEY: It wasn't just your seatmate. John Burton would roam around all over the whole floor, voting for whoever wasn't on the floor at the time.

DOUGLASS: So it wouldn't necessarily be at the specific request of that assembly person.

SEELEY: That person didn't even know about it. As a matter of fact, on one case, he voted a fellow that had died the day before.

DOUGLASS: Didn't some of these people get annoyed when they saw it in the record that they had voted for something?

SEELEY: A lot of them got in trouble about that. Most of them were afraid to speak up. They just didn't have the nerve to speak up on the subject.

DOUGLASS: It was a deeper problem than I had even thought. I thought you were particularly referring to it on request. Like Fenton asked somebody to do it. You are saying that people would roam around and flip the switches.

SEELEY: That was what John Burton would do.

DOUGLASS: How did John Burton take that comment?

SEELEY: He shut up right quick. But they agreed at that time to not do that anymore. But they went right back to it. Then it was brought up again by somebody else later on after I left there. There was a lot of press given at that time. I think it is better because the sergeants do lock

the machines if the fellow isn't there to answer the roll call. But, as I say, the key is hanging right inside the desk if somebody wants to. But they are sticking their neck out.

DOUGLASS: Times have changed.

SEELEY: Yes. In my first year, I could see that way too many bills were being introduced. I didn't think it was justified. It was more than the legislators could take care of. I know that a lot of them have staff that are professional and could read those bills and advise the member, but I didn't want to take my advice from anybody. I tried to read all of the bills.

I was out at Palm Desert and was asked to be speaker at a Rotary meeting. I answered some questions after I talked a little bit about the legislature. They wanted to know about the number of bills. "How do you feel about that?" I said, "I am very much opposed to the number of bills that are introduced. There are numerous ways that it could be corrected. I would like to see a charge made for each bill. Right now it is costing about \$600 per bill. If they would charge the member \$300 for each bill he introduces, it would limit it right quick."

DOUGLASS: It would be charged to his account.

SEELEY: It would be charged to him. He could put a check with it when he put it in. Most of these bills are introduced for somebody. They could pay that \$300. It would not be a question of it coming out of the pocket of the member. But it would make the individual that is asking for the bill to be introduced to think a little, too, if it is going to cost him \$300. My recommendation was that if they put up the \$300 and if the bill passes, it turns out to be something worthwhile, then he would get it back. If it doesn't pass, then he loses that.

There are lots of bills that are absolutely identical introduced in the same house. It is a lot of nonsense because it is more expensive all the time. They are not limiting them. There is an ungodly amount of bills that are introduced.

DOUGLASS: If you look at those final summaries, they are getting thicker and thicker and thicker.

SEELEY: That is right. No individual can study all of that and keep it all in his mind.

DOUGLASS: To whom did you propose this?

SEELEY: I just said that that would be a way of correcting it. But there was a reporter there

from the [Riverside] Press-Enterprise. They had an editor at the time that was very, very liberal and he really attacked me. He took a big article.

DOUGLASS: Why? You shouldn't put a fee on legislation?

SEELEY: If I wanted to flaunt my money around, it would be a laughingstock to the members of the assembly. It was quite an article. I wrote back. I said, "I have heard you criticize the legislature for spending so much money. And you criticize me for trying to do something. Yet, I haven't seen you come out and offer any alternative. It is easy to sit back and criticize something, but for you to offer something that would be better, you haven't done that." I really gave him hell.

I took the letter to him personally. He read it, and he said, "This is rather strong, isn't it?" I said, "I intended for it to be strong. I don't like your actions at all." He printed it almost verbatim.

DOUGLASS: That is a novel idea. I haven't heard of that.

SEELEY: It came up again later on that it might be a way of doing it. But it might be a good way of doing it. Because so many guys want to

introduce every bill that they could get. If somebody asks him to introduce a bill for them, they are just glad to do it. They don't care where it is going, whether it goes anywhere or not. Right away it puts them on the list back home of doing something. I never was up there working for the purpose of being reelected. Yet, I am sure had I wanted to and would have worked at it, I could still be there today.

One other thing, after I was defeated, I was making the rounds. I knew everybody in the assembly, plus all of the girls, the staff members and all. I could walk into any office I wanted to because I knew their secretaries.

As a matter of fact, Pauline Davis and some of the staff secretaries had a luncheon for me. There was about fifteen of us there. They were sympathizing with me. I said, "Don't sympathize with me. I will be all right. I made my living for a longtime before I came up here. And I certainly don't have to rely on what I made out of the state. So you don't have to sympathize with me. There is only one thing that I am disappointed about. You girls never will know whether I would or I wouldn't." [Laughter] One

SEELEY: of them--she was a real cute girl--said, "You can tell me."

I went up there for business and I know there was a lot of hanky-panky going on. I would never get involved in anything like that. I always said that if I was going to play with some secretary, it would be somebody else's. Certainly not my own. [Laughter] That wasn't of any interest to me.

One other thing, after my wife had gotten acquainted there, and she was pretty popular too. She was a good mixer and got acquainted with the Pals and Gals. One night when I came home, she said, "I learned a lot today. I learned that within two years everybody that comes up here, at least 50 percent of them are separated. I thought I would just tell you today how I feel about that. If you find somebody up here that you want more than you do me, you just let me know and we will split the blanket down the middle. I will take everything south of the Tehachapis [Mountains], and you can have everything to the north." [Laughter]

I have told that in a few speeches I have made, and they all laugh like the dickens

because all I had was that home we bought up there. I said, "What about the airplane?" She said, "You can have that. I can't fly it." I had quite an investment at home, and she was willing to take that. But, needless to say, we had no problems at all. She trusted me, and I certainly trusted her.

You asked if I enjoyed it. I did. I would not do it again. I wouldn't take anything for the experience I had. It is the same way for the Racing Board. I would never serve on the Racing Board again, but I wouldn't take anything for the experience that I had. And I don't need to be on the Racing Board to be allowed to go to the races. I get invitations to come to races all the time. But I have been to the races enough. I probably will go to some but not too often. I hope that you will be able to get something out of this that you can use that will be of value.

DOUGLASS: That is very good. Thank you.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

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