

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 396-019
Interviewee: John A. Lahr
Interviewer: Bob Brown
Date of Interview: April 27, 2005
Project: Bob Brown Oral History Collection

Bob Brown: Maybe I could ask you this, we talked before about—you had an association with General LeRoy Anderson, who was your father-in-law. He was a congressman from 1956 to 1960. So he ran for Congress in 1956 and he defeated an incumbent by the name of Orvin Fjare.

John Lahr: He had run in 1954, as I recall, against Fjare and was defeated. Fjare was a man from Big Timber who had written a short speech about the flag, the American flag. His campaign was based on giving that speech about the American flag. He won the '54 election and served in Congress. He ran again in '56. An issue then in eastern Montana—about the only issue—was whether or not Yellowtail Dam should be built down there on the Big Horn River near Hardin. LeRoy, being a Democrat, championed the construction of dams for hydroelectric and irrigation and flood control, so forth. Fjare did not.

BB: I wonder what Fjare's reason for being opposed to it was.

JL: I don't have any knowledge of why Fjare was opposed. I think I'll leave that alone. At any rate, that was the issue and it carried the day for LeRoy and he went on to serve two terms in Congress and did, I think, a very good job. He was on top of things and vastly interested in Montana and had served in the Montana Senate for a long time. He was really familiar with things. Of course, his military background served him in good stead there.

BB: He had attained the rank of—

JL: He was a Major General.

BB: In World War II?

JL: He was not a general in World War II. He became a general later on as he served in the reserve. He had been in Europe from the time of the Normandy landings and his most pressing time was in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a tanker and was one of the people responsible for bringing about the American victory there. He was in a really tight situation where the Americans won out.

BB: So that military record certainly must have helped him later on when he was in politics?

JL: Oh yes, it did.

BB: We're talking to John Lahr and John was a lobbyist for the Montana Railroad Association from 1961 to 1965 and then for the Montana Power Company from 1965 until when?

JL: Until 1995.

BB: So in the election of 1960, the aging U.S senator from Montana is Senator James Murray. LeRoy Anderson, your father-in-law at the time, challenged Murray even before Murray had stepped down.

JL: That's absolutely correct. LeRoy knew that Senator Murray was in an infirm condition and just decided to go for it. He met the immediate wrath of Lee Metcalf who, being a senior man—

BB: He was the congressman of the western district.

JL: That's correct.

BB: He had been in Congress longer than Anderson.

JL: That's correct. So he felt that it was his turn to go for the top job. The result was a fairly bitter election. Democrats had to divide up and it was a heartbreaker all around for us.

BB: Did you talk to Congressman Anderson when he was making up his mind to do that? Do you remember ever being involved in any discussions with him?

JL: Yes, his family, all of whom are dead now except his daughter, was against it. At Christmastime, before the Andersons departed by automobile to return to Washington from Conrad, where they had spent Christmas, they thoroughly agreed that the congressman would not run for the Senate. When he got back there his staff people, I think principally Mike Deevie (?), who was a former editor of the *Great Falls Tribune* and a cracker-jack journalist and politician, decided between Mike and LeRoy that they would run.

BB: Then Metcalf filed shortly afterwards. Murray didn't run. What position did Murray take then in that primary election?

JL: He endorsed Lee Metcalf.

BB: Maybe because he was resentful that Anderson had challenged him.

JL: Yes. There was deep antipathy with the Murray family after that incident.

BB: Now John, LeRoy Anderson re-entered politics a couple of years later as a member of the state Senate.

JL: That's right.

BB: I have a high school recollection when we took a field trip when I was in Kalispell. I remember we visited the state legislature and we sat briefly in the gallery of both the House and Senate. I remember this very imposing tall, rather handsome man with a shock of white hair stand up and speak impressively on the floor of the state Senate. Later we were told that it was former Congressman LeRoy Anderson. Then he went on, I believe, in 1968 to run for governor. It was a three way primary between LeRoy Anderson, Forrest Anderson who was the attorney general, and another one was a state senator from Sanders County named Gene Mahoney. Do you have any thoughts or recollections on that race?

JL: LeRoy Anderson, when he returned to Montana from having served in Congress and subsequently ran for the Montana Senate, became a very hard antagonistic opponent for any Republican in the Senate and for any Republican issue. His speeches were almost intemperate at time.

BB: They were very partisan?

JL: Yes they were extremely partisan. The race for governor, Mahoney was out on the fringe. The race was principally between LeRoy and Forrest. I can't even begin to tell you at this point what the vote spread was. LeRoy became very vindictive on the issues, clearly setting a fence or a divide between himself and Forrest Anderson on every issue. You'd have to check newspapers, but it was a hard fought race and it was a mean race.

BB: Then Anderson eventually prevailed.

JL: Forrest Anderson was the victor. [Anderson, 39,057; Mahoney, 35,562; LeRoy Anderson, 16,476]

BB: Then he went on to oppose the incumbent governor Tim Babcock and defeated him.

JL: That's correct.

BB: Do you remember the issue was the sales tax in that race? "Pay more, what for?"

JL: That's right. Now that you mention it, I had a hard time pulling that one up. That was the issue. Forrest's main campaign was, "No sales tax in good old Montana."

BB: Then there was that "Pay more, what for?" I think he had that too.

JL: That's right.

BB: Babcock had been associated with the sales tax. So that's how he went after him. Your background had been as a Democrat because General LeRoy Anderson was your father-in-law. How did you become interested in politics and how did you—

JL: As a child, my parents were interested in politics. My parents were people of the Depression. I was a child born and raised in the Depression. In our family, Franklin D. Roosevelt was virtually a god. He was someone for whose every fireside chat, the whole country shut down and finished dinner in the evening quickly so we could listen to the radio. As far as I knew, every person in America was gathered around the radio whenever Roosevelt talked. During elections as a child I found myself being very emotionally involved in the Roosevelt campaign.

I developed a deep-seated hatred for Tom Dewey. I liked Wendell Willkie because I was probably a third or fourth grader in Miles City at the elementary school, Lincoln School. Most of my class and our parents went down to the Northern Pacific Railroad station early in the morning before daylight. We waited for a long time for Wendell Willkie's campaign train to come through. Even though it was very early in the morning, just daybreak, when the train came through, he was good enough to be out on the platform and wave to the people as they went through Miles City.

BB: They didn't really stop?

JL: They didn't stop at all. So I always had a soft spot for Wendell Willkie, seeing him as a child. Certainly, I was pleased that FDR won and I was pleased that he won four times. In school, we happened to have a pep parade prior to a football game on the day that FDR died. We got the word as we were marching down Higgins Avenue in Missoula about the president's death. It was just an unbelievable thing to me. I was just crushed. My allegiance switched immediately to Harry Truman.

BB: As the heir to FDR?

JL: Yes. My dad and mom had a great influence on us as they would talk about politics. My brother and I, of course, absorbed it. I knew that we were better off and I didn't know the man. I didn't know anything about him. I had been brought up that Sam C. Ford was our guy. We had to have him as governor. So I was relieved when he was elected governor, and I think he was elected governor twice at different times.

BB: Yes in 1940 and in 1944. He was a Republican. How did that work?

JL: Well my dad, during the Depression, was a miner and an assayer. He had been active in Democratic Party politics, such as it was in Madison County. When the mines shut down, when FDR went off the gold standard, and the mines shut down, it was a terrible thing. Because of his activity in Democratic politics, when the FDR administration started the first relief programs, my dad was given a job by the Democrats. He was one of the people selected for a job.

His first job was he would go from small rural hotel to the next small rural town in those counties and he would carry with him a suitcase, which was filled with money. The farmers and

the people that were just down and out, before any other programs had started, would come and they'd say, "Well, I had two horses and one horse died. I've got to buy a horse to help pull the plough. So I need so much money to buy a horse." My dad would peel off the money from the suitcase and hand it to the guy. The guy would sign a check and the next guy would come in and he would need to buy some hogs. The next guy needed to buy a milk cow. The next guy needed to buy some seed from his neighbor. In each case, my dad would peel off the money out of the suitcase and it was cash.

BB: Then these guys would sign some kind of an I.O.U. that they'd pay it back if they could?

JL: I don't know if they had to pay it back. At least they signed that they had received it. I don't know.

BB: Gosh can you imagine anything, a program like that today?

JL: It worked. So anyway, that was the story my dad told me and it's always fascinated me. Then later on, as the state welfare program started, first it was CCC. [Civilian Conservation Corps.] When that program started, he had engineering training and so we moved to eastern Montana from Madison County. He and his other people would design stock water dams and irrigation systems. They would hire farmers and their teams to come out. Of course, it brought some income to the farmers and they would build stock water dams all over Garfield County and Custer County, Richland County.

Those dams, I'm sure, are still in use today impounding water during rainy times. As the federal government developed a federally financed welfare program administered by the various states, a welfare department was started in Montana. My dad moved into a position in Miles City as a supervisor for Custer County Welfare Department. I can remember him gathering maybe 100 or more men together to go out on special trains to shovel snow on blocked Northern Pacific tracks, providing funds for farmers in rural areas around Miles city.

All of the public welfare programs that were started, he was involved in those. So when Governor Ford was the governor—and Governor Ford was good for the Welfare Department—and helped it along. It was made clear to me that Governor Ford was our man. The same was true of Governor [John] Bonner. We were strong supporters of Governor Bonner in our family.

BB: So Ford defeated a governor by the name of Ayers. Then Ford was defeated by—

JL: Whiskey Lou Ayers.

BB: Is that right? That was his nickname? There's probably got to be a reason for that.

JL: I don't remember what it was.

BB: Anyway, Whiskey Ayers was defeated by Sam Ford. Then Ford was defeated after a couple of terms by John Bonner. Bonner was defeated by Hugo Aronson in 1952. Do you have any recollections of those campaigns?

JL: I remember the campaigns. I remember Beverly and I had moved to Billings by the time of the Bonner-Aronson campaign. That doesn't ring true to me that Bonner was the guy. It might have been. You would know.

BB: I think there was some—

JL: At any rate, I can remember my railroad friends and I were busy trading votes. They were reluctant to vote for a Democrat, but they said they would vote for my father-in-law for Congress if I would vote for Aronson for governor. In fact, Aronson ran against Arnold Olsen.

BB: In 1956?

JL: Yes.

BB: And I think he ran against Bonner in '52. I wonder why the railroaders were for Aronson?

JL: They were Republicans. So anyway, I was confident that I got a few votes for LeRoy and we followed that race with bated breath. It was an enormous relief to us when the votes were counted on Election Day. This was 1956. LeRoy had won. That was a great day.

BB: Then later on, I think you mentioned, about 1960 you went to work as a lobbyist in Helena for the Railroad Association. How did you happen to get into that job? Did you work for the Northern Pacific?

JL: I had worked for the Northern Pacific from the time I was in high school and all through college. I would have continued working for them if they had asked me to continue to work for them. The Korean War was on and I was called to the army as soon as I graduated from college. So then after I got out of the army, I went back to work for the Northern Pacific and worked in the general office in St. Paul. Then I worked in Minneapolis.

BB: So after you returned from the army in the early 1950s I take it, you worked for the railroad. John, do you have any recollections or impressions during that period of Governor Hugo Aronson?

JL: Not really, except that he was considered kind of a hayseed by the sophisticated Democrats. From what I had seen of him, I admired him a great deal. He and LeRoy Anderson had a great admiration for each other. Hugo, being from Cut Bank and whatever county that is, and LeRoy being from Conrad in Pondera County—Glacier County is where Hugo is from—and Hugo was the kind of a governor that was home virtually every weekend. On Friday afternoon, he would

drive to Cut Bank. The reason he had to do that is he had to cut the lawn once a week. He lived next door to the Lutheran Church, which he was a member of. He would cut his lawn and then he would cut the church lawn. Monday morning or Sunday night, he and his wife would drive back to Helena and serve as governor.

BB: So he was a very common man?

JL: Yes he was. He was a great guy.

BB: He was a big man physically? He spoke with a heavy Swedish accent.

JL: Yes. When he ran for governor against—a Democrat man, a rancher from up north of Shelby, up in the Sweet Grass Hills—Jack Toole, I can remember Jack Toole campaigning in Butte and Hugo Aronson campaigning in Butte. They both went underground separately, not on different occasions, and the miners looked askance at Jack Toole and his western cut clothes and bright, shiny cowboy boots going underground in the mine. The miners didn't care for Jack Toole at all. Plus, him being a rancher, they thought they had no connection with him. Hugo Aronson, on the other hand, his personal appearance, his big hands and his ruddy complexion and the lines in his face that showed him being out in the sun and working hard, he was an immediate hit underground when he went underground.

BB: He looked like a working man.

JL: He talked their language. He talked brokenly, which many of them did as well. He just was a very popular guy in Butte. I can't recall at this late date how he did in Silver Bow County, but he certainly made a good impression while he was here. He had been in the trucking business. He'd been in the farming business. He'd been in the oil field business. He had a real broad background.

BB: John, what are your recollections of Governor Don Nutter?

JL: I didn't know Nutter. He was elected and he was governor when I was working for the Railroad Association. I recall him as being a Richland County senator and particularly intelligent and knowledgeable about state affairs. Tim Babcock, who had been a House member and was a petroleum trucker in Billings and married to a woman whose name was Lee and her father had started a petroleum trucking company. Her husband became part of that and the company became Babcock and Lee. He was a very affable, friendly man and was nice to me, a brand new lobbyist reporting in, not knowing anyone. I didn't know even where the restroom was in the capitol. Tim Babcock was a real decent guy.

BB: That would have been when he was lieutenant governor in 1961.

JL: That's right.

BB: Now John, that was the period when there were some hospitality rooms. I think the Anaconda Company had one. I think the Railroad Association had one. I think maybe some later sessions the Green Stamps had one.

JL: There were four hospitality rooms that I recall. One of them was the oil lobby. They had the hospitality room, as I recall, at Jorgenson's. The Green Stamp people had a lobby. Green Stamps were a big thing in those days. They had a lobby, which was run at a later time by Jerome Anderson, who was the senior guy there. They hired him as their lobbyist. Women and men were welcome in both of those places. The Railroad Association had a hospitality room where both male and female legislators and spouses were welcome. Our room was at the Placer Hotel where many legislators stayed.

That was in 401. Two floors above that was the Anaconda room, which was in 601. Those were very large rooms. They had two small rooms attached so there was plenty of room. Now in the railroad lobby, men and women, were welcome there and the Anaconda Company room, to my knowledge, was male legislators only. So women spouses enjoyed coming to the railroad room because they were welcome there. Why that started out with the Anaconda Company that way, I don't know. I have no idea why. I was never invited to their room. As far as I know, no lobbyists other than Anaconda lobbyists were ever in their room. I never knew anyone who was not a legislator who was in their room.

