



INTERVIEW WITH
Mr. Thor Tollefson

by

Dr. Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian

on

April 24, 1972

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of
Mr. Thor C. Tollefson



In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Thor C. Tollefson (hereinafter referred to as the donor), do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of a personal interview conducted on April 24, 1972 and on April 24, 1974 and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) During the donor's lifetime, the transcript shall be available only to those researchers who have secured his written authorization. Upon the donor's death, the transcript shall be available to researchers without restriction.

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Thor C. Tollefson

Donor

Sept 3, 1976

Date



Acting James E. O'Heill
Archivist of the United States

October 6, 1976

Date

This interview is being done with Mr. Thor Tollefson on April 24, 1972, in Mr. Tollefson's office in Olympia, Washington. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library.

DR. BURG: Now first, Mr. Tollefson, let me ask you when you were born and what your education was--something about your background up to the time that you entered politics in the state of Washington.

MR. TOLLEFSON: I was born, Doctor, in Minnesota, May 2nd, 1901--

DR. BURG: Right.

MR. TOLLEFSON:--and came to Tacoma in 1911 with my father and mother and family. Mother and dad had decided to move west for his health reasons. He died in 1915, and we were destitute people.

DR. BURG: I see.

MR. TOLLEFSON: So I had to go out and get a job in the mills.

DR. BURG: Right.

MR. TOLLEFSON: Which I did. And I worked in them until 1922 when I saw an opportunity to go back to high school. I had dropped out



at the end of the first few months when dad died.

BURG: Right.

TOLLEFSON: And I saw an opportunity to go back to high school, working nights in the mills. And from there, of course, went to the University of Washington and graduated from the law school; and I'm a lawyer by profession.

BURG: I see. When did you graduate from the University, by the way?

TOLLEFSON: 1930.



BURG: Another one of those "lucky" people who came out just at the right time.

TOLLEFSON: Right in the middle of it, yes.

BURG: Yes, yes.

TOLLEFSON: Well, I practiced law for a couple of years. Then--

BURG: In Tacoma, Mr. Tollefson?

TOLLEFSON: Yes, yes. Then served as deputy prosecuting attorney until 1934.

BURG: That's Pierce County?

TOLLEFSON: In Pierce County, yes. And then all the Republicans in Pierce County were swept out. The big sweep occurred in '32, but the county offices were not involved in '32. So in '34 the prosecuting attorney and every other county official who was Republican--and they were all Republicans--were all wiped out. Well, I went back to the practice of law--private law--until '38 and then ran for prosecuting attorney on the Republican ticket and surprised myself more than anybody else by winning it. I served there for eight years, and then in the fall of '46 I ran for Congress and was elected. And I served in Congress for eighteen years, and it was, during that period, of course, that a number of us became interested in a man by the name of Dwight D. Eisenhower. I knew his brother very well, Ed Edgar--

BURG: I see.



TOLLEFSON: --who was an attorney in Tacoma.

BURG: Right.

TOLLEFSON: And so I was attracted to the name.

BURG: Now let me ask you this: In your knowledge of Edgar Eisenhower during the 1930s--before his brother achieved the notoriety he was later to have--how did you find Edgar then? Was he a personal friend of yours at that time?

TOLLEFSON: Yes, yes. I would not say that he was a close friend of mine. He was older, and he had his circle of friends which did not include me. When I say circle of friends--people that he played golf with. He was an excellent golfer. But I got to know him, particularly, when I was prosecuting attorney; and we had some problems together--rather, we were on opposite sides of the problem.

BURG: I see.

TOLLEFSON: I came to admire him immensely. He was a very successful lawyer. And he represented some large corporations. And if I

understood it, he held stock in some of them; so that he was financially well off. I don't mean extremely wealthy, but he was well off.

BURG: Was one of his clients Weyerhauser Timber? Do you remember?

TOLLEFSON: No, there was a--well, he may have had an account there. I'm not certain of that. But he was associated with a pulp and paper outfit. I just don't think of the name of them now, but I can supply it later. They're in the Tacoma phone book. And then some other lumber firms, smaller lumber firms. And connected with a bank. I don't remember which one of the banks.

BURG: Now you say you admired him because of his abilities as a lawyer?

TOLLEFSON: Well, that was one; but I also admired his forthrightness. He would tell you exactly what he thought even if it hurt your feelings. He had no intention of hurting your feelings, but he was sometimes brutally frank. But it was so



much easier to work with somebody if you know exactly what they're thinking.

BURG: Mr. Tollefson, were you ever equally and brutally frank with him? And how did he react to that?

TOLLEFSON: Well, that's the kind of life he liked to live. He expected me to say exactly what I thought.

BURG: So it didn't bother him, and--

TOLLEFSON: No.

BURG:--he could cope with that. All right. Let me ask you: At that time--this would be in the 1930s--were your political philosophies closely aligned with his as far as you could tell, or did you differ on some matters?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, well, we were both Republicans, but he was very much of a conservative Republican whereas I was more moderate. And, as a matter of fact, when I was first in Congress, I was considered a liberal Republican and became known as an Eisenhower Republican--Dwight Eisenhower Republican. Dwight was much



more moderate than Ed, and I know that they didn't see eye to eye on a number of items. And Ed would be quoted in the press as saying he disagreed with his brother on certain positions that the president took, and that made quite a lot of news several times nation-wide. I don't know. I suppose somewhere in the library there are those newspaper quotes of Ed Eisenhower, but the president just laughed them off.

BURG: On one occasion I had that in hand before I came out on this trip. Ed Eisenhower was asked his opinion on something that he had spoken out on in a very conservative--an ultra-conservative--viewpoint, and he was asked again by a newsman to comment on this. And his comment was that he had gotten the word--evidently from his brother--that he was to keep his mouth shut about that particular matter; they didn't need any more help from him on that--in that way. Now you were then in Tacoma at a time when Dwight Eisenhower was out at Ft. Lewis--

TOLLEFSON: 3rd Division.

BURG: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Director, we're sure starting to run out of



time. I hate to interrupt.

TOLLEFSON: Well, this won't be too long now.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: All right.

TOLLEFSON: Yeah.

BURG: Did you see him at that time?

TOLLEFSON: Yes, I did, and met him like you'd meet any general, you know. There was a close relationship between the Fort and the city of Tacoma. The Fort personnel and the Chamber of Commerce had an Armed Services Committee, and they cooked up functions to which the military personnel would be invited. And then there would be reciprocal things too. And I met him through a man by the name of Jim Stack.



BURG: I see.

TOLLEFSON: Jim was his aide--I don't know how long--when he was in Europe and also out here awhile. And Jim was a Tacoma man and was very active in the Elks. That's where I met Jim, and

through Jim I met the general. But he wouldn't remember me when I again met him back in Washington, D.C.

BURG: So you did meet him in Tacoma--

TOLLEFSON: Yes.

BURG:--perhaps through the Elks Club and Jim Stack in 1940 or '41.

TOLLEFSON: Thereabouts, yes.

BURG: And not through Edgar Eisenhower?

TOLLEFSON: No.



BURG: Just a different arrangement entirely. O.K., fine. Now I notice that you are being hard pressed--

TOLLEFSON: Well, it's just my staff. We've got a staff meeting, and I have a 1:30 meeting in Portland. I think that's what he's worried about--1:30, yeah. We got to get on the ball.

BURG: Well, now if you would prefer, we can stop at this point. And then if you can give me some time on my next trip to the

state, we'll pick up where we now are and continue. Would that be a convenience to you?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. I felt badly when I came to the office this morning and learned that the Oregon Fish Commission had arranged an emergency meeting. We have Indian fishing problems out here.

BURG: Yes, we've heard of these.

TOLLEFSON: And so they asked if we couldn't come down today and review them. Of course, I had to say, "Yes." We manage the Columbia River Fisheries together, so one state can't act without the other. And I felt that I would miss you all together. I didn't think you would come till this afternoon.

BURG: Right.

TOLLEFSON: Well--but we were talking about Edgar expressing himself on occasions in opposition of positions of the president.

BURG: Yes.

TOLLEFSON: And, of course, that made good news copy. And I remember one occasion when Ed and his wife came to Washington.



