Tape 19, Side 2

CH This is an interview with Governor Atiyeh. This is Tape 19, Side 2.

VA Constantly, I was saying, the legislature should provide more dollars for schools, and we were over all those years. Each biennium there would be more money going in, but the percent - because they kept talking about percent - was going down, and the reason it was going down is that school budgets were going up faster than any money we could put in. So when we start talking about - we may have put - I don't recall the numbers now, but if we put $200 million in one biennium, that might have constituted 30 percent; we might put in $275 million next biennium, but the percent might go down to twenty-seven. So we put more money in, but the percent goes down because they were going up faster than we could put money in. And I kept [inaudible] about it, so I'm trying to limit. You recall we talked about Senate Bill, it was either 1 or 2, where we were going to describe what is basic education and then go from that? It's all part of the same thing. My thought was, okay, we'll describe basic education, then the state will say, We will pay for that. It was some way of controlling what the cost was going to be in terms of state government. This was another approach in the same way, try to control some way so we could get our percentage up, because they were going faster than we could deal with it.

CH And apparently the other members of the committee didn't feel that way.

VA [Inaudible] [laughter]. I will say again, because I'm sure I said it once before, that the most powerful lobby was not

business. I think I - remember I told you. Everybody liked to point to it, and I've told business people that's the biggest fairy tale I've ever heard in my life. Actually, the most powerful lobby then, and still now is the Oregon Education Association.

CH I was wondering, I notice this session that you had a number of bills, and in terms of your own work, since you don't - you weren't chair of any committee. You have one secretary. How did you keep track of all the bills? What was your tracking method?

VA You mean my bills or the bills introduced?

CH Your bills.

VA Well, I knew what my bills were.

CH But you had quite a few of them. I think that this session you had more than a dozen.

VA Well, that's not too many. Actually, in relation to other legislators, that's quite - that's very stingy. It wasn't hard keeping track of them.

CH Did you have the various groups that you were working with basically keep track of them and then inform you as to where they were in terms of committees and meetings?

VA Well, there was that, and there were always - you know, if it came for a hearing, they'd always call the chief sponsor, which in this case would have been me. And it depended on who - I introduced it for myself or for - earlier we were talking about

the secretary of state. When a bill came up, I'd have the secretary of state kind of carry that one, because I had introduced it for them, not necessarily for myself. So that wasn't particularly difficult. If there was something I was intensely interested in, I would keep quite close track of what the stage is and where it is and what's happening to it. Then you have to follow it - if it's my senate bill, I have to follow it to the house. But it wasn't really all that difficult. Some legislators would put in, oh gosh, fifty, sixty, seventy bills. A whole lot of them. So I really was never one to put in a whole lot of bills.

CH But you involvement with your own bills, was that a lot greater than the bills that you introduce on behalf of various groups and organizations?

VA Yeah, because I would ask someone else to carry the ball.

CH So your own bills that you introduced for your own legislation was - you were able to follow that pretty carefully?

VA Yeah, and basically because it was pretty limited.

CH Is there any kind of reciprocal arrangement with other legislators that, you know, say in that committee, that they'll keep you informed about what goes on in the committee and offer suggestions?

VA Oh, that would be one vehicle. If there was something I was interested in, let me know, somebody that I know that's on that committee, if it's not one of my own committees. That's not a difficult task; it really is not difficult.

CH Do you try to get legislators to - in a particular committee where you're not sitting and your bill is in that committee, do you get them to basically see that bill through that committee?

VA No. That's still my responsibility. They've got their own bills. And you have to understand that the senate still is only a thirty-member body, and my bills aren't in that many committees, that many different committees. Obviously, I know all the chairmen. So it's not a difficult task, not difficult at all.

CH You were on a number of other committees that session: Credentials, the Task Force on Energy. What was that dealing with? Obviously energy, but what kind of energy legislation or issues?

VA You know, it really is strange the things I've forgotten about my legislative days. I don't recall. I developed something of my own when I became governor, but I don't recall that.

CH You were on the legislative committee on land use, and you had a Joint Resolution Number 44 requesting approval of nineteen statewide planning goals adopted by the LCDC, which was left in committee. I know that the LCDC was very controversial, but why would the adoption of their statewide planning goals be left in committee?

