

JOURNAL

November

The amazing thing is how fast things move after an election victory. In the final tense weeks of the campaign, the main thing that got Sue and me through was the "certain knowledge" it would be over soon, that in a matter of days the absolutely frantic fourteen- and sixteen-hour-a-day pace would end. But by 3 p.m. on the day after the all-night election party, I met with former Congresswoman Edith Green to discuss how she organized her office and various tips and shortcuts she felt I should know. For the next ten days, it was nonstop, trying to button-up the campaign organization, organize remaining paperwork, devise a screening procedure for campaign workers who wanted to be considered for jobs, shuffle through what finally totaled over 1,000 job applications from Washington, answer congratulatory letters, make plans with Sue for relocating the household, submit to news media interviews, and answer the home telephone which rang every five minutes.

I felt as though I had been hit by an avalanche. Without a secretary, with the remaining campaign staff scattering to points unknown for a long-needed rest, with hundreds of different people clamoring for my immediate attention, I couldn't fight off the sinking feeling you get in your stomach when you find yourself completely out of control of events.

Finally, after some ten days, Sue and I took the kids to Sun River Lodge in Central Oregon, where we stayed in a condominium owned by friends of my mother. In November, the resort community is practically deserted, which fit our needs to a tee. For the following four days, we biked along the bicycle trails by day, played cards and caught up on personal reading by night, and generally enjoyed each other for the first extended period together in almost a year.

The rest of the month was dominated by staffing decisions. Every experienced Member I had discussed the subject with had a different approach. I formed a screening committee to give me impartial recommendations on the suitability of campaign workers who sought congressional jobs. Committee members were Warne Nunn, former administrative assistant to Mark Hatfield in the Governor's Office and in the Senate; Don Barney, former administrative assistant to Al Ullman, now an aide to Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt, and Dick Feeney, former administrative assistant to Edith Green and now administrative assistant to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. I did this out of a recognition that I really had no way of knowing the pressures and precise work burden that has to be dealt with by a congressional staff. I wanted friends who had witnessed these things to give me an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of campaign workers who sought jobs. I did not want to reward a campaign worker with a congressional job simply because he may have done well in a political capacity. Any campaign worker hired would have to measure up to a professional standard.

On the strength of this, I hired my Portland District Office staff rather quickly. The District Assistant, Pat McCormick, and chief staff assistant, Marguerite Wright, came from my staff in the House Majority Office in Salem. I hired Janine Cannon as receptionist, secretary and part-time caseworker. Janine held the same position with Edith Green. Finally, I hired Carol Swope, my campaign scheduling secretary, to serve as scheduler, caseworker, and community liaison worker. I really wasn't prepared for the bitterness this caused among a number of campaign workers who failed to be offered jobs--some of them had worked for me for years and Sue and I had thought of them as loyal friends. Even today, I run into other friends during trips home who tell me about sniping remarks being made--not about me but about my district office staff. But it reflects on me when people hear such remarks from people who have been known to be my friends. And, who knows how many other people have become convinced that I have "forgotten my friends?" This had my stomach in knots for the longest time. Then I happened to talk with Don Bonker, Max Baucus, John LaFalce and other new Members and was reassured to hear stories that sounded like carbon copies of my problems. I decided to plunge ahead and let the back-biting wear itself out.

The Washington Office staff was a different matter. I really had no idea how a Capitol Hill office should be assembled, other than the need for an AA, an LA, a caseworker, a personal secretary, a press aide, and other secretarial people. But as to who should have responsibility for various practical functions in the day-to-day work of the office, I was at a complete loss. That made it awfully hard to interview people because the job applicants were understandably interested in a specific job description before jumping into an unknown situation. I sandwiched in interviews during a trip to Washington for a DSG briefing and an organizational caucus. (By January--after hundreds of telephone calls to check references and follow-up on discussions with applicants, and after mentally building a tentative staff structure as those conversations progressed--I hired the complete staff.)

The first test of the reform movement came in that first organizational caucus, in the vote to strip the Ways and Means Committee of its power as the Democratic Committee on Committees. Although I came to Congress as a reformer, I favored keeping Ways and Means the Committee on Committees. Al Ullman, second-ranking member of Ways and Means, would be in a strategic position to help each of the other members of the Oregon delegation, new members all, to a significant committee. Common Cause argued that holding the power of committee appointments gave Ways and Means, and particularly its chairman, power to intimidate opponents of Ways and Means legislation. Those arguments had merit. But no one could cite a single example of Ways and Means abusing its power. For me, it came down to a question of voting for a theoretical good and risk landing on the Post Office or District of Columbia Committees--or voting with the Ways and Means Committee, which had not been accused of a specific abuse, and having a greater chance to serve on a committee that would be of value to my district. I voted with Ways and Means. I'd have been crazy not to.

I talked with Ullman several times to see how he felt the vote would go. At first confident, I sensed trouble when he became increasingly cautious in each subsequent conversation. Then, in one of the most fateful strokes of timing, on the Sunday night prior

to Monday's vote on the issue, Wilbur Mills appeared on that once obscure stage in Boston. The next day in caucus, I saw Ullman prior to the debate and his face told me it was futile. It fell to Al to lead the fight for the Ways and Means Committee. But his very presence on the floor, manfully trying to carry the battle, weakened the cause. Everybody knew Ullman had this task because Wilbur was sitting in the cloakroom, apparently ashamed to show his face. Then the ballots were counted. It was no contest: Ways and Means had suffered its first loss of power in years.

Earlier, during the debate, I wandered into the cloakroom for a cup of coffee. I turned to see Mills sitting alone on a sofa, smoking a cigarette and sipping a Coke. I walked by, smiled and said hello, and introduced myself. He said he remembered posing for a campaign photograph with me during my trip to Washington last summer. Then he asked me to sit down with him. "It's terrible what lengths the press will go today," he said. "If they think they've got something to nibble on, they won't hesitate to sensationalize it." He paused, but I couldn't think of a single thing to say. Then he asked me where I was from and I told him. "Oregon?", he said. "Well, young man, you just stick with Al and me on this vote," he said. "You'll see, we'll win." I'll never forget that moment. One of the fabled leaders of the House who always "had the votes", had reduced to asking a totally unknown freshman for help. I felt the most awful sense of human wreckage. I was watching the destruction of a congressional giant.