Ed had some business there, and he wanted to have a social gathering: dinner with myself as his congressman and Barry Goldwater and someone else. There were only about a half a dozen people in Ed's hotel suite, and we had a couple of cocktails. Then we went out to dinner, and Ed said that he had sort of sneaked into town because he wanted to avoid the press. And he said--when he had written or called long distance to tell me he was coming and "Could I have dinner with him?"--not to say anything--that he didn't want the press to know he was in town. He says, "You know how I am; I'll say what I think." He was so careful about not having anybody know he was in town. And the next day he called me on the phone, and he said, "Thor, would you believe it?" He said; "When I got back to the hotel with my wife, here were a number of reporters just camped right at my door. Somehow or another they found that I had been in town. Maybe somebody saw me or something. But there they were." And he said, "I deliberately stayed away from the hotel until it was late so I could come in and nobody would see me. And here they were!" So he got interviewed anyhow.

BURG: Yeah, yeah, they were waiting for him. Now that's good to hear.



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Thor C. Tollefson
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Sept 3, 1976
Date

Acting James E. O'Neil
Archivist of the United States

October 6, 1976
Date



DR. BURG: I'll introduce this by saying this interview is with Mr. Thor Tollefson in Mr. Tollefson's office in Olympia, Washington on April 24, 1974, Wednesday, and present for the interview is Mr. Tollefson and the interviewer, Dr. Burg, of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Now when we stopped the last time, you and I were at 1939 and you were telling me that you had just met General Eisenhower, then Lieutenant-Colonel Eisenhower, through Jim [James R.] Stack.

MR. TOLLEFSON: Yes.



DR. BURG: And you also knew Edgar Eisenhower. In fact you knew him before you ever had met the General. So that was where we had gotten to. In fact you mentioned to me that, I think, you first met Eisenhower at the Tacoma Elks' Club.

MR. TOLLEFSON: I think it was at the Elks' Club because at that time I was not a member of the country club. And Jim Stack, this is quite vague, brought the colonel there.

DR. BURG: Was Stack himself a member of the Elks' Club?

MR. TOLLEFSON: Oh, yes. He was a very popular member of the Elks' Club. One one occasion he brought Eisenhower there. And my meeting him was just, you know, in conjunction with a hell of a lot of other people meeting him.

BURG: It's interesting to me that Stack, the way you described him, he was a popular member of the Elks' Club at that time, and yet Stack himself was then an enlisted man.

TOLLEFSON: Yes.

BURG: I think a sergeant or first sergeant.



TOLLEFSON: Something like that. I don't know when he became one of Eisenhower's staff or whether it was then or--I just don't know that.

BURG: It seems to me that the two of them are in the same outfit. It's the Fifteenth Infantry of the Third Division, I think. Stack was sort of the non-com in charge of the office. And Eisenhower had come in in a high position, and so I suppose that he recognized Stack's ability, and Stack may have said, "Would you like to meet some people at the Elks' Club in Tacoma?" and brought him in.

TOLLEFSON: Sounds like it. Did you ever get a chance to talk to Jim?

BURG: Yes, we did two interviews with him, and on the last one, just as I was leaving--that was last year, he said,

"Well, I look forward to seeing you about the same time next year. I'm going to retire in December. I'll give you all the time you want." And, of course, as you know, within about six weeks time he was dead.

TOLLEFSON: Well, it's too bad that it happened to Jim because he was a source of a tremendous amount of information about Eisenhower.

BURG: Yes, it is.

TOLLEFSON: He was with him you know over in Europe.



BURG: Yes, we got a portion of that, but, unfortunately, we didn't get it all, and it was really too bad. Now when you met Colonel Eisenhower on that occasion, was there anything about him that impressed you at all, do you happen to remember?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, it's the same thing that impressed me when I met him later when he came back from Europe. He was such a smiling, genial, friendly person. And when you were introduced to him, he made you feel as though you were a very important person, when you probably, in most cases, were not at all. He made you feel important. He had a way, and it

was perfectly natural, I'm sure. No put-on thing with him. It was a perfectly natural thing, and it just made everybody that met him feel important.

BURG: So that stood out in your mind when you first met him in '39, '40. You already knew his brother, Edgar. Do you recollect whether you made any comparisons between those two personalities?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. Ed was a legal beagle you know. I knew of Ed Eisenhower as an attorney, and he was a member of the Bar Association as I was, but we had no lawsuits involving each other until I became prosecuting attorney.

BURG: And when was that?



TOLLEFSON: That was in '38. And then when we dealt, he was a hard dealer. I mean he was a tough guy. I don't mean to say he was unfriendly; he was just tough. He didn't have that same friendly outgoing thing about him that Ike did at all. In later years, after I became a member of congress and after I came back again, then Ed was much more genial. See I had probably attained a little more status than I had when I was prosecuting attorney.

BURG: So you think that to some extent Ed's taciturn qualities may have been because you really didn't merit, in his eyes, his full attention?

TOLLEFSON: That's right. That was the difference between Ed--at least this is my impression. I was a kind of a, I shouldn't say a nobody, but I didn't have status, you see, until after I became a congressman. Then when I became a congressman, Ed came back a few times either on business or to visit his brother or they invited him to the White House, which he did. Then Ed would contact me and invite my wife and me out to dinner or invite me out to lunch, came up to the Hill once in a while to see me.

BURG: During that period, '39, '40, did you see the General very often?

TOLLEFSON: No.



BURG: Never played golf with him or anything like that?

TOLLEFSON: No. If I'd have been a member of the club, he probably would have played--Ed was a member of the club, longtime member.

BURG: This is the Tacoma Country Club?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. And they had a policy over the years, and it's still in existence whereby the people at the fort [Lewis], certain category of people, are honorary members, and they can come and play. Now whether that extended to some colonels-- I don't remember that Ike ever was the commanding officer at the fort.

BURG: No, no.



TOLLEFSON: So he might not have been in that category, but his brother, Ed, would have had him out there.

BURG: Sure. So you were introduced to him, met him that early in your career. Then you did not see him during the war period.

TOLLEFSON: Well, only at some function. For instance when Jim would bring him in, say, to an Elks' function, I don't remember that it was anything but infrequent, but the Chamber of Commerce annually had a military day, army day, and maybe a navy day, too, army-navy day. I never was a member of the Chamber, but to those functions I would be invited. I was

either prosecuting attorney or I was a congressman, and I would be invited to them. There I would see the General. This didn't happen many times.

BURG: Was his wife ever present at any of these functions that you recall?

TOLLEFSON: If I met her in Tacoma before I went back, I don't recall that. I did meet her, of course, in Washington, D. C., and she was a delightful person. We had the Daffodil Parade every year in Tacoma, not only a parade, but a whole week of celebration. The people in Tacoma would send me batches of daffodils to get some national publicity. I'd think of some damn thing you know to get some national publicity.



BURG: These were sent to you while you were back in Washington?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. One time I had a bunch of the daffodils made up in a great big bouquet, and I called Mrs. Eisenhower's secretary and told her what I was doing. "I'd like to present these to Mrs. Eisenhower. Would that be possible?" This was

the first couple of years that she was there. And the woman said, "Yes." She selected the time, and protocol had it that you got to be there at least fifteen minutes early. Well into the White House I came and waited out in the entrance way. No, they put me in one of the rooms, the Blue Room, or whatever. And after a while Mrs. Eisenhower came in and she said, "I'm a few minutes late. I apologize, but the youngsters are having an ice cream and cake party downstairs. Wouldn't you like to come down and have some," which kind of nonplussed me. Here the President's wife asked me to come down to have cake and ice cream with the kids.

BURG: Yes. And did you go down?



TOLLEFSON: No. I said, "Mrs. Eisenhower, the youngsters wouldn't be interested in seeing me. They're probably having a good time, and I'd just spoil it probably." So we didn't go down.

"Well," she said, "let's not hurry out and have our picture taken." Anybody that has a function like this has their picture taken by the White House photographer, you know, the whole slough of them there. They always want pictures.

So she had arranged, or her secretary had arranged, for me to give her the bouquet out on the porch, and she said, "Let's not hurry out. Those people got nothing else to do. They'll wait for us; let's talk about Tacoma and Fort Lewis." She said, "You know, the President and I have talked about where we're going to live when we retire. And one of the places we've talked about is that Puyallup area," Tacoma area, you know. She said, "Because I remember, the President remembers so well all those visits that we took out to the daffodil fields and the tulip fields." They raise a lot of tulips there too, and they are just beautiful you know, if it's a nice day. She said, "That was one of three places that we had in mind." One of them was the Pennsylvania area, and I don't remember the third one.

BURG: You don't remember what that third one was?



TOLLEFSON: No, I don't remember what that third one was.

BURG: I wonder if it would have been the desert country of southern California or that area?