BB: What did you do in the hospitality rooms? Did you serve meals?

JL: You served liquor and the railroad room served nothing but nuts. The oil people and the green stamp people served drinks and what you'd classify, I suppose, as elaborate hors d'oeuvres. The Anaconda Company room had prime rib available every night. I think they were open five nights a week, possibly six. I couldn't say for sure. They fed well there. It was at a time when I began lobbying, I think the legislative salary was ten dollars a day. So if you had the opportunity as a legislator to go up and have a prime rib and a few drinks and some good food, you can see why the Anaconda lobby room was a very popular place.

BB: Why didn't the Railroad Association serve something like ham or prime rib or roast beef or something like that?

JL: The Railroad Association had a different concept. They would frequently invite people for dinner and we were only one block or possibly two from the Montana Club, which was one of the finest eating places in Montana in those days. So people would come to the railroad room and have a couple of drinks, a couple of handfuls of good quality nuts and then we'd all walk down the street together and there were probably four of the railroad lobbyists there at the room at that time. When you went up to the Montana Club, there would be four different groups with each one of the lobbyists with a different group of legislators.

BB: The other lobbyist might have been John Willard?

JL: John Willard was there and Ty Robinson was our supervisor. John Willard was the full-time executive secretary of the railroad association. I was there. Ward Shanahan was there. Sometimes a young lawyer from the Billings firm would be there.

BB: You wouldn't necessarily discuss issues at the dinner table would you?

JL: Mostly you discussed the day's events at the legislature, amusing events or how things were working. Particularly if there were wives there, or let's say spouses, because there were a few women legislators by then, you really didn't talk much business. You might talk background about the company or the business. Of course, everybody in every town in Montana, except those in Garfield County, had a railroad running through their town. If they wanted to travel, they took the train. So the railroads and trains were very familiar items in Montanans' lives. So it was easy to talk about. Everyone had experiences of arriving on the Olympian or the North Coast Limited or the Empire Builder, the amusing stories about the agent in their town, that sort of thing. So it was very pleasant.

BB: What were the issues?

JL: The interesting thing about the railroad business, it's the only business I know of that is so avidly hated by its employees, particularly the operating employees—those people who run the trains. There was a senator from Rosebud County, a railroad town, Forsyth. Senator John Melcher was the principal guy for carrying the railroad union legislation. During the time that I worked for the Railroad Association, I found that most of my time was spent working against bills that Senator Melcher was sponsoring and we spent so much time on the House and Senate floors. In those days, the restrictions on lobbyists being on the floor lobbying were much less stringent than later. Lobbyists did spend a great deal of time actually on the floor literally going from chair to chair, one guy working the right side and one the left side and just going from row to row from chair to chair and saying, "On second reading today you got house bill so-and-so. You might recall that we talked about this a few days ago. We'd appreciate it if you could find in your heart to vote against it."

John Melcher would either be right ahead of me or right behind me reminding the members that this was his bill and he'd appreciate their voting for it. With the Democratic Senate and when I went there, there was a Republican House, but Melcher was generally successful. He wasn't always. We were able to stop some of his things. He was an extremely gentlemanly and fine person. One recollection that I have of the kind of a guy he was, despite the fact that we were lobbying intently against a bill of his, one morning I showed up at the capitol early in the morning and it registered on my consciousness right away that all of the railroad union lobbyists were up there.

Normally that would not be the case. John Melcher was there and he was busy working the floor as the members arrived. Then it hit me, "I'll bet there's something we've missed as far as a hearing." Sure enough, in those days, there was no public notice and you just found out when the hearing was going to be held. Through the good graces of the chairman or the chairman's secretary, they'd tell you if you asked them.

If you failed to ask them or forgot to ask them, there was a chance to miss a hearing. That was exactly what had happened. I went to Senator Melcher in all humility and I said, "Boy, I really screwed up. I didn't know about this hearing this morning and we don't have our guys here. We are totally unprepared for this. Is there any way you could help us out?" He said, "We'll cancel the hearing and hold it at a later time." That's the kind of a guy John was.

BB: He, of course, went on to be a senator in the U.S Senate.

JL: I always had high regard for him right up until he was defeated by Conrad Burns. I always had a real high regard for John Melcher. Another time we were working on a bill and we were visiting about it because here we were, you know, standing practically side by side on the Senate and House floor working a bill. I told him, "Boy Senator, I just think this bill is so bad. I don't think it's going to pass." So we ended up betting a dinner. Whoever lost had to buy dinner. So we won that bill. My wife came down from Conrad and the Senator bought my wife and me dinner. We had a very nice evening together at the Montana Club.

BB: He made good on the bet.

JL: Oh yes.

BB: Conrad, of course, is the county seat of Pondera County. You were the Democratic County chairman for a long time in Pondera County weren't you?

JL: Yes.

BB: I know then later on you became a lobbyist for the Montana Power Company.

JL: Yes.

BB: One of the big issues, and I remember this because I was just becoming a legislator at that time, was the so-called territorial integrity business. I would think in Pondera County that would have been a fairly hot issue.

JL: Oh yes. It was a hot issue. Let me go back just a bit. When I asked for a job with the Railroad Association, being the son-in-law of a congressman and being the county chairman and a Democrat served me well, because it was at that exact time when the companies began to look at the need for having a Democrat lobbyist. Previously, they had always been Republicans. All

of the people who were lobbyists for the oil industry and for Montana Power Company and for the railroads were all Republicans.

The Anaconda Company years before had split their lobby group into two virtually non-speaking factions. There were Republican lobbyists, Democrat lobbyists. It had served them well and was a good thing. So at the time I asked for a job out of the blue and John Willard, the railroad lobbyist, reported to his board that this guy wanted a job. He, of course, knew my in-laws very well. Apparently the companies had begun to think that they needed to spread themselves a little wider. Ty Robinson, as I recall, came to Great Falls and we met at the Rainbow Hotel.

They hired me. One of his first tenuous questions, and he was embarrassed to ask it, but he had to ask, was, "Are you the kind of a guy that ever took a drink?" Of course they were looking to someone who could work in their hospitality room and perhaps even knew how to mix a drink. In Montana, that's not very difficult. Bourbon and water or scotch and soda in those days about did it. The occasional martini would happen. I assured him that from the time I had been—I had been acquainted with alcohol and had served in the army and had done my share, and as a farmer. Farmers loved to have a rainy day and they can all jump in the pickup and head for town and sit at the vet's club in the bar and talk about farming.

I got over that hurdle. I had a lifelong interest in railroads, so I knew something about the industry, plus I had worked for them and had some background there. So it was a good match for the job. I worked hard. I kept farmers' hours. I usually was at the capitol no later than seven. As the first legislators began to arrive, frequently I would have breakfast or coffee with legislators. The railroad lobby, when I went to work for them, they encouraged me to make friends where I could with whom I could regardless of party.

It was time to branch out and have people on both sides of the aisle. That served me well with the railroad. I made a lot of friends with people on both sides of the aisle that were just wonderful people. The power company officials frequently were in the halls of the legislature early in the morning for a hearing. Of course, I had met them. I think they were impressed that this young man that was working for the railroads was out there in the morning before other lobbyists and I think that's one of the reasons they began to think of me as an employee for the power company.

There's one thing that occurs to me that I think I'll mention because it fascinated me at the time. It was the relationship of the men who were the Railroad Association board and who came up from time to time to lobby and came to committee hearings and so forth. Their board members, the chairman of their board—you might call him that because he was a full-time lobbyist for the association. It was Ty Robinson. Ty Robinson was a member of the premier law firm in Missoula, the Garlington, Lohn, and Robinson law firm. They represented the First National Bank. They represented the Milwaukee Railroad. They represented Montana Power Company. [Robinson was a member of Montana Power Company's board of directors.]

Going to Helena, you had Newell Gough, who was head of the premier law firm in Helena, Gough, Booth, Shanahan, and Johnson. It was Weir, Gough, and Booth then. They represented the Great Northern Railroad, the First National Bank, and the Montana Power Company. The Billings firm was the Jameson law firm. Jameson had been a railroad lobbyist. He became a United States Federal District Judge. Let's see, Arthur Lamey, who had run for governor, a Billings attorney. This was his law firm. Lamey represented the First National Bank, the Northern Pacific Railway, and the Montana Power Company. [Both Lamey and Gough were directors of the Montana Power Company.]

BB: That was the firm that Jameson started, that outfit?

JL: Yes.

BB: Was that Jim Haughey's law firm?

JL: Yes. Then the interesting thing was that each one of those men, who were all lawyers in the premier firm in their towns, and who represented First National Bank, they were directors of the First National Bank in their town, as well as their law firm representing them, they were also directors of the Montana Power Company.

BB: So what we've got is a sort of—

JL: So you have a little group of men who were directors of the Montana Power Company, of First National Bank Company, and who served as the law firms representing the railroads. In Butte, I should mention, Bob Corette was director of the Montana Power Company. The Corette law firm was the senior law firm in its town. They represented the Union Pacific Railroad and the Montana Power Company as attorneys as well. It was a loosely knit group of men who were the most dedicated Montanans I've ever met. They were real gentlemen. They loved to be with each other. They enjoyed each other immensely. I guess you'd have to say that there was some coordination of those businesses. The railroads knew what the bankers thought. The bankers knew what the utility company and the railroads were thinking about. It was kind of a healthy thing, I think.

BB: So to the extent they could help each other, they probably could and did.

JL: Yes. They loved to talk politics. All of these men were just infatuated with politics. They were supporters of Republican governors and Republican senators and so forth. One man, Jack Corette who was not—he had formerly been in the Corette law firm and then when he became president of the Montana Power Company, he was no longer in the law firm. In addition to his work as a lobbyist in years past and so forth, he was elected to be a director of the Northern Pacific. So there was another tie, which was all kind of interesting to me as a boy in from the country to see how things were. I thought that was a good system and still do. Of course, it's long since gone.

BB: So when you were up there in the capitol building early in the morning, you came to the attention of some of the Montana Power Company lobbyists. You already worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad for the Railroad Association. Then they spotted you as someone who might be able to add some breadth to their lobbying because you were a Democrat.

JL: They saw what I was doing. The Railroad Association on legislation was beginning to have some Democrats' vote. I don't know what took place, but I do know that I formed a friendship because we sat together watching the Senate and House deliberate and became good friends—Basil Andrikopoulos. He had been an oil lobbyist and had a long experience in the oil industry in Wyoming and eastern Montana. He had been hired by the Montana Power Company by Bob Corette and George O'Connor to lobby for the Montana Power Company. Basil was born-and-bred Republican. He had little use for Democrats. He didn't speak their language. When we became so close that we just enjoyed each other's company immensely—part of the reason that I was considered by the Montana Power Company was because of Basil's recommendation.

BB: You'd see him in the hallway?

JL: Yes and we sat together. In those days, there was no computer. There was a little list in the newspaper of bills that had been introduced the day before. As I said, there was no notice of committee meetings. You simply kept track of when they were meeting by pestering the chairman of the committee. If he was Elmer Flynn from Missoula and didn't like you because you worked for the railroad companies, he might not tell you when the hearing was held. If you were a Democrat like Eddie Dussault, he would go out of his way to, even though you were working for a company that was opposing the Democrats' labor bills, he would go out of his way to make sure that if there was something you were interested in, he would see you in the hallway and he'd tell you.

BB: Senator Eddie Dussault from Missoula. I think Ty Robinson was quite a good personal friend of his.

JL: They were, I believe, in the same class that graduated from the law school at Missoula. I believe Bob Corette was in that class. Eddie Dussault and Ty Robinson and others were there. Bob Corette had a photograph in his office of his class. So they were together. Bob Corette and Eddie Dussault's wife, I think her name was Jean. They were good friends and had known each other in college.

BB: John, some of the issues that involved the Montana Power Company, what do you remember?

JL: The Montana Power Company had a prolonged issue with the Montana Rural Electric Co-ops. It was called territorial integrity. What that means is that on the outskirts of a town like

Missoula or Billings, in particular, Helena, Townsend, Dillon—somebody would move out and buy a piece of land and build a house out there. So it became a battle between the manager of the rural electric co-op, which served in that area, and the local manager of the Montana Power Company to sign up that homeowner for service.

It became a pitched battle. Obviously, there had to be something done about it. It had reached the point in one case where a newly constructed grain elevator in Lewistown put in their own generator for electricity because their customers, who were farmers and loyal members of the Fergus Rural Electric Co-op, were telling management of the grain elevator, “We’re not going to do business with you if you sign up with Montana Power Company.” On the other hand is company management and [its] natural tendency to side with business. Because he was a business and he was on the outskirts of Lewistown, he thought he should be signing up with Montana Power Company.

Because of the pressure in that one instance—and there may have been others—but he actually put in his own generator because he just could not stand the pressure from the two sides. In years prior to my serving as a lobbyist with Montana Power Company, the issue had been joined and thought hadn’t been given to the pros and cons of the issue. So the Republicans would side with Montana Power and the Democrats would side with the rural electric co-ops. Where there was a Republican majority, they would kill the bill. Where there was a Democratic majority, the bill would pass and a Republican governor would veto it.

BB: Is that necessarily the case with the Butte Democrats?

JL: The Butte Democrats were against Montana Power Company on everything. When they hired me, an interesting thing happened. I went to work for the power company and I knew and we talked about territorial integrity. I realized and Bob Corette and Basil Andrikopoulos realized that this issue was really getting hot. If there was some way to work it out, it would be great. I knew that the company would be receptive if someone could come up with an idea of how to work it out. Various legislators including one of the senior Republicans from Fergus County—

BB: [J.O.] “Boots” Asbjornson?

JL: Boots Asbjornson and a Senator—

BB: Earl Moritz.

JL: Earl Moritz. Being from Lewistown, they knew how powerful and how popular Fergus electric Co-op was. They had a very powerful manager up there named Toby Rader. He was a real power in Lewistown and Fergus County affairs. So they had told the power company officials and Republicans were worried about being attacked in elections because of their stand on that issue.

They were getting fed up with the issue and wanted us to come up with a solution. Unbeknownst to us, there were people in the Democratic Party and people who were rural electric co-op people association and managers, association directors, and staff people. They too were saying, "I think the time is right for us to come up with some legislation that maybe will work out." There was a deep-seated hatred between us and between the lobbyists for the Rural Electric Co-op Association.