December

The switching of the Committee on Committees authority from Ways and Means to the Caucus Steering and Policy Committee left me completely outflanked. I had left Washington for Kansas City for the Democratic mini-convention. Momentous events took place there--the adoption of a party charter for the first time in history, a near-perfect compromise with party regulars and reformers on affirmative action, and eleventh hour rage that erupted within the ranks of the AFL-CIO over the same affirmative action rule. This split has led to more recent talk by Barkan and Meany of working outside the Democratic Party, a move that

could have a substantial impact on national politics. I confess that I was almost oblivious to these developments. I had brought along a list of congressmen who make up the Steering and Policy Committee, and I spent most of my time walking from state delegation to state delegation, introducing myself and telling each of my committee requests. It must have worked; the following week at Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the end of the Harvard seminar for twelve congressional freshmen, I got the telephone call telling me I was given every assignment I requested--Banking, Currency and Housing, and Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

The other major accomplishment in December was that I found a condominium apartment in the city (Cleveland Park) that had been recommended by an old family friend, Rusty Goldy. A charming place overlooking Rock Creek Park, it was also home to a number of friends of Rusty's. The apartment was a splendid, high-ceiling place, with security and potential friends for Sue. I convinced Sue by phone that we should buy it. We made most of the decisions on carpeting, walls, and appliances by telephone. It was undoubtedly the most unorthodox sale the real estate people had ever made. On a couple of items, like kitchen tile, we had to let one of our new-found friends make the choice between two options. She did it, without knowing a thing about our tastes.

By New Year's Eve, Sue and I and the children were alone in a vacant house in Forest Grove. The furniture we were to keep in Oregon was in storage; belongings that we were to take to Washington were already halfway across the country on a moving van. The only things left in the house were the beds we slept on and a few pieces of living room furniture which would be taken away by friends a few days after we were to leave, in order to prepare the house for sale.

I am a sentimentalist. Throughout the previous week, I couldn't help thinking about all the great plans I had had for the house and the yard and the garden, which I never got to. And now I never would.

Sue and I went to bed early and awoke at midnight to firecrackers and firearms being shot into the air. It ended the year with a special finality--and I knew that, for better or worse, our lives would never be the same.

January

The alarm rang at 4 a.m. New Year's Day, while it was still pitch dark. For the next hour, we prodded Stacy and Kelly through their morning ritual of getting dressed, brushing teeth, scrubbing faces. They were still so sleepy, they acted as though they were drugged. By 5 a.m., we were all ready to go with suitcases finally snapped shut and the family awake, dressed, and ready. Dan Potter, the Washington County Administrator, had arrived a few minutes before five to load up the luggage in his car. The night before, he had phoned me to ask if he could be of help in providing transportation to the Portland train depot. I gladly accepted this generosity, and once the bags were in the car, we stopped by the Potter house for a magnificent hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, juice, toast, and coffee that Betty had waiting for us on the dining room table in front of a roaring fire in the fireplace. It was a welcome boost to our morale. I can't imagine anything more depressing than laboring with our suitcases alone in the predawn darkness of New Year's Day and slipping out of town without saying anything to anybody.

We made it to the depot by 7 a.m. and were met by my brother Lee, a Portland TV newsman and cameraman, an Oregon Journal newspaper photographer, and Marguerite and Tom Wright. Marguerite and Tom looked like they had had perhaps a half-hour's sleep before their arrival, but, buoyant as ever, Marguerite had gag gifts for each member of the family. The TV reporters had a field day and were intensely interested in knowing why we were traveling by train. The reason was simple. The family still hadn't had that much time together since the election, and so the four-day train trip would provide a welcome opportunity to relax--free from telephones and all other interruptions. It also would give the kids a chance to see the country for the first time and would give the family time for a gradual transition from Oregon to Washington. For comfort, we got adjoining compartments with a folding door between them. We divided our time among the compartments, the vista dome car, and the dining room.

The trip was a magnificent experience, filled with picture postcard scenes showing rich slices of life. The sheer diversity I saw through the window began to make more understandable the various social patterns that make up the country. The rugged individualism

of the mountain states clearly jived with the raw and rugged snow-swept plains of Montana. The straitlaced, Protestant middle-class virtues of the Midwest found a living monument in the train depot and town square of Fargo, North Dakota--a classic Norman Rockwell scene of tidy brick and wood-frame buildings. One of the greatest scenes of all was on the afternoon of the first day, as the train climbed high into the Cascades east of Seattle. Up there in the mountains, we came upon several small logging towns which seemed completely cut off from the world by the heavy snow-drifts. People moved slowly from building to building and didn't seem to mind a bit. Outside one town, we saw six or seven people warming their hands around a fire at the base of a toboggan run that lay under a railroad trestle. They all waved to the passengers in the vista-dome car, and a part of me wanted to be with them.

The fairy tale quality of the trip ended in Chicago. That's where we had to transfer, and walking through the grubby depot with the teeming mass of travelers in a hurry, I tightened my grasp on Stacy's hand. The kids said hardly a word amid all the hustling. From that point it seemed as if a curtain was raised on a different way of life. The people were tougher, and we were more on our own. Aboard the next train, we quickly rolled through Gary, Indiana, and I was astonished at the grime of that city. It was one, huge dirty factory, and it seemed so repressive, it was hard to believe any person could live a life there. The litter and rubble along the countryside through Pennsylvania made an Oregonian feel personally diminished in looking at it. Even Stacy and Kelly noticed it and wanted to know why people let it happen.

On the last day of the trip, the train pulled to a stop a few miles out of Baltimore. After waiting for about an hour, we learned that there had been a freight train derailment ahead and that Amtrak was sending buses to transport passengers the rest of the way. When the buses arrived, we discovered that Amtrak somehow failed to correctly count the number of Washington passengers: there weren't enough bus seats to go around. So, for the last hour-and-a-half of the trip, Stacy and Kelly rode in our laps. When we finally arrived at Union Station in Washington, we were all hot, tired, and numb.

Jon Tumler, one of my legislative assistants, met us at the station with a borrowed station wagon and drove us to The Towers Apartments in Northwest Washington, where my administrative assistant lived and had arranged for a guest room for us.

We spent ten long days at The Towers--until we were able to work out a pre-occupancy agreement with the management of the condominium complex where we were in the process of finalizing the purchase of our apartment. The apartment at The Towers was well-furnished but small. It was a studio-type apartment with collapsible beds for the children. Sue and I were offended at the decor which represented the tasteless attempts at quality. In the lobby, wall murals and hallway sculpture created a contrived ancient Greek look. I thought it looked like a huge funeral parlor. "This is Washington?" I asked.

During those days at The Towers, living out of a suitcase, and facing the hubbub of an office that was trying to become organized, there was an air of unreality about living in Washington. I felt like I was gliding, in a semi-daze, through each day, surrounded by confusion and frantic activity, to which I just could not relate. This period of time was a real test of mettle for Sue and me. There were a thousand things that we had to do, but we had only a few hours each evening after I returned from the office to even see each other. We couldn't even discuss our feelings because the children were sleeping in the same room. The city seemed huge and impersonal. I couldn't believe the size and number of the apartment houses and the fact that so many people, like so many ants, lived in them. How would it be possible to have good friends here, in the sense that we knew them in Oregon?