TOLLEFSON: I don't remember. Remember I'm a young fellow

basking in the glory of the President's wife, and I'm a little excited.

BURG: And this was some twenty odd years ago too that this happened.

TOLLEFSON: And so we did a lot of chatting. We must have kept those damned photographers waiting fifteen or twenty minutes at least. And out we went, and of course they took different angle pictures of her depending on where the photographer stood, and one of those pictures appeared in, I think, it was the Pageant Magazine that wrote a story about Mamie Eisenhower. They had several pictures, three or four, five, maybe, of her, and one of them was this picture with the daffodils. It was a beautiful picture of her.



BURG: Well, that was nice. But you did not see the Eisenhowers then until after World War II. When they left Fort Lewis around 1940, I think it was '40, then you did not meet them again.

TOLLEFSON: No, I didn't meet him again until he came back and they had some kind of a reception for him down at the Statler Hotel.

BURG: In Washington?

TOLLEFSON: In Washington. I was invited; I guess all congressmen were. And of course Jim Stack was beaming all over, and so he grabbed a hold of me and took me over to the General and introduced me again. Of course the General didn't remember me. Then the next time I saw him was when he spoke to the-- wait a minute--I don't know whether this was after he came back or when he made a report. This I don't remember.

BURG: It may have been 1946, that first one, or actually '45. It could have been '45, I think.

TOLLEFSON: Of course he went back over to NATO, didn't he?

BURG: To NATO, yes.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, he went back over to NATO. Well, all right, then I saw him at the hotel first, and then as head of the NATO he made a report to congress and spoke to them in the Library of Congress conference room or auditorium, which was kind of a strange thing. I mean strange to me; I expected that he would talk in the chambers, House of Representatives, at a joint session. For some reason or another he spoke to



us in the auditorium of the Library of Congress, which was a beautiful place.

BURG: You never heard why it was done that way?

TOLLEFSON: No, no. If I did, I've forgotten. And he got up without a single damned note and just made a flawless report. I was extremely impressed, more impressed with that speech than any he ever gave afterwards.



BURG: I see. Was that a common feeling among your colleagues as far as you could tell?

TOLLEFSON: Well, I don't know how they felt about what I just said. They were impressed with the talk he made because we discussed that immediately after the meeting and the next day over on the floor. You're chit-chatting like you always do, and the fellows were commenting about what a wonderful speech he had given. Even after he was President he never spoke like that. I suppose it was because as President he had to be very careful of every word and would have to have it written. But this one was without notes, extemporaneous in a sense, though he knew what he was going to say and

probably had gone over it in his mind.

BURG: About how long did that speech take, Mr. Tollefson?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, a half hour.

BURG: And in your considered judgment, you never heard him give a better speech than that?

TOLLEFSON: No, I didn't. No, I didn't.

BURG: That's interesting to know.

TOLLEFSON: And I think it was because, as I say, he didn't read it.

BURG: Within a short time after that, I presume, say within a year, you would have begun to hear about his candidacy for the Presidency.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. We had, on the House side, kind of a liberal block of Republicans, and I was one of them. We wanted Eisenhower to be a candidate. At that time there was a lot of support, mostly Republicans, to have Bob [Senator Robert A.] Taft be the candidate. And Taft was one of the great

Americans of my time. I admired him so greatly and had occasion to work with him. While I admired him and I thought he'd be a great President, I was afraid that he didn't have the public appeal that Eisenhower would have, and, hell, I was anxious to get a Republican President, just like everybody else. I just felt kind of guilty about it in one sense because I was a friend of Bob Taft's. I don't mean a close friend, but we were friendly. And I admired him so greatly I felt like I was being a little bit of a traitor. But, like I told some of my Republican friends like [Congressman] Clarence Brown (Clarence Brown was the guy that managed Taft's campaign you know and Clarence and I had been in the House for several years and were very friendly) and I told Clarence what my thinking was--that I had decided to support Eisenhower because I thought he could make it and I didn't think that Taft could.

BURG: What did Mr. Brown reply?



TOLLEFSON: We didn't have any argument about it. He said, "I can understand your point of view," words to that effect. But, gee, he said, "This man, Taft, is the greatest--got more to offer than Eisenhower."

And I, in effect, said "That may be, Clarence, but I don't think he can make it. I just don't think he can make it. I want a Republican President."

BURG: Mr. Tollefson, if you were asked to give, let us say, the outstanding personal characteristic of Mr. Taft's that caused you to admire him most of all, could you give me an answer to a question like that?

TOLLEFSON: Well, first of all, a man of highest integrity, high integrity of mind, right was right, you know. His great understanding of American government and history. You see, his father was a President too. And his knowledge of government, especially in the legislative area. Integrity, knowledge of history and government, tremendous legislative ability. Gee, he could get support from the Democrats, you know, unless it was a strict party cleavage, but he was one of these guys, something like [Senator Arthur] Vandenburg finally developed to be, a man of respect for both sides of the aisle.

BURG: The outstanding liability, Mr. Tollefson, what do you think there?

TOLLEFSON: He was too cold and impersonal. He didn't have the warmth, and that's why I thought he couldn't get elected. But you know how the public is. You see two guys up there, you like the warm guy, the guy with the personality. Of course everybody has a personality, but Ike was so warm and outgoing, and that wasn't true of Bob Taft.

BURG: Reserved and cool.



TOLLEFSON: Very reserved. Rarely saw him laugh or smile.

BURG: Do you remember, Mr. Tollefson, precisely when or let us say the month, if you could, when you made your decision that it was going to be Eisenhower as far as you were concerned?

TOLLEFSON: No. I can say that it was when he was over in Europe at NATO and there was the talk then about Bob Taft. This is when the talk started about Taft being a candidate, and then thereafter, well, we need somebody who is warmer you know. Then the name Eisenhower began being bandied about, and there were some reports in the newspaper or otherwise saying that he didn't want to be a candidate. So this little group of liberals, Republicans, decided that we would write Eisenhower a letter and plead with him to consent to being a

candidate. Now we didn't send it. Henry Cabot Lodge, on the Senate side, met with us once in a while. And so we asked him, and he signed the letter too if I remember, if he wouldn't go over to Europe and get an appointment with Eisenhower and give him the letter and then make his, you know, pitch on behalf of all of us. I don't mean to indicate that this was the thing that decided him; I'm sure it isn't. But it had apparently some little impact on him--at least Henry Cabot Lodge did because Henry Cabot Lodge was used by Eisenhower.

BURG: Now in that liberal group, can you give me some of the names of those who were with you?

TOLLEFSON: Jack [Jacob] Javits was. Gee, I wish I had my old directory, Jack Javits, Jim [James G.] Fulton from Pittsburgh, Usher Burdick from North Dakota. See my memory is so damned poor.



BURG: No, you're doing fine.

TOLLEFSON: I think maybe John was there, John [Davis] Lodge, too, I think. He was one of our group. Whether by that time

he had become Governor of Connecticut or not, I don't remember.

BURG: How big was the group, this particular group?

TOLLEFSON: Well, there were seventeen of us.

BURG: And if we check we should be able to find your letter, and all of you signed the letter.

TOLLEFSON: Well, I didn't keep any copy of it. But I certainly remember the letter.

BURG: All right, we can check that out. We may be able to find that letter, and that will give the names of your group.

TOLLEFSON: Jack Javits might. You know, Jack--you might not agree with the guy; I get mad at him once in a while--but he has a tremendous mind--got a tremendous mind. He might even remember where he filed it; that's the kind of guy he is.

BURG: That's another thought for us to check out, and we'll do that. Now once Mr. Eisenhower made the decision that he would run, what was then your role in that 1952 campaign? You're in Congress so--

TOLLEFSON: Yes. O.K. We had an interesting situation here in the state. We had a governor here by the name of Art [Arthur B.] Langlie whose campaign I managed in Pierce County the first time he ran. He was governor, and he was not getting along with the King County Chairman, Ray Moore. I think maybe you've talked to him.

BURG: Right. I know Moore.

TOLLEFSON: Art tried to unseat Ray a couple of times by drumming up precinct committee support for the county convention and having enough precinct committeemen pro-Langlie as against pro-Ray. But Ray won every time. Ray was a hell of a good organizer, real hell of a good organizer.

BURG: That's the impression I get too.