Though to say it accurately, I dearly loved them. They were great people. We fought to a standstill on that issue. They were very suspicious of us and weren't receptive to talking. One winter day, I had been in Missoula and I drove through some wicked weather to Great Falls. I checked into a room I reserved at the Rainbow Hotel. The reason for going there was it was the Rural Electric Co-op Association annual meeting. I believe their organization was called the Montana Rural Electric Co-op Association. They had a full time executive staffer whose name was Riley Childers who had been a farmer up in Toole County.

Their chief lobbyist was Rod Hansen, who was the Sun River rural electric co-op manager. They were located at Fairfield. They served the farm on which I lived in Pondera County. Despite the fact that we fought tooth and toenail, I had become pretty well acquainted with those men. I had a good communication with them. In fact, I had been invited to Sun River Electric Co-op monthly board meetings at Fairfield. I got acquainted, and having gone to some of their state conventions, I began to realize what made them tick and how tremendously loyal their directors, in particular, were to the association and to the co-ops. One of the reasons was that they had a lot of activities for their directors.

They had their monthly director's meetings. They had statewide meetings, regional meetings, national meetings, which were held in places like Miami or San Francisco or New York City. Those people who were directors went to those meetings. They took their wives and it was a big thing in their lives. Their membership on that co-op's board of directors was a huge thing in their lives. They were as intensely interested in being directors of that association as the Montana Power Company directors were being directors of that company. This was a big thing. So here I was and if there was one guy that had to be humble it was a Montana Power lobbyist at the Montana Rural Electric Co-op Association annual meeting. I had met a lot of people, but a lot of people were really reluctant to have me there.

So I went into the bar at the Rainbow Hotel. The place was jam packed. I thought, "I'm bound to meet somebody down here." The first two guys I met, I barely knew. One of them was Toby Rader, the manager of Fergus Electric Co-op. The other one was—I'll think of it. He was the president of Fergus electric co-op and a farmer up there. He was also a member of the legislature. So Toby Rader said, "Hey John, I'm glad to see you. I'd like to talk to you a minute." So they bought me a drink and we sat down at a table. The first thing they said, "You know, you guys are talking to the wrong people about this territorial integrity issue. There are some of us that would like to sit down and work this out. There's a session coming up."

The '71 session was just around the corner. The election was over. It was like having a bright light shine on me. I thought, "My, gosh. Here is an opening on this issue." These two guys of great stature in the organization, they're making the first response. We talked more about it and the possibility of coming up with some legislation. They didn't want their organization at that point to know that they were talking to us. So Cal Robinson of Pacific Power—attorney in Kalispell and lobbyist for Pacific Power—met in Helena at Jorgenson's with Bob Corette, Toby Rader and the president of his co-op, whose name escapes me at this moment.

So we talked about how we could come up with a bill. We didn't have any good ideas, but the situation in Billings between the Yellowstone Electric Co-op and Montana Power had come to a white, hot heat on Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue, which was served on the west end by the Yellowstone Co-op and on the east end by Montana Power coming from Billings, we were meeting head on out there in a situation where there was a whole new development of homes. It looked like we were both going to—Montana Power Company would build a line down one side of the street and the co-op would build one on the other side of the street. Then the individual homeowners could select whoever they wanted to serve them. Of course, it would have been an operational nightmare as well as a foolish way to have two separate utility lines in that area.

I wrote down [C.W.] Toby Rader so I could remember his name and his partner I'll have to look up. He was a legislator from, I believe, Petroleum County. He was a House member. He was president of Fergus co-op. he was being dragged along reluctantly by Toby Rader. He wasn't really comfortable there, but he was there.

BB: Bob Raundal.

JL: Bob Raundal, that's who it was. So anyway, we visited and we talked around it. It came back to Butte. We sat down with the Montana Power Company lawyer who was pretty much a Democrat through and through. He had been assistant secretary of state under Frank Murray. He had been raised over in Lincoln. He was a poor boy who had done well. He worked his way through college and got through law school.

Bob Sullivan, the Dean of the Law School, called Jack Corette and said, "Boy, we have a guy graduating this year that is so exceptional. He needs a job. This guy is really something. I sure would like to see you hire him." So they called him up and said, "Come on over. We want to hire you to go to work for us." This guy was a genius, brilliant man. Chain-smoker, coffee drinker, J.C Penney \$30 suit and a mind that was unbeatable.

BB: What was his name?

JL: His name was John Carl. He's dead. He died at an early age, soon after—he took early retirement because of health. He only lived a short time. By golly, he sat down and figured a way out. He figured out a bill. We went back and forth, Everett Shuey and I made trip after trip

after trip to Lewistown to confer with Toby Rader. Of course by this time, the rural electrics knew that they would have their own bill in, but they knew that Toby Rader was going to have the bill. That made them very angry. Toby was the kind of guy that decided to do it. He went through with it.

By then, because of the extreme pressure that Yellowstone Electric was feeling with that situation on Grand Avenue and with other locations in the Billings rural area, Howard Zaler (Sailer?) was their chairman. He, too, got into this thing. He talked to Toby Rader and he decided that what Toby was doing was the right thing. So Howard joined with Toby and brought in a great deal of influence in the rural electric co-op. Both of these men were the best and the brightest of the rural electric co-op people. So there were some people beginning to take note of what they were doing and expressing some hope that it might bear fruit and the argument could be settled. So we then got a bill that both sides could live with.

We had meetings in the Fergus Electric Co-op office. I would go down there and meet with them and take our bill draft. They'd go over it and make suggestions. I would drive back to Butte and John Carl would do some more work on it. Then at one point, Fergus said, "We ought to have our lawyer working on this too." They had a brand new guy who had just set up a practice. He was a Lewistown boy. His name was Brad Parrish. Interestingly enough, he had just been elected to the legislature. He was a Democrat.

So it was decided that ideally, he would participate in the preparation of this bill. He did, to some extent, participate in it in the meetings in Toby Rader's office. We ended up, he took the final draft and the actual bill for submission to the legislature. It was prepared in Brad Parrish's office and put together there. Everett and I barely got home for Christmas that year.

BB: Shuey was the Republican lobbyist for Montana Power.

JL: Yes, and we had taken this draft bill. We had gone around getting signatures so that the first day of the session it could be introduced and already signed by Republicans and Democrats. So we got that done. As I recall, when the session started, we had a few more signers. Anyway, it was well on the road. Brad Parrish, having been elected and having been involved around the table as we talked about this and that, he was going to carry the bill in the House. So he was the key sponsor. Ed Smith, a Republican from Sheridan County, had signed on also. He had requested that he be on the bill. How are we for time?

BB: Five or six minutes.

JL: So anyway, we had that bill. The Rural Electric Association had their own bill. Toby Rader and his wife and Howard Zaler from Billings actually moved to Helena, moved into the Colonial Inn where the Montana Power Company lobby lived. We would have breakfast together. Toby and I frequently would have dinner together. We would talk over about how the day had gone, who we had talked to, and what the prospects for the bill were.

As the bill progressed and the hearing date came, the battle was—it was really going to be something. We had no idea how bad things were going to be. When the chairman of the second reading in the House read off the bill number, I think it was House Bill 71 if I'm not mistaken. I can't remember for sure now without looking it up. It was time for the sponsor to stand up and say, "I move that when this committee does rise and report after having considered this bill that the same do pass."

We all looked down from the gallery and Brad Parrish was down sitting very low in his seat, almost giving the appearance of wanting to slide under his desk. There was no way he was going to get up. He didn't have the guts to get up and sponsor his own bill. Boots Asbjornson, another member of the Fergus County delegation, a senior Republican, knowing virtually nothing about the bill, having signed as a sponsor and having known the history and knowing how intensely Toby Rader felt about the bill—Boots Asbjornson was a big, tall man and a deep voice, well respected. He stood up. He said, "I'll speak for this bill."

BB: Just on the spot on the floor?

JL: It was a spur of the moment. It had to be done and he was man enough to do it. That was the end of Brad Parrish. He never amounted to anything in the legislature after that. In fact, he was beat when he ran again. Fergus Electric Co-op saw to that. The bill had a rocky hard fight. Yet the rural electric co-op people realized that it did have in it the guts of something that would work for both sides and would resolve the situation. They just couldn't bring themselves to endorse the bill.

Finally Representative Ed Smith of Dagmar, a Republican who later held a major place in the Montana legislature, proposed an amendment which the rural electric co-op people liked and which we thought, "Gee whiz, this sounds like a good idea." So the Ed Smith amendment was put on the bill. The bill with the Ed Smith amendment, and everyone was always sure that they would mention that, passed and was signed.

BB: That pretty much ended the war.

JL: It ended the war. The rural electric people were not happy, but there was a bill and when they saw that it did work, it was a good thing. I think that even now today, there may be some amendments proposed. There may have been amendments in the recent legislature that I don't even know anything about, don't care anything about. The bill passed and it was a major milestone. You can't believe the amount of relief that was. We left there with some good friends in the rural electric area.

My company had even sent me to the rural electric's national convention at San Francisco during the course of this legislative battle. I rode on an airplane, my wife and I, full of their people. The whole plane was loaded with people from Montana. We stayed at the St. Francis

Hotel where they did. We went to social events. I became acquainted with a man who had been the most powerful Republican senator, Charlie Mahoney, who was not serving at that time. He was president of the McCone Electric Co-op and a big man in the co-ops nationally. We became acquainted down there at that convention and became friends. That stood well later on.

BB: Well good. That was a good story. Now John, before we started our interview, you had mentioned to me you wanted me to ask you about the Butte delegation. I think we're almost at the end of the tape. If you had anything you'd like to say about that, we've got just a few minutes. We have a minute or two.

JL: Let's change the tape. Is that possible?

BB: Yes, that's possible. This is the second tape with John Lahr lobbyist for the Railroad Association and Montana Power Company, tape number two.

JL: Why don't you ask me, go ahead and ask me the question about the delegation.

BB: The Butte legislative delegation, you'd asked me to talk to you about before, you'd mentioned to me when I brought it up in the first tape that the Butte legislators never voted with the Montana Power Company. Then just as that tape was finishing, I asked you about them again and the tape ran out.

JL: When the Montana Power Company hired me in the fall of 1965, Bob Corette had come to Great Falls and we met at the Rainbow Hotel and visited. I was just totally stunned because I admired the power company lobby group so much and I was just delighted to be asked to join them. It meant working with Basil Andrikopoulos, who I had become virtually like a brother to. I respected him so highly—is there any left?

BB: No, but do you want some?

JL: So I readily agreed to the job. When I made my first trip down to Butte to find out what I was going to do and go for it, Bob Corette explained to me that my main job would be to turn the direction of the Butte delegation as far as their relationship with Montana Power. The Butte delegation, for the most part, supported the Anaconda Company. They had a great relationship with the Anaconda Company. I think with Montana Power Company, during that period of time, there was extreme ill will between the company and Senator Metcalf.

Senator Metcalf had become an outspoken opponent to the private utility companies because of his anger with Montana Power Company. Early on, Senator Metcalf had been a great friend of the company. Joe McElwain at the time was our Washington, D.C., lobbyist. The power company prepared legislation, which for the first time allowed the import of Canadian natural gas to the United States. Jack Corette was the director of the Pacific Gas Transmission Company that was formed to import Canadian gas. The whole west coast benefited from the legislation.

Montana benefited because of the vast supplies of Canadian gas. It became available for Montana markets.

The largest part of our market was the Anaconda Company. Great Falls, Butte, Anaconda used enormous amounts of gas. So it was very important that we get that legislation passed. Metcalf got it done. He carried the ball and everything was going on great. I would hesitate to throw any dates in here because it would have to be checked out. The bad relationship with Montana Power Company developed over what was known as the Knowles Dam Site.

There's a Knowles Creek as you're driving west from Missoula through Ravalli and Dixon onto Paradise. If you come to Knowles Creek and you look up at both sides of the Clark Fork River there, you see a magnificent spot for a dam. One was proposed and at that time, it was necessary for each Montana U.S. senator and congressman to have built at least one dam in the state during his tenure. Mike Mansfield built the Hungry Horse and Burton K. Wheeler built Fort Peck. Someone else built Canyon Ferry. LeRoy Anderson had got approval for Yellowtail.

So Lee Metcalf was going to get Knowles. I've never been sure, except for their opposition to public power in general, why it was that Montana Power Company went totally to bat against the Knowles Dam. They weren't alone. They were joined by the Farm Bureau, the Montana Stockgrowers, farm organizations, Northern Pacific Railroad— which would have been virtually out of a railroad—a huge number of people gathered together including many people from the Flathead area who had no connection to Montana Power. There was a major lobbying effort against the Knowles Dam project. It went down. It was not appropriated for or approved. Lee Metcalf literally went to war with Montana Power Company.

BB: You know John, I might not have this correct because I was just a kid in the Flathead Valley in the 1950s. I remember, and this has come up on a number of other interviews, that there was a real concern that damming of the system up there in the vicinity of the Flathead Valley would cause Flathead Lake to get a great deal bigger and perhaps flood all the way up to Kalispell. I think that might have been one of the concerns about this Knowles Dam project.

JL: It could well have been because Knowles Dam would have backed water up the Clark Fork and then on up the Flathead to the point where the outflow from the generators from Kerr Dam would have been the level of the river behind Knowles Dam. There would have been no drop. In other words, the river would have been pond level all the way from the outlet at Kerr Dam down to the dam site.

BB: Metcalf felt double crossed by the power company?

JL: I don't know if he felt double crossed, but he was an extremely angry man over that issue. This was one angry United States senator.

BB: We were heading toward the Butte delegation.

JL: I think the Democratic Party as a whole in the state and in Silver Bow County in particular resented the activism of the Corette brothers in the Republican party. Jack Corette was on the national fundraising campaign committee for Eisenhower and perhaps for Goldwater. I don't know. Bob Corette was very active in the Republican party politics. Consequently, the Butte labor-oriented Democrats dismissed the power company because of their politics.

Yet at the same time, the power company was the first or second largest employer in the county and probably 90 percent of their employees, who were intensely loyal were Democrats. The employees had a deep affection for Jack and Bob Corette and a deep affection for the company. Yet, they were disappointed that the management was Republican and that their company was seen as Republican. Bob had explained all that to me. He cited the specifics of their son or their daughter, uncle, dad, sister, or somebody in almost every case, if not every case, was employed by the Montana Power Company.

Their best friends were Montana Power Company employees. The people they played golf with were with Montana Power Company. So the people they went to the Elks Club and the Anaconda Club for dinner and for whatever, they were Montana Power employees. So the company had a magnificent role in the community. They were vastly appreciated in the community. I soon realized that when I came to Butte that to be an employee of what everyone called "the Power," employees and non-employees alike all referred to it as "the Power." So when I came to Butte I worked for "the Power."