I had the dreadful feeling that the A.A. would not work out, even in those early days. She was a strange woman who seemed more attune to the superficial niceties of an office, rather than efficient management. She laughingly called herself a "Jewish mother" and I understood why. She fluttered about, tending to the smallest of my personal needs in the office, but ignored the need to lay down procedures with the newly assembled staff. As time went on, I found her dismissing new ideas on office procedure as the foolish ideas of young staff members who simply didn't know their way around. Occasionally when Alyce would drive me home from the office, she would make vague comments on what happens to nice families in this tough town

and would follow it with a cryptic, "heh, heh." In the meantime, without strong, central leadership, the staff began jockeying for position among themselves, claiming their own turf and building walls around it. At the same time, back home, old supporters immediately began to wonder aloud if I would forget them. Pat McCormick began to lose command of the Portland office because he was worried about what was happening in the Washington office and found himself listening to various complaints by the Washington staff about Alyce. I'll never forget my bewilderment in those days in wondering if I could ever draw a circle around the situation long enough to build a staff organization because it was so incredibly difficult to find a first foothold on Capitol Hill as well as in my new personal life.

On opening day, I took the family to the Capitol for the big day. We arrived at 10 a.m. Sue took a gallery pass, and Stacy and Kelly went to the floor with me. The poor kids were so hassled, they were uncharacteristically irritable, and a couple of times they were elbowing each other in their seats on the floor. We had reached the floor so late, the Democratic side of the aisle was packed with members and their children. Consequently, the kids and I sat on the Republican side. After about a half hour, I located Sue in the West Front Gallery, and she waved down. I wondered what she was actually thinking, sitting up on that perch, watching the kids and me sitting in that sea of humanity. Was she wondering where this moment would take our lives? Did either of us really know? Would this day mark the beginning of a brief, two-year interval or twenty-year lifestyle? She smiled again and gave us another wave.

I sat next to Clair Burgener, a Republican from California, and as we waited for the ceremony to begin, we discussed the bipartisan respect that existed for Al Ullman. Then Clair pointed to Charlie Wiggins, the Republican from California who went to the mat for Nixon in the impeachment hearings with a degree of blind faith you just don't often see. "There's a guy we're pretty proud of on our side of the aisle," Burgener said. I told myself that I would have to think about that. A few minutes later, another impeachment hearing figure, Trent Lott of Mississippi, sat in front of us. He turned to say hello to Clair and was introduced to me. He seemed much younger and more buoyant than the tense, bitter young man I had remembered on the televised impeachment hearings.

Finally the ceremonies began. The swearing-in was over almost as soon as it began. I raised my hand and took the oath, and it seemed strangely pro forma and uninspiring. Maybe it was because of the huge size of the crowd on the floor which made it impersonal. After the ceremony, I took the kids up to the gallery and found Sue, and then we made our way down to the Speaker's office, where families had already begun to congregate waiting in turn to have a souvenir photograph taken with the Speaker. When we finally got our turn and were posed with Carl Albert, I looked over and was astounded to see that eight-year old Kelly stood above the Speaker's shoulder. It wasn't because I was surprised that the Speaker was so small--last August in a campaign trip to Washington, I had posed with Albert behind his desk, and, sitting there, I noticed that his feet didn't reach the floor. Maybe I just realized that my son was growing up faster than I realized. I do have a tendency to think of both Kelly and Stacy as having just started school, even though they are now in the second and third grades. With the photograph out of the way, the family rode the subway to the Rayburn Building (Kelly was especially impressed), and then walked to my office in Cannon. Sandwiches were brought in; the kids drew pictures; Joyceanna, my caseworker, took them to the coffee shop for drinks; and we killed time until 4 p.m. I worked on small things at my desk, signing letters and answering constituent inquiries which had started arriving within a week after the election. The reception was well-attended and went very well. We served Oregon products, Blitz beer, Tillamook cheese, and Forest Grove wine. The offices were crowded with members of the press, a few other Democratic freshmen, members of the Oregon House delegation, and staffers from the Oregon Republican Senators' offices. The Packwood and Hatfield people went out of their way to be introduced. After some three hours of visiting with the Oregon State Society president and his wife, old Oregon friends who now live in the Washington area, lobbyists, and others, we left. Earlier that day, I had worked out a pre-occupancy agreement with the condominium managers, so that evening, despite our utter fatigue, Sue and I were determined to get out of what was by then a stifling atmosphere at The Towers and to move into our apartment. By one or two in the morning, we were in. The only furniture in the house were the beds we slept on, but we were in. We used suitcases for our chests of drawers. And we used the split-level, carpeted solarium in the living room as a sofa.

Being in our own home made up for the difficulties of the early days at the apartment, when we had problems with water pressure and no furniture to sit on. With so much to buy for the household and with such limited time to shop, it was hard to know where to begin to furnish the apartment. Our morale was good, however, because Sue and I loved the design of the apartment itself. I'll never forget my sense of relief when, about a week earlier, I had taken Sue and the kids over to the apartment to let them see it for the first time. Everything else was so chaotic at the time, I had some trepidation before unlocking the door. All I needed was to have Sue disappointed with what was to be our home for at least the next two years. But it was a joy to see her delight as I showed her from room to room. The high ceilings, the intricate molding on the walls, the solarium and dining room overlooking Rock Creek Park, the rustic, walnut-stained wood floors were a pleasant discovery for Sue even though I had described them to her. For the next several weeks, we lived downright primitively as we slowly, piece by piece, purchased items for our home. As we did so, we both began to regain our equilibrium. Several nights, around midnight, we would share a cup of coffee and stand at the window of the solarium or dining room and look out into the tranquility of Rock Creek Park, covered with snow, the creek trickling through the white banks and a periodic car winding silently along the road.

The State of the Union Message was my first moment of real excitement and I suppose the first moment when the full impact of my membership in Congress came home to me. I arrived early and chose a seat on the aisle on the northeast section of the House floor. Slowly, the chamber filled up, and then the senators arrived, and I found myself amazed to see Kennedy, Bayh, Tunney, and what appeared to be the entire Senate coming my way. In the end, I found myself sitting beside Frank Church, and next to him were George McGovern and Joe Biden. Immediately behind us was Hubert Humphrey, who chattered without stopping until the President arrived. Before Ford's arrival, Frank Church and I struck up a conversation. News of the Steering and Policy Committee's recommended ouster of Wayne Hays and Wright Patman had just hit a couple of hours before. Church asked me about the House reforms, not knowing of the Steering and Policy Committee's actions. I told him about Hays and he turned incredulously to McGovern and said, "Did you hear that?"

I repeated it to McGovern, and a smile creased his face, and he said, "No shit?"

When the President arrived, with the Vice President and Speaker sitting behind him, and the chamber filled with members of Congress, the Cabinet, and the Judiciary, it was hard to believe that the assembled leadership of the country was in that room at that same moment. I finally began to realize that I was included, too. I found myself inexplicably wondering what one well-placed bomb would do, and I shrugged off the thought as silly and embarrassingly perverse.