TOLLEFSON: And while I helped Art in the campaign, I became a little disillusioned with Art and his party politics. He was all for Art Langlie and not so much for the party you see. And so I was very close to Ray Moore and his people, and the first thing either Ray called me or I called Ray and said, I don't know whether he said or I said it, "Let's start

drumming up delegates for the state convention." Because we knew the Taft staff was out here. A fellow by the name of Paul, I think it was Judge [Charles H.] Paul, very fine--

BURG: That's right, Judge Paul.

TOLLEFSON: Very fine person and he was drumming up support for Taft.

BURG: And had on several different campaigns. College friend of Taft's.

TOLLEFSON: I guess they were. Well, he was a fine person. My, he was a fine person. So it was a contest then for delegates. Well, Ray, as I say, was just one of a hell of a good organizer. I don't remember who the hell was state chairman at that time. At any rate, Ray goes to work, and of course he's got a big block right there in King County. He has the control of the county organization, and he's got control of who the delegates are going to be for the biggest block of delegates comes right out of King County. Well, then Ray goes to work around the state. He reports in to me cause he thinks I'm some kind of a knowledgable guy which



wasn't correct; Ray was the guy. He called me one day off the floor of the House, and they were over in Spokane, and the state convention was just getting started, and he said, "Just want to report we got all we want. We got all their votes. But," he said, "boy, this guy, Paul, he's been such a wonderful person. What do you think about giving them four delegates?" I think that was the figure; I've forgotten now.

BURG: Four, that's right.

TOLLEFSON: And I said, "Well, I think that's a wonderful gesture. I think that's a wonderful gesture and can't hurt Eisenhower's cause one bit." And that's the way it was.

BURG: And would do something to ease the feeling in the Taft camp here in Washington.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, that's right. Well, then the delegates were elected to the national convention, and at that point Governor Langlie takes over as the head of the delegation. He went over to the state convention too as he always would, and he insisted on the governor's prerogative of being the head of the delegation. Well, what could the other fellow--you know,



after all he was our governor, our Republican governor. So he headed up the delegation, and he brought with him a fellow by the name of Don Eastvold, who was the attorney general at that time.

BURG: A young man and quite a career in front of him, or so it would have appeared.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. He had it in front of him and then botched it so far as his political future was concerned. And he was "the young man with the book." But at any rate, Ike Eisenhower and Sherm [Sherman] Adams got the impression that it was the governor who delivered the state. And that Don Eastvold had helped deliver it. Hell, neither one of them had a damned thing to do with it, not one thing. It was Ray Moore and his people who did it all, and Ray never got the credit except that I said it many times. But Sherm Adams, whom I saw many times, much more so than the President--you know, when you go to the White House you can't impose on the President's time, but you can on a guy like Sherm Adams. And Sherm always had a feeling that the governor, Langlie, and Eastvold, were the ones who were responsible for the state Republican delegates going for Eisenhower.

BURG: Were you ever able to disabuse Adams of that?

TOLLEFSON: Only one time when Don decided to be a candidate for governor on the Republican ticket at the end of his term as attorney general. And he didn't make it; he didn't get the Republican nomination. I was in that, not in the race. In the preliminary time period, I spent nine months canvassing the state to see what my chances would be. The only reason that I was a kind of a tentative candidate if that's the word was because Sherm Adams and the President asked me to be.

BURG: Oh, they did.

TOLLEFSON: Yes.

BURG: Can you tell me about that meeting with them, the circumstances?

TOLLEFSON: I can. I was down at the White House, Sherm Adams had called me down there, and he said he had talked to Art Langlie, and Sherm said, "The President and I want you to be a candidate." And the reason was they had found out then about Don Eastvold. They had become disillusioned with Don. Most times when he came back to Washington, DC he stayed at the



Jefferson Hotel where the hostess was a beautiful young gal--

[Interruption]

BURG: The hostess at the Jefferson was a beautiful young gal, and there was some unsavory implications about Eastvold.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. But then there was more than that. It became known to Governor Langlie because during Don's term as attorney general the governor was able to, well shall I say observe, maybe hear about Don's activities. Don was married and had, I think, five children; yet rumors were that he was going around with other women. And this became common knowledge; so when Don Eastvold announced that he was going to be a candidate for governor, Art Langlie went all around the state campaigning against him.

BURG: Mr. Langlie had a pretty strong religious streak in him by then.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, sir. Don's dad was a pastor, and he was the head of the Pacific Lutheran College, and Langlie thought it was horrible for the son of a minister to act like Don.

Incidentally, one other guy asked me to run, and that was



Dick [Richard M.] Nixon.

BURG: Oh, he did.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. On two different occasions, once when he was out here and once back in Washington, DC. We were at some party function, and I came over to him to say "hello" you know; we chatted. He said, "We want you go for that governorship." And he said the same thing out here when he came out for some Republican function; he said the same thing.

BURG: So it sounds like it had been pretty thoroughly discussed in the White House. Now the proposition was put to you by Adams and not by the President.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. One thing I was going to say to you, you asked me if I was ever able to disabuse Adams' mind. I don't think I ever did with respect to Art Langlie, but once when I was there and Don was having some of his troubles that Sherm heard about, I think, through Art Langlie, he said, "What's happening to that bright young friend of ours?"

And I said, "Well, Sherm, I don't know, but on more than one occasion you have been told about Don." Well, I don't



know. He might have thought Don had just changed from what he was. He debated Everett Dirksen at that national convention and Time and--was it Time or U.S. News and World Report, maybe all of them--but one of them called him, "Beware of the young man carrying a book." Don was a pretty good speaker, and he carried this law book up when he was debating Ev and cited from it. I didn't go to the convention, but the report I got was that he bested Ev Dirksen which was quite an order itself.

BURG: That seems to be true. That was there at Chicago in 1952. What was your personal reaction when Sherm Adams, and Richard Nixon too, when these men put this proposition to you? How did you feel personally about this?

TOLLEFSON: Well, of course I was flattered that men of that stature would ask me to run or, you know, urge me to run, very flattered. On the other hand I was quite happy with my position as U.S. Congressman, and I did a little bit of debating in my own mind. Then, on my next visit back home, I contacted my supporters, a number of my supporters, and most of them were Seattle people to tell you the truth, a big part of King County was in my district, and asked them about it. They



thought that I should take a look at it. So for nine months I'd come home whenever I could, and Ray Moore and some of the other people would arrange meetings for me all around the state to get reaction to my candidacy. I got very disappointed with the governor who was one of those that urged me to run too. Wherever I went I saw no evidence of the governor's people doing any work on my behalf. And yet some of his appointees came back to Washington, D.C. to urge me to run, four or five of them came back. Then whenever I came home, I had my office in Tacoma, and one or more would come down. Toward the end of the nine months the secretary of agriculture for the state came to see me, see how things were going, and I said, "They're not going very good, and," I said, "while you're here, you know wherever I've gone, even over in your home area, I've seen no evidence of you or anybody else doing anything on my behalf." And I said, "I can't understand it. The governor wants me to run, and yet he's not doing anything to help. In your department, you've got a bunch of Republicans down there; why can't they help?"

He said, "Oh, we can't do that. We're about fifty-fifty

Republican and Democrat, and we can't get in with that."

And I said, "Well, that's a fine howdy-do." I made up my mind right then that I would withdraw.

BURG: Who was this man, this state secretary of agriculture?

TOLLEFSON: Maybe it'll come to me.

BURG: From east of the mountains, wasn't he?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. It was a Scandanavian name, and he was a nice person, but I got the impression that he was under orders from, and so was everybody else, from Langlie not to engage in partisan politics. Now I know that was true with respect to the state patrol because Art told me so. And so did the patrol. He came to a state patrol meeting and said, "I don't want any of you fellows out campaigning for me. Don't want you engaged in politics at all." And a lot of them wanted to do something. So I don't know. One day the governor wants you to run and then on the other hand he tells his people not to do anything for me; so I decided to get out. Then, about that time, a poll was taken by Fred Baker. Fred was related somewhat to Art, and I'm not sure what that



relationship was. Fred Baker, he's been a tremendous Republican supporter and worker all the years I've known him. He conducted polls; his business is advertising. Incidentally, you ought to talk to him maybe, if you haven't already. He took a poll and the poll didn't show up very good at all. I didn't believe the poll, and I told Fred that. Fred came back to Washington, D. C. with it and asked for a meeting with the six Republican congressmen from the state. We had six at that time.

BURG: What was the year by the way?