BB: That was a good thing.

JL: That was why they hired me.

BB: People said that with pride?

JL: Yes, absolutely. At the same time, the guys in the legislature wouldn't vote for the power company on bills because the company was looked upon as part of the Republican Party, almost as a tool of the Republican Party. So Bob Corette explained, "Your job will be to turn the delegation around. We need them. We have trouble with bills. The Republicans say, 'You can't even get the guys from Butte to vote for you, why should we always be the ones that have to support you?'" So he said, "Not only that, it's embarrassing that we can't have the people that we know so well, that we grew up with and went to school with. They won't vote for us no matter what the bill is. We want you to change that. Whatever it takes, do it."

So I moved to Butte and got a room at the Finlen Hotel. Then of course my job was the Butte delegation. Then in addition to that, the Montana Power Company lobbyist team, like the Anaconda Company and like no other lobby groups, traveled the state and met with legislators in the off-time. They met with people who were candidates. They tried to keep a hand on the

polls of the politics in Montana that way. It was a delightful job and I loved it. Jack Corette gave me two instructions.

The only two instructions he ever gave me were, "Now John, you're going to be traveling from town to town and visiting with these legislators. There are two people in every town I want you to talk to: the banker and the priest. In every community, they will know what's going on. In my experience in being a lobbyist, when you want to know what's happening in a community, how an election is going or who is going to be elected, the banker and the priest will know." Those were the only two specific instructions he gave me.

BB: I remember the story Wellington B. Rankin supposedly talked to the barbers?

JL: Oh did he?

BB: He apparently had a network of barbers. A couple of weeks before the election, he just called 20 barber shops around the state and said, "What are you hearing?" It sounds like the same theory.

JL: The Catholic Church enters the issue now. It was interesting that, as I recall, every member of the delegation of Butte at the time I started work was a member of the Roman Catholic Church and active in their various parishes. Bob Corette suggested, "You know there's one guy that I'll introduce to you right away. He knows everyone in Butte. He was our division manager, the Butte division manager." His name was Frank Lynch. He was the most gentle, caring, loving, wonderful man you've ever met in your life.

His employees worshipped him. He was the most humble man you've ever met. He was an ardent Catholic. He was in every phase of the Catholic Church in Butte, which at that time had ten churches here with multiple Masses every Sunday. This was quite a town for the Catholic Church. So Bob took us to lunch one day at the Finlen Hotel and we talked.

Frank picked up right away what the goal was. Of course, he knew all the legislators like they were his brothers practically. So then through Frank, I met some other people. One woman I met was probably the most respected woman Democrat in Montana, the most respected woman in Butte and the most respected woman Democrat in Butte. Her name was Mrs. W.J. Burke. Her husband was a railroader. He worked on the section gang of the Butte, Anaconda, and Pacific Railroad. One of her sons is the dean of the Law School.

BB: Martin Burke?

JL: Martin. That's the caliber of her kids. She had a large family. All of the kids were just brilliant. Mrs. Burke took a liking to my wife and suggested that Beverly might want to try substitute teaching to keep busy. So Beverly did try that and got a job and ended up working as a teacher in the Butte system for years and years, probably close to 30 years. If you had Mrs. Burke's

approval, that went a long ways. Mrs. Burke let it be known that John Lahr and his wife Beverly were great people. They were Democrats. Beverly's dad was a former congressman and a Democrat. These were people that you can pay attention to. Frank Lynch introduced me to Gub Shea, Joseph T. Shea who was the agent for the life insurance company that's got the big tower in San Francisco.

BB: White tower?

JL: No the big huge skyscraper tower, the one that comes to a pyramid. [Transamerica Tower.] White tower, was an old masonry structure. This is an insurance company. Anyway, I went to visit him in his office and he was a major Catholic and Democrat. He loved to tell jokes. He told jokes, magnificent jokes. He told jokes about the Anaconda Company and about people in Butte. So I got acquainted with him and we would have a couple of drinks. We'd have lunch from time to time. He had a good friend. He said, "John, I want you to meet him." Joe Shea was the Democratic County Chairman.

BB: In fact, I think Gub Shea was the uncle of Jim McGarvey, who is about to become the state president of the AFL-CIO.

JL: Yes, he is. So anyway, Joe Shea enjoyed our luncheons and get-togethers so much that he said, "I've got a good friend I want you to meet over in Anaconda." I said, "Oh really? Who is that?" He said, "His name is Heavy Fitzpatrick." He was the Deer Lodge County Democratic chairman. So it became the three of us. We would go out. I'd invite their wives and then Mrs. Burke—her husband never wanted to go. He was so shy.

Frank Lynch and his wife, others, we'd go to Lydia's and have dinner. So here we are at Lydia's and the Montana Power Company is buying our dinner. It's just like they buy those Republicans dinners. We're getting the same kind of attention. Then the members of the delegation—Gub Shea would get one or two members of the delegation. Jack Healy or Tom Tracy, Jerry Lombardi, he would say, "It's okay. Lahr's going to invite you to dinner and my wife and I are going. You guys are invited. It's okay." It was great.

We were going to Lydia's for dinner. So I entertained literally around the clock with dinners and lunches. So anyway, over a period of time with some exceptions, we had a chance. Our delegation would listen to us and listen to what we had to say. We didn't ever offer any legislation that didn't make sense for Butte. The only things we ever lobbied them about were territorial integrity and the Siting Act and the last bill of my session, the one about allowing us to recover the cost of our coal.

So they would say, "Okay. That sounds good. It's for Montana Power. My sister works for them. They've always been good to her. I'm not going to lose any votes with this." That's the way it went. Then we had new people come in, like Judy Jacobsen and others. They thought, "Well these guys hire all these people in town. They must be all right. These other Democrats know

them. So it worked out with the Butte delegation. They were very good to us. I don't even know who the new people are from the delegation. I don't know how they voted with respect to this new utility company. I have nothing to do with it.

BB: Totally retired. When Bob Corette asked you to see if you couldn't get some important support from the Butte legislative delegation, obviously you were successful at that.

JL: Yes.

BB: Then you traveled around the state and you talked to the bankers and the priests.

JL: Everybody who was running for office or who held a legislative office. Then also I went to things like the Montana Municipal League and their conventions, county commissioners' conventions. I went to rural electric conventions.

BB: Stockgrowers, auto dealers—

JL: Stockgrowers. I didn't go to the others. As I told you earlier, we individually, as we traveled around whether it was Everett, me, or Basil Andrikopoulos or Bob Quinn, Gary Willis, Mike Pichette, you called on people with whom you'd formed a friendship at Helena regardless of party. In later years, it became fashionable—there was federal legislation passed, which allowed corporations to form PACS [Political Action Committees], legislation which was spawned by the pacts that the AFL-CIO had.

We formed a modest PAC because a lot of the employees who were eligible just didn't want to do it. They didn't want to invest in it. We had Republican employees who would not join because the PAC gave some money to Democrats. We had some Democrat employees who refused to join because some of the money would go to Republicans. It was generally successful. We gave modest amounts of money. People appreciated it. I don't think there was ever an instance when a lobbyist said, "Now we gave you \$100 for your election campaign. Now you owe us." That never happened.

BB: John do you know, I think the Anaconda Company used to have a lobbying team, or at least some guys for the Anaconda Company that traveled around the state a little bit and tried to keep in touch with the grassroots of Montana. Do you know whether they were still doing that when you and the Montana Power team started working together?

JL Oh, yes. When I went to work for Montana Power Company, I already knew the Anaconda lobbyists, having been there in the capitol working for the railroads. They had a large lobbying effort. They had lawyers to read and analyze all the bills. They had their principal floor lobbyist. They usually had a couple of junior people who were learning the ropes and getting acquainted in the halls of the legislature and also spending their time in their entertainment room. The two giants in the lobbying field were Anaconda lobbyists: Lloyd Crippen was the lobbyist for the

Republicans for the Anaconda Company, or “the company” as it was called, or the ACM. Glen Carney was for the Democrats. To my knowledge, they did not speak to each other.

BB: They didn’t get along?

JL: They disliked each other intensely. Lloyd Crippen was a dedicated Republican. Glen Carney was an absolute Democrat. He lived and breathed the Democratic Party. He lived and breathed mostly the Anaconda Company, but the Democratic Party was his party. He had a long history of being an active Democrat.

BB: Now I think one of the things that Crippen and Carney—and then later Carney was replaced by a guy by the name of Dennis Shea.

JL: Dennis Shea was a loyal Democrat.

BB: As they were traveling around the state, I know they looked for opportunities to talk to guys that might be interested in running for the legislature.

JL: Yes, inevitably as you travel and go to conventions, just sitting around Helena and meeting the people who are interested in the legislature, who come down from Plentywood or Glasgow or Havre, up from Baker, places like Plevna and Harlowton, Superior, up in the Flathead area. People come to town and you see them. You hear them talk and you get acquainted. Then you say, “By the way you feel about this, why don’t you run for office?” It was something that they had never thought of. Pretty soon they go home or they know their senator and they talk to him, they know a John Harp and they go say, “John, what do you think about me running?” Glen T. Rugg at a stockgrowers meeting and Basil Andrikopoulos saying, “Glen for God’s sake, why don’t you run for office? You are so gung ho about it.” Jim Shaw was the president of the Farm Bureau. Basil said, “Jim why don’t you run? Sign your name.” They did and some of them turned out to be great men. Ed Smith was a Farm Bureau guy. That’s how he got interested. People come out of the woodwork, as you know.

BB: Some of the historians, most notably K. Ross Toole, and others had characterized the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company as functioning very closely together, generally cooperating on things. From their philosophical point of view, from Toole’s philosophical point of view, as sort of the terrible, domineering twins of the Montana political sea. I talked to Everett and he was feeling kind of old and tired. He didn’t want to do an interview. He said, “Bob, I think our power in the legislature was overrated. We did a good job at lobbying as best we could. Frankly, it’s kind of a conservative-leaning state. Generally our point of view was that we wanted to keep the tax burden low and we wanted to keep the regulatory burden low. A guy wouldn’t have to be controlled by us to agree with us on many things.”

JL: That's sure the truth. I attended the university from 1948 to 1952. My professors were—there was no one of the class of K. Ross Toole. When I ran into him, I was stupefied that a university professor would be so cantankerous. There are others there now that just dazzled me when I got acquainted with them. After having gone to work for Montana Power Company and having seen the Anaconda Company operation, I don't know what it was that Ross Toole and the others saw was being manipulated. I really can't tell you what it possibly could have been that they were doing.

BB: There was probably resentment against the Anaconda Company's ownership of the newspapers. At one time apparently, there was the same board of directors in the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company.

JL: Let's discuss that a little bit. The ownership of the newspapers—there was one of the senior lawyers in the Helena firm, Taylor Weir. He was what I would call the senior editor of those papers because the news items went over his desk in Helena. He would make a judgment in his own mind, "Yes, this doesn't hurt." Or, "This isn't necessary." That was an interesting point about the newspapers. I will say that if you look at news coverage when I was a boy in high school and college, as far as reading the paper and knowing what was going on, it was far superior than it is now. We have really sorry newspapers.

BB: Taylor Weir, the lawyer in Helena, the law firm that represented the Anaconda Company and the Montana Power Company?

JL: First National, Anaconda, Great Northern, and a host of other clients.

BB: How did you understand the system worked? Maybe some reporter covered a story in Billings and he had some question about whether—

JL: I'll tell you. If he will talk about it, I don't know if he will. Ward Shanahan would know. Jack Burke would know. He was in that law firm for awhile.

BB: Your understanding of it is that pretty much Taylor Weir could kill a story or guarantee that a story would be published?

JL: That's my understanding.

BB: I suppose that resulted in some antipathy toward the Anaconda Company at least, which could have rubbed off on Montana Power.

JL: Although growing up, going through college and my adult life here, I knew that the *Great Falls Tribune* was independent and leaned toward the Democratic Party. I read the *Billings Gazette* and the daily *Missoulian* and I loved them. I thought they were great newspapers. I wouldn't say the same now for any of the three. I think they all have taken the tumble as far as

the way they're operated and the way the reporting is and their editorial policies. I just think that in the whole country, the newspaper business is on the downhill grade.

BB: John, in terms of the legislature again, you mentioned that you worked hard to neutralize and cultivate the allies of the Butte delegation because the Montana Power [was] headquartered here. Many of the jobs are located here. You felt that if you had an opportunity to present your case in a fair way, you could get their support most of the time. You were successful in that. There were other Democrats that continued to probably represent the Senator Lee Metcalf point of view against the Montana Power Company. Several come to mind, but probably the most notable would be Tom Towe. Do you have any comments or thoughts on the issues or relationships with Towe or anything like that?

JL: He was an extremely intelligent young man. He was enormously ambitious.

BB: He was a state representative [senator] from Billings.

JL: I think in order to run for public office as Leo Graybill had done before him and as others had done, he thought he had to run against the power company. So in the legislature, he did sponsor legislation which was injurious to Montana Power. He worked hard to get it passed because of his overactive and vindictive manner, his lack of respect for his fellow members, in my opinion.

He had demanding ways in their caucuses and on the floor. He had an inclination to speak on one side or the other on every bill in the legislature, not once, but many times in each debate. He made legislation which he proposed against the power company. It wasn't too difficult to go against because there were enough people who disliked him that they would vote against one of his bills because he was the sponsor. So he was an interesting case and he was the bane of our existence, but he was not—he didn't succeed in harming the company.

BB: Miles Romney?

JL: Miles Romney was one of the finest gentlemen I've ever met. He had great antipathy in his editorials for the Montana Power Company. He was one of Lee Metcalf's closest friends and mentor. He was a brilliant man. I crossed paths with him when he ran for the Senate. We were sitting on the stairway leading to the basement of Jorgenson's basement meeting room during a hot summer day when the Democrat State Convention was going on there.

A series of speakers had taken the floor to blast the Montana Power Company on the territorial integrity issue. They all knew that I was there. Their comments were especially mean because they knew that the power company had someone there to listen. Miles Romney came down the stairs and he sat down beside me and listened for a while. He said, "John, you must get awful sick of listening to this." He treated me very well. I had great respect for him. I frequently had visits with him in Hamilton. Mrs. [Ruth] Romney frequently came to Helena after the senator's

death. She would always engage me in conversation as someone that her husband had liked and had talked to.

BB: That's interesting, John, because I guess I always regarded Miles as a staunch ally of Towe.

JL: He probably was, yes.

BB: Representative Jack Gunderson from Great Falls?