The major feeling I had for Jerry Ford was pity. He reminded me of a man who was in over his head, stumbling along, unsure of himself, and trying manfully not to show it. He seemed self-conscious, and whenever he tried to be emphatic, it seemed contrived because, I supposed, he was so uncertain of himself and his job he didn't really feel emphatic about anything.

A few days later on the floor, Charlie Carney of Ohio, a little imp of a man with a trembling left arm, sat down beside me. We introduced ourselves and I told him I was a new member from Oregon. "Let me give you the most important advice you'll get," he said. He then leaned over and elbowed me in the shoulder and said, "Use that frank! It's the best single way to make sure you stay here." I thanked him for his advice. And, sadly, I knew he was right.

The next time I saw Gerald Ford was at a breakfast for the National Association of Religious Broadcasters. The President was the speaker. It was held in the ballroom of the Washington Hilton and attended by some 2,000 religious broadcasters from across the country. There were two tiers with tables seating, I would guess, fifty people. We all took our places at the head table after the President arrived. I sat next to Bill Cohen, the young Republican from Maine who voted for all three articles of impeachment in the House Judiciary Committee and had risked his career within his own party back home in Maine.

The President's speech was general and, frankly, dull. He ended his remarks by quoting from the Book of Proverbs, Third Chapter. He explained that the Bible was open to the page from which this quote was taken on the day he took his oath of office:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

To spirited applause, the President then turned, shook hands with the master of ceremonies, and nodded in acknowledgment to some of the congressmen who were sitting near the speaker's podium. As he turned my way, I was amazed to see tears had welled up and that his eyes were red-rimmed. Sentimentalist that I am, I just wasn't that moved, myself. Then I saw Ford's eyes lock with Bill Cohen's for an almost imperceptible moment, and he nodded to the young man who had a leading hand in thrusting him into an office he never sought. Cohen continued to clap, and nodded back. I thought there was more communication in that one almost unnoticed split-second than in the President's entire speech.

February

Around 10 p.m. one evening early in February, Sue and I were sitting in the living room and we thought we heard sounds from the kids' bedroom. Sue went to the door and found Stacy in tears. She talked to her for a few minutes and then brought her into the living room to talk to me. For the last several weeks, Stacy had been telling her mother how homesick she was. Once she said that she sometimes just wished that it was all a dream and that she would wake up in her own bedroom in our home in Forest Grove. Tonight it came out that she was having difficulty with some of the kids in school. One girl in particular, by the name of Anna, picked on her all the time. If Stacy didn't do what Anna wanted her to do, Anna made her life miserable. I really had no idea how I would be in a heart-to-heart talk of this kind because I had never had occasion to do it before. But I sat Stacy down and told her I understood how hard it was. I told her how bigger kids used to scare me in grade school and she seemed surprised that her father had ever had an experience of that kind. Then, for about the next half hour, I tried to explain to her that once a child reaches her age, he or she is confronted with challenges or difficult experiences of one kind or another for the rest of his life. And as hard as they are, each problem that is faced up to makes a person a little bit bigger and a little bit better. We talked about

God, too, who Stacy has been learning more about in Sunday School, and finally, around 11:30, her tears were gone and her tenseness left her. She threw her arms around me, gave me a kiss, and said that she felt much better. I felt I had accomplished more in that one heart-to-heart talk than I had since I'd come to Congress.

The first markup session in the Banking, Currency and Housing Committee was a disastrous three-ring circus. I had voted for Henry Reuss for chairman because everyone told me that the committee, under Wright Patman, was a brawling mob which invariably found its legislation being rewritten on the floor. I wasn't prepared for the chaos, then, of that first markup session. The issue was a bill that would require the Fed to take appropriate management steps to bring down interest rates. Debate was hot, amendments and points of order came from every side, and Henry at one time had two propositions simultaneously before the committee--the original bill and a substitute resolution which said it was the "sense of Congress" that the Fed report to the Congress every three months to state what steps it was taking to bring down interest rates and what its monetary goals were for the next three months. The situation was a parliamentary impossibility that had Democrats and Republicans alike throwing out points of order. Points of order were even being made while Reuss was in mid-sentence, trying to explain his ruling on a previous point of order. When Reuss was asked by Butler Derrick, a new Democrat from South Carolina, how he intended to dispose of two mutually exclusive pieces of legislation, Reuss replied that he'd have no quarrel if the committee were to approve both and send them to the Rules Committee, where the leadership could take its pick. The committee ended up approving the resolution and defeating the bill, saving itself the embarrassing spectacle of letting the leadership do our job for us. The hearing room had been filled with spectators that day and, through the proceedings, I watched with anguish as they whispered to each other about what they were witnessing.

A few weeks later, the Housing Subcommittee on which I served took up the Emergency Middle-Income Housing Act. This legislation was designed to provide a quick, "one-shot" stimulus to the housing industry by subsidizing interest rates on some 400,000 new home purchases. The government would make a six percent mortgage

available to these purchasers by paying the difference between six percent and the prevailing market rate. The program would self-destruct in one year, and the intent was that the availability of six percent financing would create a sudden demand for housing that would begin to spark business activity in home construction, the building trades, and the wood products industry. Coming from a state with a timber-based economy and unemployment rates approaching twenty percent in some of the counties in my district, I was intensely interested in the legislation.

From the beginning, the battle that had to be fought was to resist the efforts of members who wanted to convert the program into another housing assistance program--in particular, a housing assistance program that would take care of parochial problems in their own districts. Urban legislators wanted to raise the price ceiling on the homes that would qualify for the subsidy--from \$38,000 per unit to as high as \$48,000 per unit. Others, from areas which had very little space available for new construction, wanted as much as fifty percent of the funds to go for subsidies for sale of already constructed, occupied housing units. I argued in subcommittee and in full committee that this was one issue in which Congress is being called upon to legislate on some other basis than the narrow parochial interests of each member's own district. The intent of the act was to begin to solve the depression in the construction industry. Therefore, the task was to stretch out as far as possible the limited dollars available in the program--to create the greatest number of new housing units possible and, in doing so, create the greatest number of jobs. I argued that every dollar diverted from that concept would be working at cross-purposes with the intent of the act. A dramatic one-shot stimulus for the construction industry depended upon a sudden demand for many housing units, but increasing the price ceiling eligible for the subsidy would in fact decrease the total number of homes that could be made available and thus, to do so, would risk stealing the program's punch. Finally, I argued that one of the virtues of the program originally was that it would stimulate such new employment that the revenue earned from those new incomes would more than offset the outlays from the Treasury in the form of interest rate subsidies. By either tilting the program toward existing housing units or higher priced housing units, the effect would be to reduce the number of jobs to be created and cripple the ability of the program to "pay its own way".