TOLLEFSON: 1956. I looked at the poll, and, according to the poll, I had one vote up in Bellingham. And I said, "Fred, a white mule could get more votes than that up in Bellingham. There's something wrong with that poll." Well, as the election results showed, the poll was way off. Don Eastvold had a poll taken in Pierce County, and this was considered a key county. That was one of the reasons they wanted me to run; it had been so strongly Democrat, and yet I as a Republican had carried it. Don Eastvold had one of his people take a poll, and they publicized the poll showing Don way ahead of Emmett Anderson



who was the eventual Republican nominee and me. That surprised me because I had been a quite popular vote getter. Well after the whole thing was over and kind of forgotten, the fellow who took the poll told me sitting right in that chair he said, "You know that poll that we took that showed Don ahead of you and Emmett?"

I said, "Yes."

Well he said, "That wasn't true. It showed you way ahead of both of them."

BURG: And it had been doctored?

TOLLEFSON: Yes.

BURG: On the governor's orders, do you think?

TOLLEFSON: No, oh, hell, no.

BURG: Had Baker?

TOLLEFSON: No, no. This was just Don Eastvold's personal poll taken when I was investigating the prospects and Emmett Anderson, well, Emmett was an announced candidate as Don was, but I was just tentatively exploring with the prospects.



BURG: Testing the wind?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. And then the poll was taken at that time, and the fellow who took it for Don told me that it did not show Don ahead as they had publicized, and they publicized that all over the state. But it showed me way ahead. But that hasn't anything to do with Ike Eisenhower.

BURG: No, but that explains some things about the inner workings in the state. Was Floyd Oles one of your supporters in Tacoma?

TOLLEFSON: No, he was the guy that took the poll for Don Eastvold. I think Floyd would have been for me if I'd have gotten to him, but Don got into this thing first you see. And one of the guys he got was Floyd Oles.

BURG: So it was Floyd who told you that--

TOLLEFSON: Yes. Floyd's been a friend of mine all throughout. I have no reason to doubt his word; I've never caught him in a lie to me ever.

BURG: No, everything I know about him would indicate that



there's a man who tells you the truth whether you're going to like it or not.

TOLLEFSON: Well, when he told me that (and I never asked him--he volunteered this information), it wasn't for any purpose of getting anything for me; we were just conversing; he was going to let the other side come in and say hello.

BURG: I'll be darned. Now in '56, you had that on your mind. Did you take any part in the Eisenhower campaign in '56, yourself?

TOLLEFSON; No. Well, I shouldn't say, no. I was running for re-election myself as a candidate for congress, and what I would do, every place I made a speech for myself I'd also make a pitch for Ike Eisenhower and what a wonderful person he was and that sort of thing.

BURG: Judging the reaction of the crowd, Eisenhower was still popular in '56.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, he was. Yes, he was.

BURG: Did you see any lessening of his popularity between '52 and '56?



TOLLEFSON: No, I did not.

BURG: You did not in your contacts with the electorate. That's interesting to know too. Now let me ask you this while I'm still thinking of this, you had known Mr. Nixon from 1952, or had you known him earlier than that?

TOLLEFSON: We came into Congress in January of 1947, the 80th Congress; we came in together. He came from Whittier, California, and I came from Tacoma, Washington.

BURG: So you were freshmen congressmen together?

TOLLEFSON: We were freshmen congressmen together.

BURG: Can I ask you to assess the man that you knew then? How did you view his abilities as a congressman?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, I thought Dick was a very capable and influential young congressman. Even for a freshman he had a good ability to address the House of Representatives. When he got in the well of the House, he had a way about him and a mannerism that made people listen to him on both sides of the aisle. He had good support from the Democrat side of the aisle, from J. Hardin



Peterson, Florida. At that time he was a member of the Un-American Activities Committee, and I remember his first speech about Alger Hiss. He explained communism to the senior members of the congress you know.

BURG: And got away with it.

TOLLEFSON: And got away with it. But he knew some details that none of them knew because the Un-American Activities Committee had access to information that none of the rest of us had. And he got a real round of applause. You don't always get applause when you get through making a speech in that house you know. Most of those guys are orators, and if they hear some other orator that doesn't impress them too much unless he had something special to say and says it well. And Dick got applause on that talk of his that day. Well I don't know just how to say that I was impressed with Dick's integrity and what I considered to be his love of country. And I sensed that he had this all the time, this love of country; he wanted to serve. He was not in a sense an orator like they usually think of them, like Everett Dirksen and those people. He had a sincerity about him. I've heard Dick talk many times, not



only in the congress but at Republican meetings or a public meeting. I never was impressed with his oratory, but I was impressed with his sincerity.

BURG: And you judged that sincerity to be genuine?

TOLLEFSON: Yes, I did. I did.

BURG: Have you ever had reason to change your mind about that?

TOLLEFSON: I have not had any reason to change my mind. My only problem now is that I don't know all the facts involved in this Watergate thing. If I were to believe some of the things that have been published in the news media, then I might question Dick's love of country

But I have no evidence in front of me that would cause me to change my mind, and so I have been supporting Dick Nixon in his travail and have written to him about it and gotten a couple of responses from him.

BURG: Well, that's very interesting. Of course you have known one another since 1947; so you felt quite free to do this and the responses were from one friend to another.



TOLLEFSON: Right.

BURG: That's interesting to hear, sir. In 1952 when he was chosen to be the vice-presidential candidate, may I assume that you supported his candidacy?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, indeed I did. He was my friend. Yes, sir. And I was a little bit perturbed at Mr. Eisenhower because he didn't seem to accept him with open arms, you know, if you'll remember. I don't know whether you remember that period or not.

BURG: I do. I do.

TOLLEFSON: And it wasn't until the "Checkers" thing broke that Ike then put his arms--well, I remember the picture--he did put his arm around Dick Nixon.

BURG: Yes, and said, "You're my boy."

TOLLEFSON: "That's my boy."

BURG: Yes. Did your perturbation take any concrete form. For example, it would be one thing to think to yourself, "I'm a little irked at General Eisenhower; he's not responding



as I think he should." Or did it go further, Mr. Tollefson? Did you call anyone or write to anyone?

TOLLEFSON: No, no, I did not; I did not. Who was I to talk to the president, you know. That was a matter for somebody in the higher echelon. And I felt similarly when Dick was first a candidate for President and he wasn't getting the support from the President that I thought he should get, you know.

BURG: Is it possible that the reason you would feel this way and perhaps others too is that you have been a practicing politician, Mr. Eisenhower, I think we could safely say, was not?

TOLLEFSON: That's right, I think so. Everybody has their own philosophy of politics, party politics. I like to think I'm a team player, and I want to go all out for the team. This is one of the things that defeated me in 1964. I went for Goldwater because he was the Republican nominee. And that didn't help me in Pierce County. They had sold a bill of goods that Goldwater would get us into war and that sort of thing. At any rate, I felt that the President should




be somewhat like that, big enough, far out as I was as a team player. But, nonetheless, it bothered me that he didn't join the campaign for Dick. It might have made the difference. That was the time Kennedy beat or didn't beat him. It was that close you see.

BURG: Yes, depending on how one viewed that. I was going to ask you, this is one thing that you would be willing to say about Mr. Eisenhower. It's a place where you felt he in some way did not measure up to a standard that you would have preferred he reach. Do you think of any other occasions where his performance, seen through your eyes as a practicing and experienced political leader, fell short?

TOLLEFSON: Well, nothing quickly comes to mind except one state of affairs that existed down in the White House, and most, if not all, Republican congressmen were aware of this. All politicians are familiar with the value of their name appearing in the press and over the radio and all that sort of thing while they're back in Washington, D. C. They want to keep their name before the public and in a favorable way. So if five million dollars was going to be appropriated for



military facilities in Pierce County, I would like to be the one to announce it. And we would be aware of something coming up, but, when the decision was made and the money was to be allocated, then we wanted to make the announcement. This was, in a sense, agreeable to the White House except--well, it really wasn't; it really wasn't agreeable. It finally was to the extent they would give us twenty minutes lead time, and this was after several years, they would give us twenty minutes lead time over the Democrats from the state of Washington. After they talked to me, then they'd call the Democrat congressmen and give them the same news. Now this was contrary to past practice. The Democrats would get it a day ahead when they had a Democrat President. Republicans just hoped for any news out of the White House, and they didn't get it. And this was one criticism of the White House that most of all Republican members of the House had: couldn't depend on the White House for any political help.



BURG: They gave you twenty minutes to get on the phone to the Washington Post and get your story in?

TOLLEFSON: No, no to the--

BURG: To the Tacoma Tribune?