JL: Jack Gunderson was a great guy that I see from time to time and he always greets me like a long-lost brother. I knew his older brother, who was postmaster at Havre for years. He had been a legislator. I knew his wife. I knew his brother's former wife who held high positions in the Democratic Party. I knew his dad, Ole, who was a farmer at Power and who was—

BB: He was also a legislator I think.

JL: A legislator and a lobbyist for the Farmers Union and a major man in the Montana Farmers Union. They were totally Democrats, liberals, voted for anything that was against Montana Power. Yet, we got along well. I didn't ever make enemies of anyone. The closest I came to a hatred for any legislator personally was Tom Towe. In fact, a legislator from Butte, at Towe's bidding and because of Towe's influence, sued the Montana Power Company and sued me personally for a large amount of money.

Tom Towe was the lawyer. The suit was tried in district court here in Butte. It was a week-long trial. They called such witnesses as Dan Harrington. They were interviewing him to find out what was bad about John Lahr. They found out that Dan Harrington liked John Lahr and couldn't think of anything wrong with him. Jim Murry, the head of the AFL-CIO was called as a witness. Jim Murry praised my wife, my wife's family, and me as fine people. I was a great friend of his wife. Let's see, who were some of the others? [Dorothy Bradley was also a witness.] The jury found twelve to zero in the Montana Power's favor and in my favor.

BB: The legislator who brought this action was Bob Harper?

JL: Yes, Representative Bob Harper. I still see him from time to time having breakfast at Lockett's Bakery or at McDonald's or somewhere. He always visits. Time passes.

BB: There's a journalist in here that I think I kind of put in that camp by the name of Rick Foote.

JL: Rick Foote was never a factor. He was kind of a rabble-rouser. He was a Butte boy. He rose to a high position. He became editor of a Lee newspaper. He was on the road to success, good pay, and with a company that had papers all over in the U.S. Rick was the kind of a guy that didn't get long with anyone in Butte. He was always critical of Montana Power Company, although he knew everyone in the power company. He knew what they represented in the

community. He was critical of the Anaconda Company. He knew what importance they were to the community. He was so critical of the Lee newspaper company that they fired him. He hasn't done very well since.

BB: Dorothy Bradley? She was later a candidate for governor.

JL: Yes, Dorothy Bradley has an important role in the history of Montana. She was the cutting-edge. She was the person who introduced environmentalism to the public in Montana and to the legislature and state government. Unbeknownst to most of us in Montana, there was a huge movement under way with many young people, although there also were people in the older age group. There was a strong environmental movement in Montana coming to life. Her election in Gallatin County as just a recent college graduate, a brilliant mind, parents who were professors, and she took Helena by storm. She was controversial, but because of her kind of shy, blushing, yet at the same time determined ways, she became a real power in the legislature and had a lot of influence. She made fast friends on both sides of the aisle. There were many people that didn't like her, but I think most people in the legislature on both sides of the aisle respected her and liked her because she was a great person.

BB: I remember her as being well respected, but not everyone agreed with her.

JL: No. I made a point to make her acquaintance and to call her. I called on her first during the campaign and met her in Bozeman for the first time there when she was out door-to-door campaigning. I realized that we've got something new to cope with here. She showed us that we did. I don't suppose that there was ever a bill that we had anything to do with where she was on our side. I could be wrong about that, but I would guess that to be the case. We always got along well with her, not just me, but the other members of the Montana Power lobby. We had a lot of respect for Dorothy and still do. In fact, I got a valentine from her this last Valentine's Day. The only valentine I got this year was from Dorothy Bradley.

BB: Pat Williams?

JL: Pat Williams, as I told you earlier, I met him when he first began to be active in Butte politics. He was newly married. He was married to Carol Griffith. Her father had been mayor and a highly respected family. They were a good Catholic family. Pat was not a Catholic then and possibly is not now. I don't know. Pat was a teacher. I had a movie one time that the company bought at my behest. It was a couple of hours long. It was a documentary made about a congressman from California about his election campaign and about his career in Congress. I can remember letting some of the teachers know that I had that movie available. Pat Williams had me show it to one of his classes. I showed it to a Democratic Party meeting of some kind here. That's how we became acquainted. Subsequently he ran for the House.

BB: The state House. This was the period of time when you were working hard to get a better relationship with Butte legislative delegation. Where did he fit into that?

JL: We did forge a good relationship with him. I can't quite place in my mind when he was there.

BB: I think in about the '67 or '69 session. [Served 1967-69.]

JL: Yes, there would have been, during that time, nothing that would have affected us that he would have supported. On territorial integrity, he would have opposed us in that. I'd hesitate to say that we had more than two or three of the Butte delegation on that. If there was ever an issue, and I think all lobbyists agree that if you have a bill come up and you know that you can't possibly win, anyone who is having some difficulty in their district because of their support for you on that issue and you can see the thing is going down in flames, you tell them, "Forget it. Get off of it. It won't pass. Don't hurt yourself." They appreciate hearing that. They go that way. Pat and Carol were at Helena. Then subsequently he moved to Glasgow and did some work up there teaching some sort of federal program. At some point he served with John Melcher in the House.

BB: On Melcher's staff.

JL: No, in the legislature.

BB: Yes. After Melcher was elected to Congress—

JL: I guess I'm wrong on that. He wouldn't have served in the House with Melcher, I don't think. Somehow he got acquainted with him and went on Melcher's staff when Melcher was elected to the House of the national Congress. Then he served, himself, in Congress. Where I say he was accommodating on issues that affected Montana Power Company, he was a willing listener and helped us from time to time on legislation back there. We had a good relationship and I had a lot of respect for Pat Williams. I don't know why, I've never heard him explain why he chose not to run again, nor did he run. I thought he would have had a great race for governor. He didn't run. What took place back there to make that happen, I have no idea.

BB: Representative John Hall from Great Falls was the Democratic floor leader in the House, minority leader in the early seventies.

JL: John Hall was a leader on the Democratic side at a time when the legislature, beginning from the time I first began to work there until fairly recent years, was bound with complex rules. The parties would use rules to edge each other into bad positions or to move a bill into a bad position where it would be easy to defeat or easy to pass depending on whom was doing the maneuvering.

John Hall was a master at that ability to use the rules. Jim Lucas, who was a speaker and a great man, a boy that I knew in grade school and in college and who is a great attorney in Miles City.

The two of them would go at each other on the floor over the rules about various bills. They would pack the galleries. It was a joy to watch those two men in a debate on a given bill or on the use of the rules. John Hall was from Cascade County, a lawyer up there. He was a guy that took liberal causes. He was a friend of the working men, of unions, Farmers Union, and a scholar. He was well-read. He was a hard worker, a great man. He was well-respected.

BB: John, we haven't really talked much about, or at all, Governor Tom Judge. He served both in the state House, the state Senate, as lieutenant governor, and then as governor during the entire period of time that you were a lobbyist for the railroads and the Montana Power Company. Do you have any thoughts or impressions?

JL: I always had a good relationship with Tom Judge. I've been to his home on at least one occasion for dinner when he was governor. Maybe it was when he was lieutenant governor. He was a man with tremendous ambition. He walked right up to the governor's position and lost out. He was a very confident legislator. He was young when he was elected first. He was young when he was elected lieutenant governor. That was at a time when lieutenant governors were elected as an independent office.

BB: Separate from the governor. So he went in with Forrest Anderson.

JL: That's right. Were they on the same ticket?

BB: Yes, but they ran separately.

JL: See, he presided over the Senate in those days. The lieutenant governor presided over the Senate. He was able to vote on a tie vote. He had great power. He ran the Senate just as the president of the Senate does today. He wasn't in the chair during the Committee of the Whole, but he was in a position of influence. During the second reading, the lieutenant governor usually sat in the chair of the presiding officer, who was chairman of the Committee of the Whole for that day.

His office was right off the Senate where some of the leadership offices are today. It was a poorly paid position. It didn't have much responsibility. It was a stepping stone. He used it. He was very ambitious. He had a great following in Montana. He was tremendously popular in Silver Bow County. At a time when patronage was more available than I think it is now, there were many employees of the Highway Department, the liquor stores, liquor warehouses, and of the prison, mental hospital, and so forth that had jobs because Tom Judge got them a job for a member of the family and had their undying loyalty after that.

BB: Governor Ted Schwinden was minority leader in 1961 when you were first there as a lobbyist. Then he went on to become lieutenant governor.

JL: I think he had a Ph.D., the only governor in the history of the state that had a Ph.D. He was a very bright guy. He was a successful dryland farmer from up there on Tule Creek, which is north of Wolf Point. I think he was in Roosevelt County, the northern edge on the highway going up to Scobey. Ted Schwinden, in his session as minority leader, was almost too great for the job. He was so smart and he wanted to do so much. One of the things he wanted to do was—and the thing that defeated him—was to revise land taxes, agricultural taxes. It probably should have been done, but the way that he presented it, rural Montana just was up in arms. The issue was so unpopular that when he went home and ran the next time in his own county, he was beat. Later on, he ran for lieutenant governor with Tom Judge and was elected. He soon surpassed the governor in popularity, in my opinion.

BB: What caused Tom Judge's popularity to decline within the Democratic Party and Schwinden's to rise that so he was able to defeat Judge for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1980?

JL: Let me go back. There was one story I thought I'd tell. One fall, I went to the Democratic Convention, which was held in Missoula at the Florence Hotel. Before I left that afternoon to drive over to Missoula, I had a visit with Bob Corette. I said, "Well, I'm on the way to Missoula to the Democratic Convention." Forrest Anderson was up for re-election. There were a lot of candidates to meet over there. It was their platform convention. Territorial integrity was an issue. I was very nervous because I had to make a presentation at a committee meeting at the party over there on the issue of territorial integrity. Forrest Anderson was governor, ending his term and—there's something wrong here in my time because filing hadn't started yet.

BB: It was probably around 1972.

JL: Filing hadn't started yet. One thing that came out of the convention that was fascinating was that they didn't invite the governor to speak at the main dinner. They invited Senator Metcalf to speak. They had a luncheon that filled up the whole big meeting room in the basement of the Florence Hotel. The governor was the speaker. During the time the governor was speaking, Forrest Anderson, the people were chattering and visiting. There was just a din of conversation going on as the governor was speaking. When he finished, there was tepid applause.

When I got back to Butte, Bob Corette had the most insatiable demand to know what was going on politically. You had to call him at least once a day on the phone. He liked to be called at the office during the day and at home at night, both, to hear what's going on. He was just fascinated with what was going on in Montana. So on this day, I went up to my room to call Bob Corette that evening. I said, "I don't think Forrest Anderson's going to be re-elected." Bob said, "What the hell are you talking about? For God's sake, aren't you smarter than that?" I said, "I don't think so. All the Democrats in the party that worked for the party were at lunch today. While the governor was giving his speech, they were all busy talking. They paid no attention to the governor and didn't give him much applause when he was through." Bob said, "Boy, that doesn't sound good."

BB: Bob would have probably wanted him to be re-elected?

JL: He loved the guy. I think he's in that picture of the graduates of the law school. He had great respect for Forrest Anderson as a guy that ran state government, the nuts and bolts.

BB: So we were talking about—this was background to my question about how Schwinden succeeded in beating Judge for the nomination.

JL: Yes. So then how did that work? Forrest didn't run. Judge ran against Ed Smith. Judge won that election and he came in with some of the same administrators that Forrest Anderson had. They were Gary Wicks—they were competent guys. They ran their various parts of state government very well. Tom Judge, to me, had almost a kingly manner. He presided over things, but it seemed to me that he presided from afar. The day-to-day nuts and bolts things were left to his department heads.

He just kind of oversaw from a distance. That's my impression. At the same time, he was smart enough. If some guy in Silver Bow County needed a job, Tom Judge got him the job. I'm sure the same is true in Havre, Missoula, Whitefish, or Billings, wherever. He seemed to lose his allure. Perhaps he was distant from the party workers. Perhaps he didn't get around to see people out in the sticks as often as he should have. I don't know. Ted Schwinden took the bull by the horns and literally filed against his governor.

BB: He had run as a teammate.

JL: Yes. He had. He filed. Did they run in a primary?

BB: Yes.

JL: Schwinden had the party workers. He had rural people. He had the rural electricians. He had people who, earlier, had supported Judge because they supported Democrats. They liked Ted Schwinden better than they liked Judge. He was more one of them. He had a very earthy way about him. He knew people, liked people. In a way, I think Tom Judge was uncomfortable going around meeting people campaigning, whereas Schwinden thrived on it. Schwinden won.

BB: What are your impressions of Schwinden as governor?

JL: I liked Schwinden as a governor very, very much. He was the absolute favorite. Paul Schmechel was the head of my company then. He thought Schwinden was the greatest man in the world. He loved him.

BB: How about Governor Stan Stephens?

JL: Governor Stan Stephens, there is a puzzle. I don't know much about his career as governor. He had one of the most fascinating friendships I've ever known two men to have. He and Allen Kolstad—

BB: Both state senators at the same time.

JL: Yes.

BB: Then they ran as governor and lieutenant governor as a team.

JL: Yes.

BB: 1988 and they were successful.

JL: Kolstad was a Republican senator from Chester, Liberty County, just across the line from Hill County where Stan Stephens was. Stan Stephens was a businessman up there. They saw a lot of each other at party hearings and matters. They were both Lutherans and knew each other that way through the church. They just enjoyed each other's company and spent time together at every opportunity. In fact, when they served in the Senate together in Helena, they lived in the same house. They rented a home and they would entertain there and have people over for dinner, members of the House and Senate over for dinner. They just enjoyed themselves a lot.

They ran on the ticket as a team. They were elected governor and lieutenant governor. Something came between them that I have no knowledge about and never heard. No one that I've ever been around has talked about it. Their friendship just seemed to end. To me, that was one of the tragic things about politics in Montana was to have a friendship that deep end over probably a political matter. To me, that was a real tragedy for them personally. Stephens did not run for re-election. He had some sort of a seizure, some problem at the very end of the session one year when he was governor.

BB: I think there was a special session that occurred in January of the off year. He had a fainting spell or something.

JL: Yes, it was right at the very end.

BB: He had already announced for re-election. The state auditor, Andy [Andrea] Bennett, had announced against him in the Republican primary. Stan had this fainting spell of some kind. A couple of days later, he withdrew from the race and then Marc Racicot stepped into the picture with Stan's (unintelligible). Stan supported Racicot as attorney general.

JL: Yes. I never did know or I never spent a lot of time thinking about why Stephens did not have a better administration. It was like here was a man with all the class in the world and all the intelligence, who could have been a magnificent governor and leader. He had been a fine leader

in the legislature. It just did not ever develop for him in the Montana governor's job. He just didn't seem to take hold. I thought he had a weak staff.