I was exhilarated to have won both battles in the subcommittee, but when it reached the full committee, I failed to prevent an increase in the percentage of existing homes that would qualify for the interest rate subsidies. Having lost that fight, I was able by the skin of my teeth to beat back an effort to increase the per-home price ceiling. It was a minor victory, and a major loss, but I had done my homework and I knew that I had debated well, nonetheless. I had not expected to jump so conspicuously into committee debate so soon, but with an issue of that kind in a district like mine I had no choice. Despite losing half of the victory I had won in subcommittee, I felt the genuine satisfaction of actually legislating for the first time since arriving on Capitol Hill. Beyond that, knowing that I had argued well enough to earn the respect of the veterans on the committee.

In the following days, I knew that I would have to carry the fight to the floor--frankly, an awesome prospect for a freshman who had yet to complete his second month on Capitol Hill and who was far from being comfortably conversant with House rules and procedures. Then one afternoon Henry Reuss telephoned me to say that he had been giving more thought to the issues I had raised and wanted to call a Democratic caucus to see if we could reach a compromise among the Democrats on the committee. I was delighted. In the caucus, after about an hour of discussion, it was agreed that the Democrats would support a floor amendment to reduce the percentage of existing homes eligible for the subsidy from the forty-five percent to thirty percent. It was still more than I had wanted to give, but the prospect of having the committee Democrats united on a proposal that was at least better than what originally left the committee added up to what I knew was the best bargain I could get.

It fell to me to offer the amendment on the floor. But it wasn't until the day of the vote that I learned--with about five minutes notice--that procedurally I would be unable to offer a single, straightforward amendment. Instead, Paul Nelson, the committee staff director, informed me that I would have to stand up when three of the dozen or so separate committee amendments were read and offer three, appropriate substitute amendments. Moreover, the pertinent committee amendments would not come up in sequence, thus forcing me to return to the debate three separate

times. As it turned out, after some two hours of debate, I had won passage of the final, conforming amendment and had won a victory in my first outing on the floor. But the experience drained me. The parliamentary steps I had to take were incredibly complex and the committee itself was terribly disorganized. At one point, Millicent Fenwick, a Republican committee member from New Jersey, offered an amendment to my amendment, and the senior Democrats at the committee table were confused as to whether it was an amendment in the nature of a substitute or an amendment to the amendment. Consequently, on a voice vote we voted a resounding "no", thinking we were killing the Fenwick motion. Actually, the effect of the no vote was to kill my motion. As soon as Reuss and Bill Barrett, the Housing Subcommittee chairman, discovered the error, Reuss asked for a record vote, which enabled us to vote correctly. On that vote, we won.

Some reflections on that first day on the floor: After initially stating my case for my amendments I had my first taste of the flowery praise members are noted for heaping on their colleagues, as one veteran committee member after another stood up to throw me bouquets. They were trying to make the RECORD look good, but it got so syrupy that Robert Bauman, the Republican gadfly, asked me to yield and inquired as to whether I was going to announce my candidacy for reelection now or later. I responded that if the House accepted my amendment and passed the bill, there would be plenty of credit to be claimed by every single member of the House.

Another lingering memory from this experience goes back to my work on the bill in committee. At one point, someone suggested imposing an elaborate extra procedure on HUD in the administration of this act. I can't remember the specific proposal, but I was worried about the additional administrative costs that would be incurred. By reflex action, I asked for a fiscal impact analysis of the proposal. Having served on the Ways and Means (Appropriations) Committee of the Oregon Legislature, I was accustomed to fiscal impact statements from the legislature's budget analysts on every proposal that carried a fiscal impact. I was amazed to learn for the first time that on such questions, committees are limited to the guesswork of their staff, few of whom are fiscal analysts. So

my question struck most people as having come in out of left field. It was an astounding discovery to learn that in this respect, as well as others, the Oregon Legislature is more professional--not to mention more responsible--than the Congress of the United States.

The afternoon after the vote on the Foreign Aid bill, Mark Hannaford, a freshman Democrat from California, sat down beside me and looked flushed and more than a little bit hassled. I knew that something was bothering him and in a few minutes he told me what it was. He had taken a walk on the Foreign Aid bill because he had campaigned against reckless American spending overseas. And since the vote did not allow us to make a distinction between that kind of spending and, say, aid to Israel which is popular in his district, he decided to just leave the floor. "Les," he said, "I'm ashamed of myself but I just didn't know how to handle that issue politically." My advice to him was that politically, and for his own piece of mind, it simply isn't worth it to calculate how each vote will sell or be attacked in the next election. I told him I knew what he was going through, but having gone through four years in the Oregon Legislature, I had long since concluded that you can twist your mind into a pretzel with those kinds of political calculations. I told him the best advice I had ever heard was from Wayne Morse, who had said, "The cardinal rule in politics is, one, to determine the facts and, two, to follow them to wherever they lead." Mark and I have been on close terms ever since.

My trip back to the district during the First Congressional Recess in February drove home how powerful incumbency is. The Portland office had done nothing to solicit press coverage of the tightly scheduled ten-day trip, other than distribute a detailed itinerary. McCormick and I were amazed to find ourselves trailed by television cameramen at every step along the way. Weekly and daily newspapers seemed hungry, too, for interviews. It was a far cry from the bleak days of the campaign when we had to scratch for a line of type in a newspaper.

At the very beginning I had instructed the Portland staff that I wanted to schedule listening tours of the district during each recess. Where we would have no speaking engagements, we would schedule town meetings on our own. The remaining time would be spent on tours to better familiarize myself with the social and economic pattern of the district, individual meetings with groups,

and office hours. The public response to the first listening tour was unbelievable. At each stop, people thanked me for coming to listen to local problems and to talk candidly about issues. The response surprised me, but then I realized for the first time that my predecessor, Wendell Wyatt, while enjoying a great reputation for effective casework and quick communication, was really not a very visible member of Congress. I realized that I had never seen Wyatt in public in the nine years that I had lived in the district, with the single exception of a major dam dedication near my home in Forest Grove. During that recess, one of the groups I met with in my district office was a peace group, petitioning me to resist additional military spending in Southeast Asia. I assured them that my position had not changed, that I continued to oppose the additional funds. With that piece of business out of the way, the conversation got into a rather stimulating discussion about the condition of man--in the world, as well as in America. At length, McCormick came to usher the group out in order to keep me on schedule for the next appointment. A woman in a wheel chair said she wanted to make just one more point to summarize. She said, "It all boils down to something I read on a Christmas card from a young Peace Corps worker. The card said, 'We are building walls, when we should be building bridges.'" What an eloquent summary of our problems.

The staff operation still has not come together effectively. I had a long meeting with Alyce and told her we simply had to define goals, determine what steps were necessary to reach those goals, and prioritize functions to insure that work that was essential to realizing those goals was not crowded aside by nonessential work. She told me it is impossible to organize a congressional office this way, that after I had been on the Hill awhile I would come to realize it myself, but that she would try. We also agreed that we would give it a couple of weeks to see if it would work out. We came to an understanding that if it didn't work out, she would leave.