TOLLEFSON: --Tribune and the Seattle PI [Post-Intelligencer],
Seattle Times, whatever it happened to be.

BURG: And Heaven help you if the lines were clogged up. You
might lose.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. And it didn't do us any good because twenty
minutes after we called why the Democrat member, Scoop [Senator
Henry Jackson] or Maggie [Senator Warren Magnuson], or some-
body would call with exactly the same information so the
story would either publish all three of our names or none.
And they would just say the Washington delegation. So we got
no benefits at all.



BURG: Were these releases coming to you from Jim [James C.]
Hagerty?

TOLLEFSON: No. He was the least cooperative. The White
House under every President had a congressional liaison person,
and one fellow that Ike had was a fellow by the name of
Anderson from California. He had been in the House ten years,

and he dropped out then when Ike got elected. I suppose Anderson was active in politics on Eisenhower's behalf down in California. He came back and was the congressional liaison for Ike, or one of them.

BURG: Jack Anderson?

TOLLEFSON: Jack Anderson. That's right, Jack Anderson. Now there were a couple of other fellows and one of them was a military man; he was a kind of a congressional liaison too, General--

BURG: Goodpaster?

TOLLEFSON: No, another fellow [Wilton B. Persons]. I think it was colonel but I think general. Well, at any rate, Jack was the one that got to the House members because he was a member of the House. I remember how I pleaded with Jack. That was the only reason I got twenty minutes because I begged Jack, "For God's sake, you've been in politics how about giving me this release."

BURG: Clearly he must have had to fight somebody. Was it the President that he had to fight to get even the twenty minutes?



TOLLEFSON: The President--he never said that, but you know you can't talk about your boss like that. You don't ask.

BURG: Even to an old friend from congressional days; so you never found out.

TOLLEFSON: No, no. I assume it was Ike. It could have been Sherm Adams although Sherm had served a term in the House so he knew something about politics. I just concluded that the President himself wanted to have support from the Democrats in the congress too you know.

BURG: Now, other than that instance (that clearly was a major factor in your mind), were there any other difficulties that you as a Washington state congressman had with the White House, any of the White House staff? Now you say Jim Hagerty for example was the least cooperative.

TOLLEFSON: Well, his was a different job. I mean, Jim was friendly. I never had occasion to call Jim and ask for anything because I assumed that he was supposed to be the President's press secretary, and that was his job. But there was a little fellow down there, a little short guy. He was with Ike all the time he was there, and then he was with Dick



too in his first term, [Gerald] Morgan, a fellow by the name of Morgan. He was very helpful. I called Morgan on a number of occasions for help, and he was very cooperative. I've known him before, before Ike came there. He was a lawyer, damned smart lawyer too. And he was quite helpful, more so than Sherm Adams. Couldn't depend on Sherm. To give you a good illustration, there was a new TV channel scheduled for Seattle, and a group of Seattle businessmen solicited my support to get it. Now they had a senator by the name of Harry Cain, Republican senator, but they did not go to Harry because they couldn't trust Harry. I mean, this is what they told me; they couldn't depend on him to do anything. He was too busy making speeches or something, at least that's what they said. So they came and asked me, although I didn't represent Seattle as such; I was in south King County. So the first person I went to was Sherm Adams. He assured me of his complete support. And I had a number of visits with him, and then he asked me to get--Gerry Morgan was his name--asked me to get Gerry Morgan to help too. "Go see Gerry." Well, the vote was three to three to one, and this guy was a Republican.



BURG: That number one?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. There were seven votes on the Federal Communications Commission, seven people. They had two or three votes, and they could reach no majority. The closest I came was this three-to-three-to-one vote, and I'm not sure what happened to that one vote, but I do know that I found out afterwards that Sherm Adams never talked to him, and he never talked to these three, and what I was doing was all on my own except that Gerry Morgan had called to make appointments for me. I could make my own appointments, but I thought it would be better if the White House called them.

BURG: A little more leverage if they did.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. But the thing was that Sherman never gave me a bit of help on that, and Gerry did. And if Sherm Adams had called that guy, the vote would have been four to three and the Seattle people would have gotten it. My Seattle people would have gotten the license, but they didn't.

BURG: I see. Now these are instances where you needed White House support for your work. Can you give me instances of where the White House came to you needing support?



TOLLEFSON: Well, on more than one occasion when there was a close vote anticipated on the floor of the House of Representatives, we would get calls from the White House, and we'd have people come to see us, call on us.

BURG: Was it usually Anderson?

TOLLEFSON: It was he sometimes, but [Arthur] Summerfield came, and then there was one other cabinet officer. Who was Secretary of Commerce? [Sinclair Weeks] Summerfield was Post Office. I can't remember now who the Secretary of Commerce was, but he came also. I don't mean many times. You know, when there was a very close vote, they would solicit your help.

BURG: And were you ever able to point out to them, "Here you are asking for our support and--"

TOLLEFSON: I never said that.

BURG: You never did.

TOLLEFSON: No.



BURG: Did that just simply go against your principles? You just felt that--

TOLLEFSON: That was my President up there. I was all for him all the time even though I was a little critical as I have been. He was still my President, and that overrode everything else. When they came for my support, I didn't always give it. Like I told Summerfield one time when he was talking to me about the advantages of voting a certain way, and I said, "Oh, Mr. Postmaster General, why not leave my politics to me. I know my district better than you."

BURG: What did he say to that? What was his reply?

TOLLEFSON: Nothing. That was the end of the conversation.

BURG: I see. No laughter?

TOLLEFSON: No, no. Oh, something like maybe, "Well, think it over. We'd sure like to have your vote," or something like that.

BURG: Now would you describe your relations with the White House in general? We're talking now about Mr. Morgan, Mr.



Anderson, Sherm Adams. Were your relationships with them generally successful as you look back on it?

TOLLEFSON: Well, I didn't get what I asked all the time, you know. That's par for the course I suppose. But I felt that my relationship with the White House was good and friendly, and on more than one occasion the staff people, that would be Sherman Adams, Gerry Morgan, those two particular, would invite me down for lunch, not to have anything better to talk about but just because we were friends. And my friendship with Sherm was a little bit shattered when this information came out. But that was about the same time that--

BURG: "This information" being that vote in the Federal Communications Commission.

TOLLEFSON: Yes. That came about the time that Sherm would be going to get trouble with his vicuna coat. No, carpet, I mean; it was carpet. Remember he got this rug from this fellow.

[Interruption]

BURG: Now you were saying that this was about the time that



Mr. Adams had his own difficulties over the rug and vicuna coat. Do you remember what your personal feelings were at that time about Adams' difficulty?

TOLLEFSON: Well, I was kind of shocked. I happened to be home when the news story about the rug and the other stuff connected with it, like staying in the hotel and this man-- I've forgotten that name now. [Bernard Goldfine]

BURG: So have I, but I know the man you mean.

TOLLEFSON: Of course, when I came home the word was out right away and the news media, the radio and newspaper people, questioned me about it. And I remember saying one thing that I was disappointed at what happened. I said, for want of something better to say, a fellow in Sherman Adams' position had to be kind of like Caesar's wife, and somehow or another that got back to Sherman.

BURG: It did?

TOLLEFSON: Yes, it did. And I never saw him after that, but I got one letter from him in which he called me, Mr. Tollefson. That was the first time he ever called me Mr. Tollefson. And



that was in connection with some public statement I had made about President Eisenhower and the vicuna coat thing. And I staunchly supported the President in with his integrity. This was much ado about nothing, you know--a fellow taking a gift, then they suspect he would give favors because of that. And that got some publicity and got back to the White House, and Sherm wrote me a letter to thank me for that. But he called me, Mr. Tollefson, because I didn't say anything nice about him. That happened almost simultaneously.

BURG: Did you ever straighten that out with Mr. Adams?

TOLLEFSON: No, I never saw him again.

BURG: Never saw him again and never did.

TOLLEFSON: No. He soon left. He resigned and left, and I never had occasion to see him again. But up until that time, he would go out of his way if we were at some reception, and there were an awful lot of them in Washington, DC, go out of his way to come over and chat. So I felt a little badly about that. On the other hand, I didn't think that what I said was out of line.



BURG: The expression itself, that Caesar's wife must be above reproach, is rather commonly used in circumstances like this and certainly the Sherman Adams thing was not the first time that anything like this happened. As we know, it hasn't been the last time. So I suppose, at that time, he must have been especially sensitive about things and would have seen slight or insult where it was never intended.

TOLLEFSON: Could be. Could be.