BB: He told me, "The Democrats have held the governorship for 20 years." He said he had a number of ideas for top people. He said, "They were reluctant to come to Helena. If you served as a director of the Department of Commerce or the director of the Department of Revenue, it doesn't pay very much. It isn't a very prestigious kind of a thing. It isn't like being asked to serve as Secretary of the Interior or attorney general of the United States. In some cases, I got my third and fourth choices for some of the cabinet appointments. That was a very discouraging thing." He talked to me about that. I've heard people speculate too that Stephens was my leader (?) in the state Senate. He was the floor leader. He was president of the state Senate. I had an enormous amount of respect for him. Maybe, and this is really wild speculation, if Stan had been elected to the U.S. Senate instead of governor, he might have been a pretty important U.S. senator. It was just something about a legislative body that might have suited his personality better than being governor. I don't know.

JL: I don't know how many people in the state he knew of the caliber to be department head or of the background to be department heads. I don't think he knew very many people outside of his generation. I think there were a lot of younger people who would have served him very well. One younger person he did choose was Art Wittich. He was a very intelligent lawyer who worked on his personal staff.

BB: Department of Natural Resources too, eventually.

JL: At any rate, that could have been part of the problem is when you look back at the Judge/Schwinden/Forrest Anderson times, most of their department head were people from a younger generation than they were themselves. They were young people, very bright, very ambitious, and very loyal. Governor Stephens was looking for the most part, for people among his own generation either not knowing or not taking seriously those younger men and women out there who were good Republicans, who were intelligent people, who could have done the job. He didn't know them well enough to know they could do the job. That's just my guess.

BB: John, we're just a few minutes from the end of a tape, just three or four I think. Anything you'd like to say in conclusion, in summary of our visit today?

JL: I think we ought to put in another tape. I'd like to discuss the Constitutional Convention a little bit.

BB: All right. Okay this is tape number three with John Lahr. John was a lobbyist for the Montana Railroad Association in the early 1960s and then for the Montana Power Company from the middle 1960s up into the 1990s. During that period of time of course, the 1972 Constitutional Convention took place. John, maybe you could share with us some of your thoughts and impressions about the 1972 Constitutional Convention?

JL: Well, the Constitutional Convention and the new constitution was a major event for Montanans, but it also, I think, was the turning point for the Montana Power Company. I think that some of the things that the Constitutional Convention did finally years later, were the seeds that brought about the demise of the company. Prior to—in the legislative sessions prior to the calling of the convention—there were lobbyists principally from the League of Women Voters and independent people who didn't hold office, who just had as a mission in life the calling of a Constitutional Convention. One of them was a man named Harold [Charles W.] Cooley, who was the Chevrolet dealer in Lewistown. He had a successful business. Daphne Bugbee, Dorothy Eck, and Jean Anderson were three members of the League of Women Voters. Daphne was the wife of a university professor, a brilliant woman in her own right, who joined the League of Women Voters for the purpose of getting a Constitutional Convention going. Dorothy Eck was a university professor's wife and a university professor's mother from Bozeman, active in the League of Women Voters.

She was a very liberal person who used her role in the League of Women Voters to work for a Constitutional Convention. Jean Anderson, the wife of a doctor in Billings who was a major power in the Montana League of Women Voters and who saw as her career choice securing a Constitutional Convention. I became very well acquainted with the three women. Harold Cooley was not the kind of guy who wanted to get acquainted with any lobbyist. He was a strange little man that haunted the halls of the legislature. He seemingly didn't really talk to anybody, but as we all know, he got the job done.

BB: I don't remember him for some reason. My first session was in 1971. I remember Jim Murphy, a state representative from Flathead County, was vitally interested in the Constitutional Convention and state Senator Jack McDonald. I know they were involved in the legislature and getting legislation passed to convene a convention.

JL: Murphy didn't serve though, did he?

BB: No. Neither one of them did because there was a court ruling or something that disqualified sitting legislators from running. John, you mentioned, and I'm not sure you really made it clear, there were some things that perhaps in your opinion, the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company did that caused the public to feel there was a need for the Constitutional Convention?

JL: They weren't things that those companies did. I guess you can say that the management of both companies said, "We've got a constitution, why do we need another one?" That was the way they felt about it. That was the way the Republican Party thought about it. That was the way the stockgrowers, most farmers—

BB: There were a fair amount of Republican votes to call the convention.

JL: Oh sure. I'm talking about before. So people would generally say, "What the hell do we need another constitution for? We've got enough trouble with this one."

BB: What do you think the League of Women Voters and Cooley and whoever else, Jack McDonald and so forth, why did they have this burning desire to have a convention?

JL: I don't know about Jack McDonald, but it seemed to me as that issue began to be discussed, the main criticism that these people had, and they came to Helena not to lobby for a new constitution but to open up the initiative process. There was a limit on initiatives.

BB: In terms of the number that could—

JL: Yes. It was ridiculous; only one or two. It just didn't make sense. If you feel that the voters have some intelligence, they ought to have a few more chances to change the constitution. In our visits with each other over dinner or something, sitting in an office, Bob Corette and Everett Shuey and myself, we'd discuss, "What's so bad about having a few more initiatives on the ballot?" Then someone would argue, "You wonder what some of those things might be." So it came that the bills in the legislature to allow more initiatives failed. I, for one, was disappointed. I thought, "Boy, that's too bad." These people just said, "The hell with the initiative process. We're going to go after a new constitution." They got one.

BB: Do you buy the theory that attorney general Bob Woodahl—they called him Bingo Bob because he cracked down on gambling so hard—that might have been part of the impetus for a new constitution too? The 1889 constitution according to the courts, contained a prohibition against gambling and perhaps that led to some of the—

JL: I wouldn't even speculate on it. When the thing was debated in House and Senate about whether there should be a new Constitutional Convention, that was a heated issue. It transcended political lines. Republicans voted for it, some rural Democrats voted against it. I'd have to look up the journal to see how the vote was. It was not a party line deal by then. These people were working the halls. There was one little strange looking gal up there always scowling. Any time a lobbyist looked at her, she'd give them the evil eye. She didn't ever do any lobbying, but I think she was sleeping with Harold Cooley and that's what her reason for being there was. I often thought, "Boy, the two of them must be something."

BB: So the legislation passed.

JL: So the legislation passed. The people ran on a non-partisan ticket.

BB: No, I think it was partisan for the Con Con.

JL: That's right. It was. It was Republican and Democrat.

BB: The Democrats had a big majority.

JL: Then when they met, the Democrats elected Leo Graybill, who was a very liberal plaintiff's attorney from—a trial lawyer, well-to-do second or third generation attorney. His father had been speaker of the House of Representatives. He, Leo Jr., had run for Congress against Jim Battin. Jim Battin beat him, fortunately for Montana. Now Leo was elected as a member of the new Constitutional Convention. Everett Shuey and I had been out and we had met all of the members. It was a difficult job meeting them because there were no legislators. There were only a few people we knew for some other reason. One man we knew was—and his son has been a Republican legislator for years and years from Yellowstone County who ran this last time and didn't make it—[Clark] Simon. One of the men we knew was Simon. He was a director of our company. So we knew him.

BB: He was a Con Con delegate from Billings.

JL: Yes; he ran Cole's department store, a very fine multipurpose store, a classy store in Billings. Other delegates included Rod Hansen, the chief lobbyist for the rural electric co-ops, the manager of Sun River Electric Co-op. Even though territorial integrity had passed, he took a dim view of us. Although we were friends and got along, talked, there was always that feeling. Charlie Mahoney, this guy that I had met, a former Republican senator. He was a strong opponent of the Montana Power Company.

BB: He was elected to the Con Con?

JL: Yes.

BB: I had forgotten about that. Miles Romney.

JL: Was Miles there?

BB: Dan Harrington was a delegate. Dorothy Eck.

JL: So there were people that we knew. Daphne Bugbee was a member. A banker from the bank in Polson, Jean Turnage's good buddy, the most conservative Republican in the world, he came down. He was a member. So these 100 people gathered together from all walks of life, from all political viewpoints, let me just say, a couple with legislative experience. They came together to write a new constitution. Leo Graybill had the juice to become—he was elected president of the Constitutional Convention.

He was an autocrat, ruled with an iron fist. Out of the 100 delegates, within 24 hours, he pissed off 99 of the others. Another interesting thing happened, a professor of economics, a great foe of utility companies, George Heliker, was appointed chairman of the Transportation and Utilities Committee. People were put on that including Charlie Mahoney, who was a great

opponent of the power company. Rod Hanson, who had been our bitter opponent in the years of territorial integrity, was on it. I'd have to look up the list to see the others.

A grocery man from Great Falls, who I had met cold, and had really gotten along with was there. The first meeting of the Transportation and Utilities Committee was held. Leo Graybill designated that, because they had a large committee and there would be a lot of people at their hearings, he designated that their hearing room would be the Senate chamber. So they met in there for the first meeting. The lobbyists were allowed to sit in the Senator's seats in the rear of the room. The committee, George Heliker placed in the front row of the Senate. He took the president of the Senate's chair and proceeded to announce how the committee was going to be run.

Here's Rod Hanson who has been a lobbyist over there knows the rules. Charlie Mahoney had been the most powerful senator in the Montana legislature for years and he's treating them like a bunch of brand new Cub Scouts. Well when that meeting adjourned, it was the membership of the Utilities Committee and the utility lobbyists versus the chairman. That's the way it was the rest of the Constitutional Convention with a couple of exceptions.

Then what happened—there were all kinds of utility bills. George Heliker had a never ending—he had bills that he must have worked on for years that could be implemented if ever we had a Constitutional Convention. We would meet and there was a bill that the Public Service Commission be appointed. The company said, "Oh, my God. What if we got a bad governor? Then you'd have a whole bad bunch of guys." I said, "How about Oregon and California? They've got great Public Service Commissions. They're appointed and they're competent people. Some of them even have backgrounds, master's degrees. It's somebody that you can talk to." They said, "Oh, my God, we can't have that, so kill that."

BB: Now John, were you there at the Constitutional Convention?

JL: Every minute. I was there 24 hours a day.

BB: Was Everett Shuey there? Bob Corette?

JL: Yes, every minute. First of all, on the social issue, they frequently got together. They didn't want any lobbyists providing any dinners or anything for them. The power company up until that time had always provided name tags for the legislature. Mountain Bell had put out the phone book. The Anaconda Company had put out the copper book. So right away, we offered to get the I.D. badges. The phone company said, "We'll be glad to put together a phone directory and committee memberships, all of that for you." Anaconda Company was right there saying, "We'll get photographers up here and we'll get started on this book." Leo Graybill announced, "There will be no power company badges. There will be no Anaconda Company books. There will be no telephone directory." So as a consequence today, if you are looking for a list of the members of the Constitutional Convention, you'd have a hell of a time finding it

unless you went to the lawyer's office and looked it up in the law books. I don't know how else you'd find out.

BB: You guys were able to neutralize Heliker pretty well in his own committee?

JL: He neutralized himself. He never would talk to any of us. We never had a conversation with him. He put his bills in. We'd work to kill them and they'd be dead. Another bill would come in, another one, and another one. Not only did Graybill not allow any evidence of corporate name badges or phone books, yearbook, you might call it, he cautioned them from the rostrum almost daily to avoid contact with lobbyists.

BB: This is Graybill?

JL: Yes. "Don't meet them socially. These people are looking after their own interests and keep clear of them." The minute the session would be over, they'd be out in the hall and say, "Well, we can't see you guys. Where are we going to dinner tonight?" So that worked to his disadvantage. Of course, we never had Heliker out to dinner, but there were people who Everett knew who were old-timers in the stockgrowers, the woolgrowers. He knew them. They were close personal friends. They were not about to not go out with Everett for dinner now and then. I'd have people out every night. There was one guy that hated our guts. He lived at the Colonial. We lived there too. Quite a few members lived at the Colonial. He was Bill Bertsche from Great Falls. Why was he there? He was a senator.

BB: He might have been out though. Do you suppose he was out for a couple of years before the Con-Con? He couldn't have run if he was an incumbent senator. Maybe he had—

JL: Maybe I'm thinking of—oh, I just don't know. I've forgotten. I remember that just like the vitriol that he felt for us. He just despised us. If anyone should have been a Republican, he was a millionaire. He was a very wealthy man.

BB: Now John, I interviewed Marshall Murray, who was a Republican delegate from Flathead County and who had been a member of the state legislature in the '61 and '63 sessions. One of the comments he made to me about the Con-Con was that it was his impression that the business lobbyists in Montana weren't very much in evidence there. He speculated that the constitution has the reputation for being one of the most progressive and liberal in the country. He said he thought part of the reason for that was that the lobbying interests, the corporate people in the state kept away from it.

JL: Twenty-four hours a day. Every minute of the day and night there was somebody awake thinking about something the Constitutional Convention was doing.

BB: Would that have been true of the Anaconda Company people, the railroad people and so on?

JL: I can't even remember anyone else but ourselves. It was so intense.

BB: Here's another story that he told me: he said that this occurred to him early in the Con-Con. He said he had a conversation with Marion Erdmann, who was another Republican delegate from Great Falls. She said that she had noticed the same thing.

JL: She had been the mayor.

BB: Yes. So according to Marshall Murray, he and Marion went to Graybill. They said, "Look, if we're going to try and get this thing passed, we need to have participation from everybody. It appears to us that the business community isn't paying much attention to this Constitutional Convention." Murray said, "If I rough out a letter and we can send it to the State Chamber of Commerce and to their membership, to the rest of the business community of Montana, telling them, 'Look your presence is not only welcome, but it's invited here.' Will you sign it?" Graybill said, "Yes, I will." So Marshall said the letter went out.

JL: I'm just astonished. That's something I didn't know.

BB: Do you suppose it was because of Graybill's admonition for the delegates to avoid lobbyists, that maybe some of the lobbyists were kind of in the background?

JL: No, they were there during sessions and during committee hearings. Where bills were being heard, they were there. The lobbyists were there. You had to be to give testimony, to listen to what was happening to the bill. Then when they brought them up for debate on the floor, they'd be in the gallery listening. So at any rate, Heliker proposed some things which, had we accepted them and helped get passed instead of defeated, such as an appointed commission, I'm sure we would have been better off than with what we've had, both Republicans and Democrats.

BB: A Public Service Commission?