I attended a White House swearing-in ceremony for Carla Hills, the new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Members of the House and Senate Banking Committees were given front-row seats. President Ford opened the ceremony with a few general complimentary remarks and then Mrs. Hills took the oath. Afterwards, she made a short, idealistic speech about providing adequate

housing for all Americans and thanked Ford for his confidence and stated her loyalty to him. Then she kissed her daughters and her husband, who were on the stage with her. The President shook Mr. Hills' hand and bent down to shake hands with the Hills children. Then he stepped off the stage and came over to greet the members of Congress. I was one of the first to meet him and, again, his eyes were filled with tears.

Phil Burton invited about ten of the Democratic freshmen over to his house for dinner and the conversation turned to the question of what the caucus should do about the Vietnam military aid request. By this time, I had become concerned about establishing a precedent in which the caucus would dictate legislative instructions to standing committees. A few weeks earlier, the caucus had done just that, voting in support of an amendment to the tax-cut bill that would eliminate the oil depletion allowance. As opposed as I was to additional military aid to Southeast Asia, I argued that evening that committee members would rightly see this as a threat to the committee system and, consequently, it could lead to a backlash against the caucus, itself, as a political mechanism. This, I argued, could destroy the caucus as a political entity and as a result Congress would lose its principal instrument for reform. The latter, in fact, is what the major role of the caucus should be. Whenever such a body gets into substantive issues, decisions are made without the benefit of expert testimony or careful thought. It can literally lead to mob rule, where people are emotionally stampeded and where the loudest voice carries the day. Within weeks, the Vietnam question was before the caucus, however, and the body voted resoundingly against additional military spending.

When I arrived at the airport to catch my flight back to Washington at the end of the February recess, Dick Petersen, a machinist who worked hard for me in the campaign, told me with broken words that Barry, his son, was rebelling against him and was not adjusting to his new marriage. He was refusing to go to school and his dad said that for the first time in his life, he couldn't communicate with Barry. Dick said that Barry looked up to me and he wanted to know if I would write him a letter and appeal to him personally. I said I would and by month's end, sent the following letter:

"Dear Barry:

"I will never ask many personal favors of you, but I am writing to ask one of you now. I am asking you to follow some personal advice, which I'm about to give you, even though it may be difficult to fully understand why.

"Your dad tells me you aren't going to school, and I think I know why. This concerns me very much and is the reason for this letter. There was a time in my life when I treated lightly the importance of an education, and it almost cost me my future. I wasted away much of my freshman year of college and as a result my grades were close to a disaster. Had I put in one more semester of that kind, it could well have been the end of my college career and all that has come since. Luckily, I had the ability to see what was happening to me and during a tour of duty in the Army, I had some time to sort things out in my mind. What I learned was that the people I found myself admiring most in the world were ones who had an education--high school, if not college. And I discovered early what is the usual fate for those who fail to achieve a high school diploma. Their average lifetime earnings are greatly lower than those of high school graduates; they are usually the last to be hired in good times and the first to be laid off in hard times. It's not a very pleasant picture but while there are exceptions, this is all too often the life that's in store for a high school drop-out.

"Barry, I understand what's on your mind. You've always been close to your dad, you've had him all to yourself, and you were fond of the life the two of you were living. Now your dad is remarried, you're in a new town, a new school, and you suddenly find yourself having to share your dad with several others. It isn't easy, is it? It probably seems as though the whole world has changed and you may not be sure you like it or even want to be a part of it.

"You probably never knew this but I came from a broken home myself and went through some of the same changes when my mother remarried. This happened later in my life than yours, so I'm sure it's even more difficult for you.

"The situation calls upon you to be a man, perhaps earlier than you would otherwise. Part of being a man is learning to sacrifice a bit, and to be unselfish. Your dad's life is important, too, Barry, and it won't be too many years before you'll be setting off on your own in the world. When that time comes, your dad will have to let you go gracefully and not insist on keeping you to himself. You'll expect this and you will deserve no less; it's the nature of things.

"And when your dad does this, where will it leave him if the son he loves has prevented him from having the kind of future he deserves?

"Think about this, Barry. It would be a favor to me if you would. And when you really analyze it, see if you don't think you'll be a bigger person--a man--for facing up to these big changes, for having the determination to overcome the difficulties they bring, and for sharing someone you love with others who love him too.

"I just have a hunch you've got something inside you that will help you do this, and that you won't let your father down.

"With my best wishes,

"Your friend,

"LES AuCOIN
"Member of Congress"

Three days later, Barry wrote back:

"Dear Les,

"I received your letter today and was quite choked up I guess you would say. I never thought a man of your time would be so concerned about a fourteen-year-old boy who was having problems at home and I really appreciate you for that.

"You must be a man of great understanding to be able to put just what I feel on a piece of paper and give me some of the best advice I have ever had. And I think I am going to take it, because I know how important it is to have a good education.

"But I still need some time to think things out, everything's happening so fast around me. So day after tomorrow which will be the 26 or the 27th I am going to Seattle to visit my mother for a week and then BACK to school I think and hope.

"Well it is getting very late, 12:10 a.m. to be exact, and I am pretty tired but before I go I just want you to know how much I appreciate the letter you wrote me and want to say 'thanks', and if there is ever anything I can do for you here let me know and I will try, and that you have a friend for life and I hope I do too.

"Sincerely,

"Barry Petersen"

February marked the first embassy party Sue and I were invited to. It was the West Germany embassy and I think our invitation grew out of an introduction we had been given to the West German ambassador and his wife early in January at a Sunday brunch introducing the new members of Congress. We had no idea what to expect and when we arrived we knew no one there. But in minutes, however, an embassy staff member who had once lived in Oregon as an exchange student (and who undoubtedly was assigned to us for the evening) came up to us and kept us entertained through the cocktail hour. Then we moved into the dining room and Sue felt a bit horrified to see that couples were separated and placed at different tables. At my table I was flanked by Lady Ramsbotham, wife of the British ambassador, and Betty Beale, a newspaper correspondent.

I spent the first part of the dinner, listening to Mrs. Beale and Lady Ramsbotham compare notes about the wife of the former French or Belgian ambassador to the U.S. Then Mrs. Beale complained to another dinner partner that whites had no say in D.C. city government and, turning to me, she said she, too, was a Democrat until the party adopted the principle of "minority rule." Because of years of Democratic domination of the federal government, she contended that "blacks and minorities are running the country." I said that that analysis would be of interest to American blacks who find that in a time of eight percent national unemployment, twenty percent of their numbers are looking for jobs. We debated, eye-to-eye, for the next half hour and finally someone asked her to dance.