BURG: I think I can imagine him being like that.

TOLLEFSON: It could have been a letter written by his secretary, and he just signed it.

BURG: Yes, yes. That's very possible.

TOLLEFSON: If I had occasion to see him about it, I would have talked to him about it, but I didn't want to make a special effort to go and see him or call him on the telephone or anything because he didn't say anything bad in his letter. He just thanked me very much for my support of the President. But the mere--



BURG: There was a clue in it, a clue for you. Now during those eight years of the administration, did you find yourself ever having lunch with other congressional leaders with the President or any contacts of that nature?

TOLLEFSON: Well, he would have groups of us down for lunch every once in a while. I don't mean once a month, but occasionally he would invite a group large enough to fill the table in the State Dining Room. They had that big oval table, and I suppose it could seat, what twenty-five, thirty people. I was down there a number of times.

BURG: Out of curiosity, how would that be handled, Mr. Tollefson? Would you receive a letter from the President or from the appointment secretary or how would they handle that?

TOLLEFSON: Usually a printed form, "The President requests the pleasure of your company at a luncheon," such and such a date. No name on it, just "The President requests" it. That was an order. I remember one time I got one of those, and the luncheon was on a day when I had another commitment that was terribly important; so I called down to the White House. I don't remember who I talked to.



BURG: [Thomas E.] Stephens, by any chance?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, I don't remember. I'd forgotten about Stephens until you mentioned his name. No, he wasn't the one. I think I just called some appointment secretary or whatever it was. Any rate I just said that I was sorry that I couldn't come to the lunch because I had this other commitment. Well inside of a couple of hours some guy called me, and it might have been Sherm and the general I was talking about. He knew me of course, and he kind of chuckled and he said, "I guess you haven't been around here long enough to know that the President's slightest wish is an order."

I said, "I'll be there."



BURG: I'll be darned. He was good humored about this, and you were too. Now when you got there, Mr. Tollefson, what was the routine? You are driven there or you drive your own car there.

TOLLEFSON: You could drive your own car; take a cab if you want to and get off at the entrance to the White House. You could take a cab because it's the most convenient way of getting around; you don't have to worry about your car. And

then when you go, there are cabs out there that'll take you back. Well, you are ushered into this huge entrance hall, and then somebody directs you to the Blue Room or the Green Room, whatever, and there you stay until everybody is there, and then the President comes. When everybody is there, then the President comes. And he greets all of you and shakes all your hands. And somebody comes to the door of the Green Room and says, "Lunch is ready, Mr. President."

So he says something like, "O.K., let's go."

BURG: So he circulates in the group and sees to it every single individual there is greeted personally.

TOLLEFSON: Right, right. Then we walk in the dining room, and you sit where your place card is.

BURG: Now you attended several--

TOLLEFSON: Several of those, yes.

BURG: --did your place vary at the table?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, yes. Yes, on one occasion, I don't remember what the occasion was, I sat with the President. I was able



to have a conversation with him. He was a wonderful conversationalist, tremendous.

BURG: Do you happen to remember what you were talking about? Your Tacoma associations or--

TOLLEFSON: No, no. It could have been a number of things. I don't recall.

BURG: Now what I'd like to ask too is, at one of these affairs, did he use the luncheon as a sounding board to give you all his views?

TOLLEFSON: No.

BURG: Just to be there at lunch with the President, to exchange some ideas and--

TOLLEFSON: He might make reference to something that was pending, but I don't recall that he ever gave us what we'd call a sales pitch. He didn't have to say very much to let us know what he kind of expected or hoped that we would do in support of his position. It was just a very social, sociable luncheon.



BURG: Now let's say that you and I are at the end of the long oval table and seated across--

TOLLEFSON: Well, he always sat in the middle of the long table; so that we--

BURG: It's not at the head as--

TOLLEFSON: No, no, always right in the middle of the long table so that everybody could hear what he was saying, and he could hear what everybody else was saying if they all wanted to talk.

BURG: All right, now, let me ask you this, would it be possible at that table for you and I to converse down at either end of the table. We could converse with each other or with the people seated next to us, but there probably would be times then when the conversation would be directed to the President or from the President.

TOLLEFSON: Anybody could speak to the President. He would, like anybody else, converse with the people here and maybe the guy across the table or the fellows across the table, and the rest of the men down here be talking about something.



But always you keep your eye on the President, and the time comes when he wants to say something to everybody you somehow or another sense it you know.

BURG: I see. About how long would one of these luncheons last, Mr. Tollefson?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, an hour and a half. I mean the whole period of time. The lunch would be served leisurely by these waiters.

BURG: Would drinks be served?

TOLLEFSON: No, never were. Never at one of these luncheons. The only time that I saw liquor served was at the state banquets. I was very fortunate in that just before I came to congress in '46, they reorganized congress and decreased the number of committees from forty-eight or forty-nine down to nineteen, and I got on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. That was a committee that somebody else had to drop. The members then had to choose one committee. And the Merchant Marine and Fisheries was not very important committee like Ways and Means or Appropriations; so that was one of the first committees that older fellows had dropped, and the net result was that in the next congress I was the ranking Republican.



BURG: On that committee?

TOLLEFSON: On that committee. And I was ranking Republican all the time I was there except when I was chairman. That was one time, that was the 85th Congress, I was chairman of it. Well President Eisenhower started a series of White House banquets, and he would invite the chairman and the ranking minority member of every committee and their wives. So my wife and I got to go to a number of those when fellows who had been in the House for twenty-five years more than I didn't get to go with their wives

And at those functions there would be no cocktail hour. We would assemble in the ball room, and then at the given moment the President and his wife would come into the hall. But this was one occasion when we came in, the President and his wife would come into the ballroom, and then we'd go through the line. And then when that was over, they would go into the dining room, and you'd all be seated according to place cards, they would serve a glass of sherry. They had the four wine glasses. And the waiters would come around and pour you a glass of sherry; that was your cocktail. Then they'd serve you a white wine with a fish entree and then a red wine for

the meat entree, and then champagne, but no hard liquor. That changed when Mr. Kennedy came in. No reflection on Mr. Kennedy because I can assure you that most of the members of the congress appreciated the cocktails when they went to the White House for lunch or for dinner.

BURG: A little bourbon and branch water as a tonic.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, right.

BURG: Was smoking permitted at these affairs?

TOLLEFSON: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, they would have boxes of cigarettes and cigars which would be passed by waiters, just like they were serving you coffee.




BURG: I see. Now I was going to ask you this, during the eight years of the administration what legislation especially had your interest? Put another way, what do you recollect now to be the most important legislation with which you were associated during that eight year period?

TOLLEFSON: Well, I was on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee as the ranking minority member or the chairman.

My chief interest was the maritime legislation and the next

important was the fisheries legislation. Maritime was more important to me because this had a national defense aspect. The Chief of Naval Operations, I've forgotten his name right off, said when the war was over that the navy would not have been able to meet its commitments except for the American Merchant Marines. What he meant was that the navy didn't carry soldiers and materiel to the front; it was the American ships that did so. And without those ships we couldn't, according to this admiral, we could not have won the war. He didn't put it in those words. He said we would not have been able to accomplish our mission, which was to win the war. And so I considered that the most important legislation to me within my responsibilities on that committee. That isn't to say there wasn't other important legislation like foreign aid and all that sort of thing and military appropriations. But my responsibilities were in connection with the maritime legislation.



BURG: This would have to do with legislation that affected--

TOLLEFSON: Ship construction, ship subsidy, operations, and that sort of thing.

BURG: You were not, however, involved in anything with the St. Lawrence Seaway?

TOLLEFSON: No, this was one of those things that was of general interest to everybody in the House. Certainly we would be interested in improved ship transportation. I supported the seaway project.

BURG: If you were to give me advice on who I ought to talk with as key figures in the St. Lawrence Seaway thing, who would you recommend among your former colleagues?

TOLLEFSON: Right off, a name comes to me, Jim Fulton, but I understand Jim passed away. He was from Detroit.

BURG: Detroit or Pittsburgh?

TOLLEFSON: I mean Pittsburgh, right. The other fellow was Jimmy [James E.] Van Zandt. Jimmy was a congressman from Pennsylvania. As far as I know, he's still alive. He was healthy enough to live to be a hundred. He lives in Altoona. I think that's his home. Jimmy was, by the very nature of the kind of fellow he was, interested in anything that would affect the seaway I'm sure.



BURG: All right. So these are a couple of names.