VA There was an air of uncertainty when the goals were established and they were adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. A powerful effect. Cities and counties had to conform with those statewide goals and guidelines. So

I'm, in effect, saying - what I wanted to accomplish, which I didn't do, was, let's give them some assurance that the sands aren't going to be shifting. This is not a statute, this is a regulation by an agency of state government. They could change the regulation. You might come up - while you're going through the process of your zoning, they say, Well, now, wait a minute. This is not exactly what we meant. What we meant was such and such - which, incidentally, they were doing, so, in effect, they were constantly changing goal posts. So what I was trying to do was to put this into law. What I was trying to do was say, these are the goals and guidelines. Now, for those that were ~~fervid~~ FERVENT land-use planners, they didn't want that.

CH But, then, why did you have a joint resolution? Why didn't you sponsor legislation to actually adopt those goals?

VA A joint resolution, at least I knew where the - what the odds were, so the thing to do was to define it somewhere by the legislature saying, Well, this is what we think they should be, which is what - actually, I was going to take the ones that were adopted - I wasn't going to change anything - say, Okay, there they are. We'll put them over here.

CH Is your strategy in terms of joint resolutions, like, for instance, this one, to get the legislature to adopt a certain direction without the specific legislation and then come back at a later date and actually address that issue in terms of legislation saying, well, this is in concurrence with the resolution?

VA Not necessarily. In other words, you look and see, okay, what are the odds of my getting any changes at all; and, okay, if

I step back from doing it in statutes, maybe I've got a better chance doing this than I would if I try to get it into statute. I didn't have a chance to do either one, but the whole idea was - and it's true there was a great deal of controversy, and when I became governor, one of the main things I wanted to do was to get this whole process finished. And so - and there were some complaints, and they were legitimate. But this is what you said. Well, yeah, that's what we said then, but we've changed our mind. So how could cities and counties really finally come up with a plan that could be adopted by the LCDC, because they were always changing the rules, changing the goal posts. And it was terrible while they were going through the process, and I was trying to pull some of the antagonism and the crisis nature out of it, but there were those that wanted to keep it that way. They didn't want any kind of a certainty that I was looking for and that cities and counties were looking for.

CH Well, I guess we can talk a little more about the LCDC later, because you became more involved in that, then, as governor, didn't you?

VA Yeah.

CH I guess one thing that I wonder about this, though, you had some differences of opinion with the LCDC over certain goals that they were adopting, didn't you? Weren't you a little more interested in tempering some of the more far-reaching goals?

VA Yeah.

CH Did the goals that they embraced at this point coincide with what your feelings about the LCDC and where it should be were?

VA Yes, but you see, let's break it down for a minute. Part of the battle that I had, even when I became governor, LCDC stands for Land Conservation and Development Commission. They kept dropping the D like it never existed. And I said, you know, D means something. This doesn't mean that you're going to put everything that's there now and lock it in cement. But they kept forgetting the D part, and it was always conservation. And I understood that - you know, again going back to history of the things of that kind of life [?], why people came here, they came here - they came here starting - well, now we've got the centennial of the big migration in 1843, and they were looking for land of their own; they were looking for something that's mine, that I can do something with. All of a sudden the state comes along and says, Whoa, whoa, you can't do that anymore. Well, wait a minute; this is my land, my money. I put something into it. No, I'm sorry, you can't do that anymore. So I understood, you know, we still had the western attitude that this is my land. I knew, as I told you earlier, that we were going to have to do this, I knew that it was important for my children and other people's children and their children to know Oregon's going to grow in a very orderly way. I knew that. But at the same time, I didn't believe in rubbing people's noses in it. And, oh my, the discussions I had with the department and the commission. I can recall going to some kind meeting. It happened to be up at Timothy Lake, a meeting with planners. Now, the other thing, it was amazing. We jumped on the land-use bandwagon, passed Senate Bill 100, adopted nineteen goals, cities and counties all had to come up with a plan to match nineteen goals, and there weren't that many land planners in the United States, let alone in the state of Oregon, but all of a sudden we were planners. And some really weren't educated as planners. They didn't know. But now it's a bureaucratic job. I've got a job; I'm a planner. So now

they're doing it according to their own views of what ought to happen, most of which left the D out and kept the C in. And I can recall going to that meeting up at Timothy Lake, and I said, You know, you've got these felt pens and they're yellow, they're blue, and they're pink and they're red, but you have to realize that when you put that pen down, there's people down there. But they really didn't want to be bothered with people. People were kind of a vexation. No, this is where the line ought to be, you know, and they'd put these lines there. I said, There's people under there, real human beings. So I was trying to convert some sensitivity into this process. I never, ever thought we should divert from an orderly land planning of our land, but still I had that great feeling of understanding why people are upset, why they're mad.