In fact, everyone at my table went to the dance floor, leaving me momentarily at the table alone. Within minutes, my embassy staff host was seated next to me again, gamely trying to renew our conversation. The next dance was a hard rock number, and I thought to hell with it. I out-debated her, why not out-dance her, and so I asked Mrs. Beale to dance. It was surprisingly fun, got me away from the embassy staffer who was trying to overprotect me, and maybe it spared me from being harpooned in Mrs. Beale's social column. Sue and I stayed until 1 a.m. and, except for a discreet number of dances with other partners, danced together until we could dance no more. A priceless evening.

In February, the House voted on raising the debt ceiling. It passed by a 78-vote margin. I couldn't believe the number of fellow liberals who had soft-peddled arguments for fiscal restraint and seldom voted against a spending measure, but voted against raising the statutory ceiling on the debt--an action necessary to meet costs and payrolls mandated by their votes! How easy it is to vote for programs that cause that debt and then tell the folks back home how fiscally responsible you are by voting against increasing the debt ceiling. The sheer hypocrisy is staggering.

By this time, I am beginning to see why members of Congress find themselves surprised by the effects of laws they write. Some days, I answer as many as ten or more calls for a recorded vote. Often I arrive from my office or from committee with only seconds left on the clock. Luke, the man from the leadership floor staff, stands at the door with his thumb up or down. Up means the party wants a "yes" vote' down means it wants a "no" vote. After being moused a couple of times, I adopted the habit of heading straight to the floor as soon as I hear the bells. This gives me a few minutes to check with several different sources on the floor before casting my vote. The problem doesn't occur on bills or major amendments because it is known that these will be coming up, a fact which gives my staff and me time to research and study the issue in advance. But it certainly is a problem for amendments that pop up out of left field.

March

Early this month, the Banking Committee Democrats caucused on several housekeeping items. After matters had been discussed for about an hour, Wright Patman, the dethroned chairman, came to life and asked to be recognized. He started talking once again about the evils of the Federal Reserve Board and recalled what he had been saying as early as the administration of FDR. I had heard it before, more than once, but you could tell the cause was the old man's life and he was putting everything he could into it. Other members soon began to visit with each other and still others doodled on paper. Mr. Patman's eyes went up and down the table as he talked and in the inattention of his colleagues bothered him, he didn't let it show. But when his eyes caught mine down at the end of the table, he lit up and finished the last ten minutes of his remarks looking and nodding at me. I didn't have the heart to look away.

I replaced my AA after difficulties came to a head over the mail. After being repeatedly assured that all the incoming mail was being distributed each day, I discovered a file of unattended correspondence two inches thick--some of which was almost two months old. I challenged Alyce and she resigned before I could fire her. The new AA came in on the first of April. The replacement, Susan Geoghegan, unlike Alyce, has never been an AA. But she's young enough to relate to my approach to politics and government and she worked for Jack Gilligan when he was in Congress and later when he was Governor of Ohio. Beyond that, she had a reputation for getting along with people but being tough enough to handle leadership responsibilities.

The last time I heard anything of Alyce's activities was during my March trip home, when Dave Barrows, a close personal friend of both Senator Bob Packwood and me, asked for an immediate appointment in my Portland office. He told me that Alyce was telling people on the Senate side of the Hill, in interviewing for jobs, that she quit me because I had "designed my office operation for one purpose and one purpose alone--to get Bob Packwood in 1980." Dave said he didn't believe it, but he wanted to hear it from me. I assured him that the last thing on my mind was a Senate race when I was working my rear end off trying to organize an effective

congressional office and learn the ropes as a congressman. Back in Washington, I telephoned Bob to tell him I was embarrassed by the episode and to pass the same message along. He was good natured and said he understood, but I'll never really know if he did.

Two days before I left for my March trip home, Sue's father called me from Oregon with the shattering news that her mother, Kathy, had been swept by cancer and wouldn't last long. He offered to pay the air fare for Sue and the kids so they could have one last visit before the end. It was a terrible blow to Sue and me both. Kathy had been a major figure in both of our lives. She had had a mild form of cancer diagnosed a year earlier but under repeated treatment she had received clean reports. Then suddenly she began to feel poor, had a check-up, and they discovered cancer everywhere. We arrived Friday night in Central Oregon. We visited Saturday and Sunday and had good talks. Kathy was reconciled to the inevitable and none of us showed our feelings in front of her; but outside the bedroom each of us, alternatively, broke down. It was like Kathy to insist that she stay home rather than be committed to the hospital where they simply prolong the inevitable. On Easter Sunday afternoon, Kathy was still alert and I had to fly to Portland for a week of appointments and speeches. Before I left, Kathy wanted to see me one more time. We both sensed we would never see each other again and our visit was one of the most poignant I've ever had. As I prepared to leave, I told her she would never know how much she had meant to me. She said, and I believe she actually meant it, "I know that someday you are going to be President of the United States." I could dismiss the prediction, but her unbridled faith was really overwhelming. We kissed after a long hug and then I rose and said goodbye. I had never said goodbye, a real goodbye, to someone and it devastated me.

I sat with Bob Duncan on the floor one day and he asked me where I was the night before at the Boy Scout reception. I told him I had gone to receptions or dinners or some other social affair for six nights in a row and I just flat decided to spend the night at home. "Well, I'm glad your reelection is secure so you don't have to worry about these things," he said with a laugh. It was supposed to be a joke, but it wasn't funny. "When it comes to these things, I more or less feel I'm public property," he said. "If people travel all the

way across the country, they feel they're entitled to see their congressman, and I'm inclined to agree." There is some truth to that, but my wife and kids are entitled to see me once in a while. I simply refuse to let myself some day wake up to the fact that my children are adults and are strangers to me. That's too high a price to pay for any job. As it is, I fear I'm neglecting them. Sue and I have had several conversations at home at night trying to work out a way to insure time with each other and with the family. We haven't perfected it because we've still be settling in, but we've begun and after the family is back from Oregon this fall, we're determined to implement if fully. One night a week, Sue and I will do something totally on our own. On Fridays, we'll continue our delightful new "tradition" of lunching leisurely together at the House dining room. The breakfast hours and at least a day-and-a-half on weekends are exclusively for the family. We've done this in bits and pieces but must regularize it in the fall.

George Cassidy, an official of the Carpenter's Union in Oregon, came to my Washington office one afternoon and was upset that I had not cosponsored Jim Weaver's log export bill. Several members of the Northwest delegation had discussed possible legislation curtailing log exports for a number of weeks. I had not had time to study the Weaver bill, and had an indefinable feeling that if I cosponsored, I would wish I hadn't. I told Cassidy that I simply didn't know what was in the bill, that I had asked Weaver to hold off a week or two until I could study it but couldn't get him to do so, and that, finally, I simply refused to cosponsor legislation I hadn't read. Cassidy couldn't understand. First, he implied that I might be flirting with the Weyerhaeuser Corporation. Then he reminded me that the Carpenters had supported me in the campaign. Finally, he said a "friend" would not have to study the bill but would take another "friend's" word that it was good legislation. I told him that while it was conceivable I might cosponsor the bill later, after studying it, I took no one's support with strings attached and that the day would not come when "friends" legislated for me. After he left, I mused over the "friends" remark; I had never set eyes on George Cassidy until I had arrived in Washington.