JL: Public Service Commission. Another thing was having them become a constitutional body. Of course Bob Corette just went nuts over that. We killed that. I don't think that would have been a good thing. I think the present way it's constituted where it's a creature of the legislature and the legislature has some oversight, I think that's a good thing, just as they have oversight over other departments and so forth. So anyway, we killed that. There was one day where there were seven or eight different things. It was a big day for utilities. One after another they came. They killed six of them. There was one thing left. He had to have something, the poor bastard. Everybody was starting to feel sorry for him. The members of the Utilities Committee, our friends are thinking, "Geez, you have to give the guy something." So the last thing was, let's have a constitutionally constituted consumer counsel. It was somebody to overlook from a broad view the way things are going, rates, regulation. Other states have it. It looks like a pretty

good thing. So Bob Corette, we talked it over. Bob and everybody said, "What the hell. I don't know what it's going to do, but it doesn't sound bad." When that was voted, that was the beginning of the end. The consumer counsel had a couple of good guys on it, competent, not friends of the utilities, but very professional.

BB: The consumer counsel is in the constitution?

JL: You bet it is. Then this guy, I think he's still there, came in. His name was [Robert A.] Nelson. He hired a lawyer. Then the members of his staff who had been middle-of-the-roaders saw how their boss was leaning. That Mary Wright, the real left-wing environmental lady lawyer. They hired her to be their attorney. The other staff members shifted over to, "Let's punish the utilities." It came to the point where—

BB: This was after the Con Con now?

JL: Yes. The result was that after a series of consumer counsel officers—one came in who foreboded ill for the utilities, for our company in particular. Then the Public Service Commission had people that we could talk to, Democrats or Republicans. From time to time, a guy like Clyde Jarvis, a guy [like] Haffey, [you] could talk to. Another guy who you ought to interview for his ideas is Jack Haffey.

BB: (unintelligible) state Senate and also was an official of Montana Power Company.

JL: You're going to find out viewpoints from him that would be far distant from anything you'll hear from Shuey or me, I'm sure. He is a truly liberal, left-wing bleeding heart guy. He is a virtual saint. It would be fascinating.

BB: Was he at the Con Con helping the lobby?

JL: No. He's never lobbied.

BB: He served as a state Senator. I remember that.

JL: Anyway, the consumer counsel and the tremendous influence that they ended up exerting over the commission—because the consumer counsel ended up hiring all the expert witnesses. So they literally delivered a rate case to the PSC. We applied to the PSC and then the consumer counsel told the PSC, "Well, this is what you can give them." The PSC had the power to change that. They feared the consumer counsel and its staff. Plus, the guy is still alive and so I won't use his name, but the PSC had a staff member who became so powerful and who was the son of businesspeople, a stockholder in a hundred different companies in America, who became an anti-power company guy.

There was no decision made by the Montana Power Company management that was satisfactory for 20 years. It had to be changed no matter what it was. With that sort of oppressive atmosphere and where you've got the best and the brightest guys in Montana sitting as the management of the Montana Power Company, Bob Gannon, Jerry Peterson, Jack Haffey, the guy whose dad is a railroader in Havre—his names slips off my tongue, Perry Cole. Here is a brain trust. They are all Montana guys, one of them born in Butte, one in Billings, one in Havre, and one in Anaconda. Finally, they say, "Geez we can't do anything. We literally can't run this company."

So then their financial people in New York, and in their own office here in Butte, would say, "Okay, look at the value of your company. Now if you had this same money over here in the telecommunications field, you'd be making 25 percent a year. You'd be working for a company that would pay you 2 million dollars, maybe 5 million dollars a year. You're working for 150,000 dollars, for God's sake?" That was the germ of the idea to sell the company, take the money, put it in telecommunications, and become rich.

BB: Would the PSC have been able to regulate the Montana Power Company if they had been in the telecommunications?

JL: No. Nobody can. The federal [government] doesn't even regulate it.

BB: So part of the thinking was to get out from under what was considered to be the tyrannical control of the consumer counsel dictator.

JL: Right. And take that money to get it going. It just so happened that when they got to, around to the point where they were in the telecommunications business, the damn thing just up-ended. Qwest went broke. They all went broke, AT&T, for God's sake.

BB: It's your feeling that perhaps that decision wouldn't have been made if the—

JL: If we had accepted Heliker's bill on an appointed commission, and if we'd killed the bill on the consumer counsel, we'd probably still have the Montana Power Company doing business in Butte, Montana. Everything would have been fine.

BB: John, do you know whether the Montana Power Company took a position on the constitution after it had been passed by the convention and was proposed to the voters?

JL: I don't have any recollection of them taking a position. I think they just figured, "What the hell?"

BB: You weren't involved in anything in terms of trying to defeat it or trying to pass it or anything?

JL: No. And as I recall, it was defeated, but the Supreme Court analyzed the vote on the gambling part and took that and accepted the majority vote on the gambling as an indication that the thing should pass. You'll have to check that out. I think you'll find that's the case that the gambling issue, part of it, passed. I think that the constitution did not pass. The Supreme Court made the decision.

[The Constitution did pass, by a vote of 116,415 to 113,883. But some electors did not vote on whether to adopt the Constitution and instead voted only on the side issues. The ballot said the Constitution passed only if it received "a majority of the votes cast." The total number of voters in the election was 237,600, so the question was, was it the total voting in favor from among those who voted on the Constitution, or was it a majority of all votes cast? A federal appeals court ruled it was the majority of voters who cast a ballot on the Constitution adoption question, not a majority who voted.]

BB: I think you're right. I think the logic was something to do with, obviously there can't be legalized gambling if the constitution doesn't pass. So they had somehow or another to interpret those votes for—

JL: And they wanted it to pass. The Supreme Court did.

BB: I think it was just a three to two decision. [In the Montana Supreme Court it was a 3-2 decision, which was appealed to a federal three-judge court.]

JL: Was it?

BB: Yes, I think so. Governor Anderson personally, before the Supreme Court, argued for the ratification. That's also a big memory of some kind. I was away in the Navy at the time.

JL: I think that's the case that it didn't actually pass. It was stunning news to read that it had passed.

BB: John we've got some more time on the tape, although we've been doing this for a while and you might be tired, I'd give you an opportunity to say anything else you'd like to say or perhaps it would also be interesting for me for you to spend a few minutes on your experience at the Democratic National Convention.

JL: I will just say, I am getting slow here. One point I was going to make that's historical is the development of the Montana Power Company generating system that I've never heard anybody talk about. It ought to be in the history books. The power company was a hydro system. It started off with Rainbow Dam up in Great Falls. The man who started the company, his name is John D. Ryan. You constantly read about the Copper Kings. John D. Ryan was a bigger man than any of the Copper Kings. The only one who's written anything about him that I know of is *The Battle for Butte*, Mike from Bozeman.

BB: Mike Malone. I think Malone considers him the greatest person in Montana history. He makes some comment like that.

JL: I could drive you by his home. That chair you're sitting in came from his house. I bought that at an auction.

BB: From John D. Ryan's house?

JL: Yes. That chair that you're sitting in is his. Anyway, it came from Marshall Field Company. I'm sure when he built his huge mansion up there in Excelsior Street he and his wife probably went to Chicago on the train in a private car and bought furniture. It all came out on a railroad train.

BB: You know, totally unrelated to this—

JL: He came to Butte from Michigan, from the copper country in Michigan. So he knew about copper. As Jack Corette tells the story, I think he came here as a Conoco salesman, selling oil. He got acquainted with [Marcus] Daly somehow. Daly liked him and put him to work in the Daly Bank and Trust Company. He became a great friend of Mrs. Daly. Dalys were Catholics. John D. Ryan was a devout Catholic. Mrs. Daly in particular was devout. She was a daily Mass type person. She really took a liking to this young Ryan. So then Marcus Daly died in New York. I think he's buried in New York. Wherever he died, whether it was Europe or New York, he's buried in New York. [He died in New York City and is buried in Brooklyn, N.Y.] That's where their home was. They had a lovely home in Anaconda. They had the ranch at Hamilton. They did not have a home here. Anaconda was his town. He was a beloved guy. Miners and everybody loved him. They hated [William A.] Clark. Clark was a mean son of a bitch.

BB: Why was that?

JL: Daly was like Hugo Aronson. That's what he looked like, spoke broken English, a big brute of a man with huge hands and knew how to mine.

BB: And Clark didn't come across the same way?

JL: Clark was a miserable son of a bitch. He was a real asshole. He had only one thing in mind and that was to make money. He wanted to be an important man so he decided to be a senator. He was one. Anyway, Daly died and so Mrs. Daly relied heavily on John D. Ryan. She hired some other guys, a fellow by the name of Maroney who was a banker, a bank examiner, and a heavy drinker. Cornelius Kelly, a heavy-duty Catholic, tall, handsome, Irishman lawyer by trade was hired. Kelly and Ryan became inseparable companions. They were together breakfast, dinner, and supper. They lived within a block of each other up on the west side of town.

BB: Kelly and who?

JL: Kelly and Ryan were inseparable. Mrs. Daly gave them more and more responsibility. They built the Rainbow Dam at Great Falls to provide power for the mine. Ryan got himself elected as a director of the Milwaukee Railroad and talked them into buying power from Rainbow Dam to run the railroad. Then he became president of the Amalgamated Copper Company. Then while he was president of the Amalgamated Copper Company, he started Montana Power Company. He bought a bunch of companies, small towns. Conrad had a power company. He bought them. He bought Lewistown.

BB: Little private power companies? He put them together and—

JL: It made the Montana Power Company. He ran both companies. Then whenever he died, he died fairly young. The companies never had common management except for John D. Ryan. They never had the same board of directors. Because they were such a large customer, the Anaconda Company thought they ought to have a director. So they had one of their vice presidents from New York, who was a lawyer by trade, serve as a director of Montana Power Company.

BB: Who was that?

JL: I can't think of his name. I haven't thought of it for ten years. When they began to really dislike each other intensely over utility and gas rates—

BB: This is the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company?

JL: Yes. They had been paying next to nothing for many years. Finally, when the cost of gas and the cost of generating electricity got more and more, and their prices started going up, they really were balking. So they were having constant negotiations over electric and gas rates.

BB: About when would this have been?

JL: This would have been probably in the Sixties I would think, early, real early. So the Montana Power Company board of directors, sometime when they were sitting, said, "We shouldn't be talking about what we plan to do with an Anaconda guy here in the room." The Anaconda guy said, "I shouldn't be here." So Jack Corette talked to somebody at the Anaconda Company and said, "We don't think you guys should have a director here anymore." He's putting himself in jeopardy by literally being on both sides of a contract negotiation.

So they agreed. They said, "Yes, it doesn't make sense." So that ended that. That was the end. Then in the development of the company, I was going to just tell one little story. As these companies came together and they had the dams at Great Falls, Cornelius Kelly and Ryan went to talk to Paris Gibson, who owned the Great Falls Water, Power & Townsite Company. They

owned all those sites on the river. As he became ill, he wasn't making much money because he was basically a sheep rancher, but he had a dream for Great Falls, the river, and the power plants. Those were his dreams. He had sold out. He liked Jim Hill very much. When Jim Hill came to Great Falls, Paris Gibson, needing money, sold his interests in the dam sites to Hill.

BB: This is James J. Hill, who was the founder of the Great Northern Railroad.

JL: Yes. He was a great visionary. He and Daly loved each other. Daly was being screwed by the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific. Hill said, "We'll take care of it." So they built their line down through here. The Great Northern built the B.A. & P railroad for the Anaconda Company. They built it to the highest standards. Then consequently, everything was shipped Great Northern.

BB: Did you say the B.A. & P?

JL: It's called the Butte Anaconda and Pacific.

BB: Okay. That was the Anaconda Company's own railroad?

JL: Yes.

BB: That provided the link to the Great Northern—

JL: To Anaconda, to the smelter.

BB: Yes, it connected the mine and the smelter, but then it made it possible to connect to the Great Northern main line?

JL: They connected at Butte. The Great Northern came to Butte.

BB: So they didn't have to do business with the Northern Pacific or the Milwaukee?

JL: They just said, "Screw you." Then somewhere in this time period when they were developing the electrical part, Kelly and Ryan went to Paris Gibson and he said, "The guy you have to see is Jim Hill." So they went to St. Paul. Here were these two young, robust go-getters from Montana. Jim Hill realized all the impact of the mining. He was getting old. He was sick. So he sold them, gave them practically, the dam sites at Great Falls. So that's how it got started with the power company at Great Falls.

BB: So this business about, how I'd understood, maybe this is from Ross Toole history or maybe it isn't from him. Maybe it's just the folklore of Montana is that the Montana Power Company was the creation of the Anaconda Company and that they always had the same board of directors up until modern times.

JL: That's totally incorrect. The creator of the Montana Power Company was the mind of John D. Ryan.

BB: He was an official of the Anaconda Company at the time, but he created it as a separate entity.

JL: He saw it as a way to make some money for John D. Ryan. The Union Pacific was screwing him on the rates on coal, wonderful Utah coal and wonderful Wyoming coal, high BTU, good coal. They were charging the Anaconda Company ruinous rates. They had no place else to go. The Northern Pacific got the job of hauling the finished product out, but also they got to switch all of the mines. They got it, but they didn't provide locomotives or cars. The mines had to constantly shut down. It was a nightmare. The Northern Pacific hauled the ore from Butte to Anaconda. They didn't have enough power. The trains would stall. It was chaos, literally chaos. So Jim Hill said, "Why don't you build your own railroad? We'll help you." He was trying to screw the NP.

BB: Now that's separate from this power thing? We've got two things going on.

JL: We have all kinds of stories going on.

BB: Make sure I understand now. John D. Ryan saw a need for electrical power for the mines. So he went ahead—

JL: To lift the ore.

BB: To lift the ore so he went ahead and created this group of little independent power companies—

JL: The first thing he did was to build Rainbow Dam and built a power line to Butte and Anaconda. Then he built power lines from over by Ennis, from Helena, from Holter Dam and Hauser Dam. Those power lines all went to Anaconda and Butte.

BB: Okay.

JL: To lift the ore out of the mines at a reasonable price.

BB: Okay, and Ryan was the president of the Anaconda Company and the creator of the Montana Power Company. The Montana Power Company was always separate from the Anaconda Company.

JL: Yes, it always belonged to John D. Ryan.

BB: Okay and so the only way that—

JL: He was the Chief Executive Officer of the Anaconda Company.

BB: Yes, and also of the Montana Power Company initially. Then this business that we understand about the interlocking board of directors—

JL: There was no such thing.

BB: Except that there was one person from the Anaconda Company who was permanently a member of the Montana Power Company, which may be as the basis for that.

JL: I don't know.

BB: John D. Ryan made a separate deal with Jim Hill to get better—

JL: Daly made that.

BB: Excuse me. Daly made it.