I think we've already touched on some of these things, but - that farmer has his home; his son wants to take over the business. He can't build a house on that. That's crazy, you see. This is what I call dumb. Those kinds of things. But there were people that just didn't want anything to happen. No changes, nothing. Bang, the state of Oregon is now locked in forever. Well, it doesn't work that way. I don't think it works, nor should it work that way.

CH Did you feel that these goals that you were requesting approval of helped put the D back in the LCDC?

VA Yeah, because one of the goals happened to relate to development. At least one happened to relate to it. That wasn't the reason to put the D back in. The really reason was, quit changing the goal posts. That was the real reason. And incidentally, again for the tape, there were fourteen statewide goals that applied to every county and city in Oregon plus five

that related only to coastal counties and cities. So there were five coastal zones, and the coast had also the other fourteen. The rest of the state had fourteen.

CH You were also on Legislative Trade and Economic Development. Did this go back to the international trade?

VA Well, it was moving slowly in that direction. We didn't do - it wasn't a pell-mell rush.

CH You were on the Indian Affairs Commission. Was this the first time that you were on the Indian Affairs Commission? I don't recall that having come up before in our discussions.

VA When did we do that? I think we did that the session before. I don't know if I've got anything here that tells...

CH Well, I have a list of your committee assignments in '75, but I don't see anything regarding...

VA Well, that was not during the legislative - well, we did begin in the legislature, but that was kind of ongoing. We created a Commission on Indian Services. You don't have that anywhere, when we did that? I'm trying to remember. I think it was 1975. We created the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, of which I was a major sponsor. The whole idea was - and I can recall that very well, because we began to learn about the Native Americans, some things that we didn't really know and should have known, probably. But there was a lot of services that the state could provide to the Oregon Indians that they weren't taking advantage of, but they should have. There was a kind of a distrust. With all of these things I'm telling you

there's kind of a learning process and you learn about it, but the tribes in Oregon were accustomed to dealing with the federal government, and they were a nation. We use the word treaty, just like we use a treaty with France or a treaty with Great Britain or a treaty with Japan or whatever. There was a treaty. So you look at it in terms of we had a treaty with a nation. That's the way the Indians looked at it as well, and they didn't want to really get involved with state. They are a country; they're going to deal with the United States of America. Well, there were a lot of services, really, that - mostly human resource services - that they weren't taking advantage of where the state could be involved because they just weren't trusting the state, they didn't want to get involved with the state. So the Commission on Indian Services really was basically designed to kind of create a bridge, and the concept of the Commission on Indian Services was that there would be - the tribes in Oregon would be represented. That would be not just reservation tribes, but urban tribes, because we had - in the Portland urban area we had, besides Warm Springs and Umatilla and Burns, Paiute, and there was the Metropolitan Indians in Eugene and the Coastal Indians in southern Oregon. That's before most of the tribal statuses became recognized. Now many of the tribes are recognized. So anyway, they'd be represented, and there would be one senate member and one house member, and I was the senate member. One of the things I lamented, having been elected governor, is that, obviously, I'm not in the legislature anymore, and so I had to leave my post as a representative of the state senate on the Commission on Indian Services. That's continued over all the years, and I really have - really feel very good about my relations, and it continued as I was governor, my relations with the Indians in Oregon.

CH Was this the conception or the original point for you to become involved with Indian affairs, then?

VA Well, it could have been. I was trying to find the year when we started it. There was a lot of reluctance, and we talked with the Indians, and I can recall talking with them in my office, and there was no coercion. We were going to create it; if the tribes wanted to join the commission, they could do it, and if they didn't want to, they didn't have to. That was part of the idea. And Umatilla signed up the last. They were quite stand-offish about the whole thing. But they were welcome to come to the meetings and watch what we were doing, and they eventually said, I guess that's okay, and they signed up and became members of the commission. And, of course, they can leave anytime they want. It was very good in providing services for Indians that they were not taking advantage of.

CH I don't know if you want to talk about it right now - I'm trying to remember the specific time - but wasn't there sort of a gradual dissolution of the Klamath tribe, and eventually they were seeking compensation, or the government was going to compensate them for the dissolution of their tribal organization, or official recognition of their tribal recognition?

VA [Tape stopped.]

When you talk about the Klamath, I'm not sure how much diversion you want to get when you start talking the American Indian and certainly the Indians in Oregon. Yes, they had actually, by their own vote, sold their property, and they got paid for it. It was kind of a disaster, because they got the money, the tribal members got the money, they spent the money, and now they don't have any money. They didn't have any money

before, and they don't have the land and they don't have the money. A short version of the whole thing. They did finally, not too long ago, get restored the tribal status, and they've got a small amount of reservation now in Klamath.