TOLLEFSON: There might be others, but, quickly, that's all that comes to me. Have you ever talked to Hugh Scott?

BURG: No, but he's one that we definitely have to see for many different reasons. He was very active in 1952 I believe.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, he was, Hugh Scott was a member of our group come to think of it.

BURG: I was going to ask you if he was. I wasn't sure if he was in the Senate at that time.

TOLLEFSON: No, he was in the House at that time.

BURG: Yes, because he's one that I believe the General spoke to in '52, and of course the whole Pennsylvania group met with Eisenhower on one occasion too in '52.

TOLLEFSON: There was some people with money in Philadelphia you know, Hugh Scott's friends, that were interested in Ike's campaign.

BURG: Now were you at all involved, I presume you would be interested in, the Columbia River Treaty negotiations that



were going on while you were in congress. Being a congressman from the state of Washington, I suppose that you kept tabs on that?

TOLLEFSON: You're talking about our treaty with Canada?

BURG: Precisely.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, indeed. That Columbia River situation presented a lot of prospective good and a lot of problems. Being on the Fisheries Committee of the House, I was concerned about all the dams being built. On the other hand, I came from a town called Tacoma, Washington which was public power oriented and still is. We manufactured our own power, so I was pro-public power too, and I had an awful time.



BURG: I'll bet you did. Now was it your feeling that, on the Columbia River, additional dams even though they had fish ladders might irretrievably damage the fisheries of the Columbia River?

TOLLEFSON: Well, at the outset the first dam that was built was called Grand Coulee Dam, and it had no fish passage facilities.

Once it was built, it killed about a thousand miles of, well maybe not a thousand miles, but pretty close to that, of salmon spawning area. And we feared the construction of other dams that did not have fish passage facilities.

BURG: Now Bonneville did, but Coulee did not.

TOLLEFSON: Coulee did not. Bonneville is way down, the last one, and Grand Coulee is way up, you see, and then there's a number of dams in between. So when it became inevitable that the dams were to be built for power or irrigation, principally power, then the pro-fish people put on a fight to get adequate fish passage facilities. This was a chore to start with because the Corps of Engineers didn't give a darn about fish and some of these public utility districts didn't give a darn about fish. We finally got help, however, from the Federal Power Commission, really. They'd have to get a permit to build a dam, and we'd make our pitch before the power commission, "Don't give them a permit to build a dam unless you order them to build fish passage facilities or make some mitigation. So that kind of solved the problem, the dilemma, that I had at the outset of being pro-fish and



pro-power too--kind of had my cake and eat it too while fighting to protect fish but at the same time acknowledging that we had to have these power-producing facilities.

BURG: Now, Mr. Tollefson, were they ever able to put in a fishway at Grand Coulee?

TOLLEFSON: No, it was too high a dam.

BURG: So they never could do it.

TOLLEFSON: Never could. Talked about it since, but the conclusion of people like my own experts say the dam is too high.

BURG: So about all that you could do then once Coulee was built in the 1930s you were able to see to it that the lower dams like Rock Island and some of the others did have the facilities so you could keep the salmon spawning grounds up to Coulee, and that's as far as it could be taken.

TOLLEFSON: Then we did one other thing. We had a couple of the public utility districts that built dams to build artificial spawning channels to replace the spawning area that



was lost or part of it. So we have some spawning channels; we have some other dam situations. We have had the people build hatcheries for us, like the city of Tacoma built two dams on the Cowlitz. On the first dam, the lowest dam, they built some very elaborate fish passage facilities which included not only a fish ladder but also an elevator to lift them up and dump them in a water-filled truck and hauled over to the impoundment back of the dam. Then when they built the other dam beyond that which is the bigger one, we said, "No, we don't want any fish passage facilities on this dam. We want you to build us a hatchery below even the first dam so that the fish that come back to that hatchery where they were born, they wouldn't have to go over any dams." The City of Tacoma spent, twenty million dollars, fifteen, twenty million dollars on that hatchery system.

BURG: Now in your own career, your last service in congress ended about 1964 I believe you said.

TOLLEFSON: January 1st, 1965. The fall of '64 was the last election.



BURG: What was your course of action after that?

TOLLEFSON: Well, when November elections were over, the first thing that came to me was a question from Senator Magnuson's office. There was a Republican vacancy on the Civil Aeronautics Board, and would I be interested in taking it? And I said, "Yes." The head of the airlines here, the West Coast Airlines, a strong Democrat, Nick Bez, who was a good friend of Harry Truman's, supported me too.

BURG: How does he spell his name?

TOLLEFSON: B-e-z. He's now dead, but he was a big Democrat here, big fund raiser and giver himself. He wanted me to go, and I said, "Yes, but," I said, "how about Scoop Jackson?" Scoop was down in Honolulu after the election. He left after the elections and went to Honolulu for a vacation.

Nick said, "Oh, Thor, I take care of Scoop. Don't you worry about Scoop; I take care of Scoop."

I said, "Well fine, but I should talk to him before."

"No, don't bother." So I went back to D.C. then thinking that I would have a chance for CAB, and I finally wound up as the number one prospect. Somebody said I ought to go to



enlist Ev [erett M.] Dirksen's support too, and I thought well, sure. I went over to see Ev; he used to call me "Bror"--

BURG: What did he call you?

TOLLEFSON: Bror, B-r-o-r. I don't know where he got that. "What can I do for you?" So I told him. Well, he picks up the phone and he calls Lyn [Lyndon B.] Johnson and said, "Lyn, there's a Republican vacancy on the CAB, and I want you to know that Bror Tollefson is my candidate." Of course I knew Lyn. Ev, when he got through talking, said, "It's all set." And the word apparently got around through the industry because I began being wined and dined you know like nobody's business.

BURG: By the various airlines?

TOLLEFSON: Yes. Then Scoop called me. He said, "Thor, I've got to oppose you on this appointment."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "You didn't even come to see me."

BURG: Did you tell him about Nick Bez?



TOLLEFSON: I did. He said, "Oh, you know Nick. You know Nick."

I said, "Well, it was on that basis I didn't call you. I sure appologize if I have offended you in any way."

Well he said, "That was the chief reason, but there was another reason too. I'd like to get a Democrat from Washington on the CAB when a vacancy comes along." So some other Republican got it, and no Democrat ever got it from out here, I mean, when the vacancy did come along. They don't occur too often. I'm familiar with politics, and so I have never held this against Scoop. He said, "Thor, there's nothing personal." I'm not sure that there was because the first excuse and reason was that I hadn't called him you see.

BURG: If he said you knew Nick Bez, by implication it can be said that Mr. Jackson also knew Nick Bez.

TOLLEFSON: Oh, he sure did.

BURG: And ought to have taken that into account himself.

TOLLEFSON: Nick was a big contributor to Scoop's campaign and also to Maggie's. But, at any rate, actually it wasn't



very long before I felt very good about not getting that job. I don't think that I would have been happy with all that kind of pressure, and my wife and I were tired of living in the bustling D.C. conditions. Living conditions were not so good, you know. We owned our own home, but, nevertheless, general living conditions were not good, and we were both glad to come back here. But then after that CAB thing fell through, there was three different law firms that wanted me to come with them, one was in New York, to handle maritime matters. All the shipping lines that knew me considered that I'd be a good man to have. I thought about that a long time and finally my wife agreed with me that we didn't want to live in Washington, DC any more.

BURG: Oh, two of these offers were in Washington, DC, and one was in New York. I see.

TOLLEFSON: In New York. And then on top of that one shipping line wanted me to be their Washington, DC representative, kind of lobbyist thing. That type of work didn't appeal to me. And about that time the governor [Evans] here came back, and I had lunch with him and with Tom [Thomas M.] Pelly. Representative Pelly.



BURG: Who was the governor at that time, Mr. Tollefson?

TOLLEFSON: Dan [Daniel J.] Evans. He had just been elected that fall of '64. There was Tom and I and the governor and somebody else was there; I don't remember who it was. "What are you going to do, Thor?"

"Well, I haven't got anything yet."

And the governor spoke up, and he said, "Oh, yes, you have. You'll be my director of fisheries if you want it."

BURG: That was very nice. And that job did have appeal for you.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, it did. And it brought us home you see.

BURG: You came to it then, and you've been with it since that time.

TOLLEFSON: Will be nine years at the end of this month.

BURG: Now for clarification, you are Director of Fisheries, Salt Water Fisheries.

TOLLEFSON: Yes, yes. All food fish, we call it, and that chiefly, salt water fish, and the most dramatic of those