JL: Daly was so fed up with the Northern Pacific with the way they were treating him on rates, poor service, lack of equipment, lack of locomotives, the crews even said, "The hell with it. It's the Anaconda Company's. We'll do it tomorrow." So Jim Hill didn't operate that way. He talked to Daly and Daly told him all of his problems. Hill said, "Build your own railroad. The hell with it."

BB: Now when you came into the picture, you had lobbied for the railroads in the early 1960s. Then you lobbied for Montana Power Company beginning in the middle 1960s. You'd mentioned that early in the Sixties, there was this feeling that Jack Corette had indicated to the top leadership of the Anaconda Company that because their paths were beginning to diverge significantly, that they should have a completely separate board of directors?

JL: It wasn't their paths, it was a matter of the product that Montana Power was supplying the Anaconda Company. The price of the product was becoming so controversial that you couldn't have a guy from the Anaconda Company sitting on the board discussing what we're going to charge them for rates.

BB: So when you came into the picture, there was unquestionably a separate distinction between the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company.

JL: Absolutely. There was no connection of any kind. At noon when the Anaconda Company was in its glory days, and the Montana Power Company was in its glory days, the Montana Power Company officials from Jack Corette on down to the engineering department and the legal

department, they all had lunch in one room at the Finlen Hotel. In the other room, the Anaconda guys had lunch together. They didn't even want to have lunch with each other.

BB: So there was some animosity there?

JL: There was even social animosity. These were all guys that were growing up in Butte together from childhood. They were all Catholics and all married to Catholics and all went to Catholic school together. You know there's nothing like guys that are raised that become rivals for hatred to develop.

BB: I've interviewed earlier today—

JL: Yet they were friends.

BB: I interviewed Lew Brown and Lloyd Crippen, who were both part of the lobby team of the Anaconda Company.

JL: Neither one of them were family though, in the sense that with the Anaconda Company, the MacDonald family, the Corette family—these people were, if not related, they'd been raised together in the same crib. Their parents had been friends. Their grandparents had been friends. They had all come into this together making money out of the mining. It had all come together. They were rivals because of the cost of the electricity and gas.

BB: I know Crippen and Lew Brown spoke highly of Jack Corette today.

JL: Yes. He was the finest gentleman that you've ever met. He was the kindest, but toughest nut you've ever seen too. He was a tough guy.

BB: That came through too.

JL: He was a gentleman's gentleman. He was just the most sophisticated, elegant man you've ever met, as was Ryan, I guess, and Cornelius Kelly. Bob Corette was a big, fat, cigar smoking rough and tumble guy.

BB: He was Jack's younger brother?

JL: Jack was the older. Their dad John started the Corette law firm. J.E Jack Corette and Robert B. Corette were members of the law firm. The power company and the Anaconda Company had the same legal department. They were Anaconda Company employees and they were housed in the Hennessey Building. The Anaconda Company legal library, law library, was the finest in the state.

BB: So they had that connection up into the Sixties? They had the same—

JL: That was earlier. I'm not sure just when. I used to have a book that I could turn to it and tell you.

BB: John, that would lend some credibility to this theory that they were joined at the hip.

JL: No, not really. They did have the same lawyers because they didn't want to—the Anaconda Company had the best law library and finest bunch of lawyers in the state. Bob Corette was a member of that law firm. When Jack Corette was elected president of the power company as a young man, he wanted his brother to be the number two man. They were very close. They talked everything over together. Every move the company made, every matter having to do with hiring and firing of a certain employee, and family matters, they acted as one. There were probably other iterations that I don't know anything about. They remodeled the office building, bought law books. Bob Corette quit the Anaconda Company and went to work for the Montana Power Company.

BB: Their headquarters were still in the Hennessey Building?

JL: No, Montana Power's was never there, just their legal department. The Montana Power Company didn't have a legal department. Let's put it that way. They didn't have a legal department.

BB: When did they get their own legal department?

JL: They got it in fairly recent times. Bob Corette quit the Anaconda Company and he went into his dad's old law firm. His brother left that to take over the power company. Bob left the Anaconda Company and went to work for the power company first. He was a demanding kind of a guy.

BB: Bob Corette?

JL: Yes. He had a secretary that was worse than he was. Between the two of them, Jack Corette said, "Bob, I want you to take Louisa with you and go into dad's law firm and take that over. It's not going to work here with you and Louisa here."

BB: Now when I was a young legislator, I remember meeting a couple of young attorneys who I thought were with the Montana Power Company, Mike Zimmerman and Bob Gannon.

JL: They were with the Montana Power Company. They had never worked for the Anaconda Company.

BB: I thought you said that their office was in the Hennessey Building.

JL: They were long after that.

BB: Okay, so the split had occurred in terms of the legal department and everything had taken place sometime in the sixties?

JL: A generation before them.

BB: Okay. Maybe in the fifties then.

JL: Yes. I'm sorry I can't come up with the dates. It's just all a big story. It's a story I love. I'm heartbroken that it all fell apart. I think I know why it fell apart. It was so unnecessary.

BB: That's what you told me about the Public Service Commission.

JL: Anyway, to get back to one other last thing whether there's time on the tape or not, as the construction of the generating plants took place, most of them were like 30 megawatts or 60 megawatts. Then they had the Thompson Falls plant. Then the big deal during the Depression was the Kerr. They were out of money. So the best they could do, they bought one 60 megawatt generator and put it in at Kerr.

BB: Kerr Dam is south of Polson.

JL: Then as times got better, then they bought a second generator of 60 megawatts, then finally a third. So there were three 60 megawatt generators, a total of 180 megawatts at Kerr. Billings was growing and here the power was being produced up at Great Falls and over at Polson and had to go all the way over to Billings. That was not a good deal. So Frank Bird was president then. So they built a 60 megawatt plant at Billings, their first steam plant. It could be operated by either natural gas or oil. Of course the two big refineries were right there for oil. They found a cheaper source of gas down at Carbon County, a cheaper source of fuel. They built a pipeline down to Carbon County and developed a natural gas field in Carbon County just for that power.

BB: That's the Bird Plant?

JL: Yes. It no longer exists.

BB: That brings us back again to the Knowles Dam. You said that Montana Power had opposed Knowles Dam, but it sounded like they were looking for more sources of power.

JL: They wouldn't have had any—

BB: Oh, I see. Okay. That would be like Hungry Horse. They did oppose it even so.

JL: Oh hook, line, and sinker. They just went to work against it. From then on, Lee Metcalf hated it. They made life miserable for the whole utility industry in the United States. The utility industry in the United States, when they would have meetings and so forth, they would berate Jack Corette for this son of a bitch back in Washington that's raising hell with us. "It's your fault."

BB: Did you ever meet Metcalf?

JL: Oh yes. I got along well with him. He liked Shuey.

BB: He didn't take it out on you guys?

JL: No. He used to tell a story. He told it every time we went to see him. He was sick and in tough shape at the end.

JL: He would tell us a story, Shuey and I. We'd go to see him and he liked Shuey so well because he knew Shuey when Shuey was with the Wool Growers. He'd always see us. Although Vic Reinemer wrote all the bad articles and everything, he got to be a friend of mine. He just took a liking to me. He and his wife moved to Helena after the senator died. He retired. He used to come up to the session and he'd bullshit with me by the hour.

BB: He and Metcalf wrote a book called *Poles Apart*. It was pretty much an attack on the utility industry in the whole country.

JL: Yes it was. Metcalf used to tell the story about Tom Towe. Tom Towe organized the election of the delegates to the McGovern convention and made sure that they were all McGovern people elected. It was a powerful, well managed campaign, all these counties to get people elected that he wanted for the delegation that were all McGovern people. Lee Metcalf wanted to go as a delegate to that convention. Tom Towe turned him down, a United States senator.

BB: The story was that Metcalf had told Senator Muskie that he'd support him. At least that's the story I heard.

JL: He wasn't going to support McGovern, at least at first.

BB: Tom said, "Well if that's the case, you're not going."

JL: And he didn't. So Tom Towe was running for Congress. He came to Washington to get the endorsement, raise money, and so forth. So he showed up one afternoon late at Metcalf's office. They said, "Why don't you sit out here, the senator is busy right now. He'll get to you." So he sat there probably from two o'clock to five or six. They told him, "Well, why don't you come in tomorrow morning and he'll be able to see you in the morning first thing." So Tom Towe shows up there at the crack of dawn and sits there. The morning passes, the afternoon

does. They keep saying, "The senator is busy." He sits there all afternoon. Finally they said, "Well, maybe you better come back tomorrow. He won't be able to see you today."

So the senator left then out his private entrance and down the members' elevator. He was going down the steps of the office building. Here is Tom Towe. Tom said, "Oh Senator I've been waiting for two days to see you. I wanted to talk to you about getting your endorsement." Metcalf said, "I told him, 'You little son of a bitch, you stopped me from being a delegate to the convention in 1972. You can go to hell.'" Then Metcalf would laugh to beat hell. He was in such pain when we'd go to see him that his legs from football injuries were just excruciating pain. They used to say he drank a lot. If he did, I'm sure he did it because he was in such terrible pain. People worshipped him. He was a man with a following like Huey Long had. There's no other politician that I've ever known in Montana that had that kind of loyalty and devotion.

BB: I had a real good experience with him. My dad, who was a very staunch Republican all his life, had some tolerance for Senator Mansfield. He had none for Metcalf. I think that was generally the case among Republicans in the state. I don't know whether my dad voted for Mansfield or not. He might have a time or two. I tell you, my dad was a devout Republican. I highly doubt he ever did. He didn't get very exorcised about Mansfield. He was exorcised about Metcalf. I think Metcalf inspired loyalty.

JL: Metcalf gave me—it was a great thing. Senators all had ashtrays. They were crystal. They were about this big around. They were very, very heavy. They were massive things with this great seal, the seal of the United States Senate etched into the crystal, and their names. Senator Lee Metcalf, United States Senator of Montana—he gave me the ashtray. I've had it for years. There was a girl at the power company, one of the clerical people who had worked there for some time. One time she was in my office and she saw that ashtray. She said, "For heaven's sake, I didn't know there was a senator named Metcalf. That was my name before I was married." She was from Indiana. I said, "I'll give you the ashtray." I'm sure it's a treasure for her.

BB: We've got about ten minutes left. Do you want to say anything about Congressman Arnold Olsen? Did you know him?

JL: I knew him. He was a neighbor here in the neighborhood. He was a judge in the Montana judicial district here in Butte. He went to dinner from time to time with me. His wife was dead by then. He had a girlfriend. He was active in local Democratic Party politics. He died here. I went to his funeral.

BB: You didn't have any dealings with him when he was a congressman and you were a lobbyist?

JL: None.

BB: Any thoughts or comments on Senator Mansfield?

JL: I admired him very much. He was a great man. I always thought he kind of used Montana as a device to be a United States senator. He's probably the only man like him that I've ever met. There was a man who ran a restaurant in the Fox Theater Building in Missoula. I don't know what his relationship was. I used to go in there as a boy for coffee or lunch. I knew this guy. Well, then years later here I am up in Montana back from the army and living in Conrad. I was a county chairman. You'd get a call at night, like on a Sunday night. The phone would ring and you'd be in bed.

The phone would ring and it would be this guy from Missoula who owned the restaurant. He drove Mike Mansfield around. The call would be, "The Senator is in Helena tonight. He's going to be in Conrad at eight o'clock in the morning. We'd like to have you get a few people together for breakfast." This was at 10:30 the night before. So I'd get on the telephone and I'd call every member of the Democratic Central Committee, all the precinct men and women. I'd call the office holders, all of whom were Democrats, county commissioners. I'd call the John Deere dealer. I'd call the mayor. I'd call the bankers. I'd call the newspaper guy.

There was no one in town who didn't want to go to that breakfast. When they found out why you were calling them at midnight about breakfast if it was for Mike Mansfield, "Oh I'll be there." So we'd pack the place. I'd sit next to him. He'd be very quiet. He never said much. I smoked a pipe and always used Raleigh tobacco. He smoked a pipe constantly. He used Raleigh tobacco. He'd get up and he'd give his set speech of the campaign. They were always those speeches that would blend in the names of the counties like Sweet Grass, Flathead, Lincoln, and Garfield, Broadwater.

The Cabinets and the Pioneers, the Continentals, this and that mountain range, the Yellowstone, the Bighorn, the Missouri—he'd give the whole speech. The speech was so popular it would be published in the papers. He'd send it out at Christmas to everybody. It was a great speech. He wasn't campaigning to provide some certain thing for Montana. He was running to be a United States senator so he could go back and be majority leader.

BB: I guess Metcalf once complained that his voting record was very similar to Mansfield's and yet he had a tough re-election campaign every time. Mansfield always had an easy one. Maybe what you said is just part of the reason for that.

JL: He didn't like him. He didn't go around and meet the people. The party loved him. He didn't have to—he could give a speech a couple times a year at Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner and at a state convention. He had the party faithful.

BB: This is Metcalf. You said that Metcalf didn't like Mansfield?

JL: They were all jealous. They all would make little comments about Mansfield. He didn't spend a lot of time with them just because they were from Montana. It didn't make any difference to him.

BB: He was a pretty private, elusive kind of a guy.

JL: Very much so. Probably some of his closest friends in Washington D.C. were the Anaconda Company lobbyists and Lee Metcalf's friends were Anaconda Company lobbyists.

BB: Who were those lobbyists?

JL: Lloyd Crippen's father-in-law.

BB: Al Wilkinson.

JL: LeRoy Anderson thought Wilkinson was the greatest man that ever walked.

BB: Mansfield didn't really have a warm personality. He was always very kind to me. I have a good recollection of him. Did it surprise you that he was U.S. Senate Majority Leader for 16 years? He wasn't very dynamic.

JL: I wasn't surprised by it. I just felt that whatever he had was what they want back there.

BB: He was very low-key.

JL: I had a professor Wren, Dr. [Melvin C.] Wren at the University of Montana. He was in the History Department. I took some classes from him and boy I'll tell you, talk about fascinating. He was a contemporary professor with Mike Mansfield. There wasn't a class period that went by when he didn't comment about, "What an ignoramus Mike Mansfield is and how in the world he ever got to be elected to the United States Congress, I don't know."

BB: There must have been some personal problem there. I don't think Mansfield was an ignoramus.

JL: No he wasn't. I know that. This guy, my professor, taught Russian history. I took a class on the medieval history of Europe and the medieval history of London. They were the most fascinating courses I've ever taken. There was one thing he was pissed off about was Mike Mansfield being elected to Congress.

BB: John anything else? We're just about at the end of our tape.

JL: No

BB: Okay, well I certainly appreciate it.

JL: Punch it.

BB: All right.

[End of Interview]