The different reservations acted in different ways. Umatilla has been a large reservation for a long period of time. Through their history, however, they sold property within the reservation, so if you were to look at a map, it shows private ownership versus Indian ownership. It would look like you shot a shotgun through there. They're just scattered all over the place. And it creates some kind of a problem, because you've got non-Indians who own property living in the reservation. On the other hand, at Warm Springs they received money because of Celilo Falls. They did not hand it all out, and they've got a tribal council that budgets and all. They've done a very good job. And also, although they didn't have too much sale within the reservation, they acquired what little was there, and I think now the tribe owns, I don't know, 97-, 98 percent of all the property on their reservation.

Siletz was the first of those that got their tribal status restored, and followed, then, quite a few tribes in Oregon. And I acquiesced on all of them. Anyone that asked the governor what do you think? Yeah, you bet. But Siletz, I can recall going down there to celebrate the restoration of their tribal status. They have a small amount of land for their reservation. They got a little bit more somehow to sustain them, in some way to sustain them so they could kind of operate on their own. The Grand Ronde, they ran into some kind of problems. The non-Indians, the Oregonians were maybe fighting them sometimes because they wanted fishing rights, they wanted hunting rights, they wanted land, and the non-Indians were not willing to give up a lot of that. By and large, though, in Oregon it's gone through quite relatively

noncontroversial. But I enjoyed my relationship with the Indians. I still do today. I still like them, I visit them when I can, I'm on the board of the museum at Warm Springs. I really like that relationship very much.

CH A lot of people consider the Warm Springs group to be one of the most successful in the country. Why is that, and why didn't other Indian groups emulate their example?

VA It's hard to tell the why. I can tell you that they've had good leadership over the years. They established their own - which they could have done, and it was controversial, but they've got their own, what we call a constitution. We celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of that, oh, it was a couple of years ago, I think. They didn't just get the money and distribute it, they used it for the benefit of the whole tribe. They have senior housing, they have their own court system, and they do it quite judicious with a police force. They have an education program, but, then, they do pay money to Madras for their students which go to the Madras schools. They now have an early childhood center, which is fairly new. They built Kah-nee-ta, which lost money for a long period of time, but they hung on, and it's doing well now. Now the museum. They put in $3 million against about a seven-and-a-half-million-dollar operation, and we're approaching $6 million, I think, so we need to collect some more money. But they've done what they think is benefitting the whole tribe rather than saying, you know, just an individual.

So why? It's hard to tell. I think they've had good leadership, or persuasive leadership. That's not to say that - well, Umatilla would be the next big one. Siletz has had good leadership, but they were just recently restored to tribal status. Burns and Paiute, out there in eastern Oregon and Burns,

Oregon, they've had some good leadership, but it kind of came and went, and they didn't have much asset to deal with. It's hard to tell, but yes, you're right, they're very progressive, a very progressive tribe. They've done very well.

CH You were also on the Property Tax Relief and Expenditure Limitation Committee group. Was that specifically for that session to deal with those issues, or is that - that's not a standing committee, is it?

VA No. I'm trying to think of timing there.

CH There were some tax issues that you did - you were dealing with at that time, and, in fact, Senate President Jason Boe's top priority bill would have allowed school districts to fall back on their previous year's tax levies plus increase...

VA Oh yeah, okay. The safety net. There you go. That was one described by Senator Carson, looking at the bill, talking about Jason Boe's safety net as, How do you fall up to a safety net [laughter].

CH Well, they wanted to be able to fall back on the previous year's tax levies plus increases of up to 6 percent if...

VA Yeah. That was to establish a tax basis for all districts and all the rest of it.

CH And that was soundly defeated in a special election?

VA That was defeated, yeah.

CH Lawmakers approved a measure in the waning hours to require school districts to seek voter approval of new property tax bases if they previously asked the people to approve tax levies of more than 6 percent above their old tax basis, and the legislature also appropriated $617 million to raise state aid to schools to 40 percent of total costs by the year '78-79 school year, the highest level of state support in many years. So is this what you were dealing with in this...?

VA Well, let's not - you said something, and it's - I'll give you a story. After Jason's safety net bill failed, I said to him, "Jason, why don't we pass a law that says that if a school district tries for a new budget and they are unsuccessful -" and I'm trying to remember one or two times; I don't recall that - "by state law they have to go to an election for a new tax base."

[End of Tape 19, Side 2]