April

Shortly after the prayer, Bob Carr, the Democrat from Michigan, rushed over and sat down beside me near the center aisle on the House floor. "Damn it!" he said. "What's the matter," I asked. "There was a real 'Miss America' sitting up there," he said, pointing at the east gallery, "and she left before I could get a better look at her." We exchanged a few bits of news on how it was going for each of us, and he left. I first met Bob last August, when I made my proverbial campaign pilgrimage to Washington to meet congressional leaders. I never expected him to win. But, then, I really wasn't sure I would either.

Lindy Boggs, one of the Banking Committee members who threw bouquets at me after my maiden speech on the floor, invited Sue and me to join her at the House-Senate Democratic fund-raising dinner. Another night of great dancing; Sue and I have done more of that in three months in Washington than we did in three years in Oregon. Hubert Humphrey was the life of the party, cutting it up on the dance floor until past midnight with a long line of women, young and old, queued up to cut in for a few steps with him. During one dance, Sue and I whirled past Ted and Joan Kennedy and it was a fascination for Sue who had never seen either of them; later she said she felt a bit embarrassed with herself for being as curious as a tourist. I felt the same way about myself.

I got a telephone call one afternoon from Paul Nelson in the Banking Committee. The International Trade and Development Subcommittee was taking a trip to Singapore and the Philippines, and did I want to be included? I declined. It was the second trip I was offered; the other one was a meeting in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which I also had declined. No one bothered to explain the objective of either trip. Before arriving in Washington, I had decided to decline all trips that did not directly relate to pending business before one of my committees.

I thought I had scored a coup when Tip O'Neill consented to be my guest on my weekly radio show during the week of the Vietnam Evacuation Aid vote. I arrived in his office with my tape recorder and after an amiable general visit, I started the interview. It's a five minute

program but I couldn't get a single answer limited to five minutes. I left the office with 25 minutes of taped conversation, most of which was so disjointed the entire recording was useless. I sent Tip a thank you letter, but never told him that I had my press secretary call State Department the same afternoon to arrange for an interview with one of the senior members of the President's Task Force on Vietnamese Refugee Relocation.

One of the fascinating games that's played in this town is "Instant Analysis." This is where you listen like hell to a Presidential speech so you can have something clever to say to back home reporters who are doing the classic "reaction round-up" story. To try to comment seriously about some major policy statement you haven't possibly had time to study makes as much sense as a blind man trying to judge a beauty pageant. One of these days, when I'm button-holed right after a Presidential speech and asked what I think of it, I'm going to look the reporter dead in the eye and say, "I haven't the faintest idea," then tell him to call me in a couple of hours.

During one particularly chaotic and confusing debate this month, I sat down beside Lud Ashley, the Democrat from Ohio, and said, "Lud, I've become an advocate of a strong presidency!" Ashley exploded with laughter and told me I was learning quickly. I meant it. The effort must not stop to strengthen Congress and make it stand on its own two feet in being a meaningful partner in the setting of public policy. Surely, it must never be allowed to drift back to the days when it was content to hand over its powers, year after year, to the Presidency. But however much it is reformed and structurely strengthened, Congress will always be made up of 435 members who'll be ever-hesitant to resist a parochial interest and, in an increasingly political age, will be tempted to engage in showmanship. A committee of 435 cannot run the country -- and an intensely political committee of 435 egos surely cannot. No one dislikes the policies of the last eight years of GOP administrations more than I do. But the way to change that is to recapture the White House rather than attempt to make Congress something which, inherently, it cannot be. Sooner or later, the Democrats will again control the White House. We will have won a hollow victory if we have structurally weakened what still is the best instrument for leadership in this country.

It's amazing how to what extent the House legislates on the basis of bill titles. The Youth Camp Safety Act is a prime example. It imposes federal regulation of youth camps, pre-empting state authority, creating a new bureaucracy and regulations without a demonstrated need. Someone hazarded a guess on the floor that more people were killed or injured in bathtub accidents in this country and thus he supposed that passage of this act would logically mean that bathtub safety regulation by the federal government should come next. The debate dealt a devastating blow to the bill. And yet it passed, 197-174! A majority of the members of the House clearly did not want an opponent's campaign literature to show they voted "no" on a Youth Camp Safety Act. The best thing I heard on the floor that day was the suggestion that someday the House simply must ban titles being placed on bills. Had this bill gone simply by its number, I'll bet it would have been defeated, as it should have been. The Press is an important part of the problem. Voting synopsis on how the State delegation voted usually lists the bill, a brief explanation, and how a member voted. You have to flinch when you see yourself listed as voting against "Youth Camp Safety." How many constituents read such reports and reach a conclusion about you without giving you a chance to explain the problems that existed beneath the surface of the title. The Voting Rights Extension Act, passed June 4, is another example. Some of the provisions were so complex and fraught with ambiguity, that explanations of the effects of the bill given by members of the subcommittee contradicted their explanations in committee. The debate showed so many confusing ambiguities, I would have voted to recommit the bill to committee. As I drove home, the radio news broadcast reported, "The House voted today to extend the Voting Rights Act for 10 years." Had a recommittal motion succeeded, there would have been hell to pay. A vote to recommit would have been seen as a vote hostile to the purpose of the Act. Banning bill titles would not correct the problem, but it would help.

I sat next to Wayne Hays today at lunch at the large round table in the corner of the members' private dining room. This seems to be the prestige table to which Burton, Hays, and others gravitate. Every once in a while, you see a freshman sitting with them. Today was my turn. I had visited with Hays several times on the floor since the organizational caucus in January

when I voted against him as chairman of the House Administration Committee for documented cases of personal abuse of power. (Among other things, he had refused to release a paycheck of an employee of another member because he was in a dispute with that member.) They say Hays is a genius at political chess, and I believe it. His instincts are sharp and his sense of political timing is something to behold. I think the scare he had has convinced him personal abuse of political power is a powerful issue today and that in many ways he was lucky to escape defeat in the chairmanship race. If he does show a recognition of the limits of power, I probably will support him in the next organizational caucus. You've got to respect skill when you see it.

May

I was appointed to the House-Senate conference committee on the Emergency Middle-Income Housing Act, the first freshman, according to Henry Reuss, to have been so named in the Banking Committee. In the Legislature, I had been convinced that the part of the process in greatest need of reform was the conference committee. It is the biggest single opportunity for political abuse and as House Majority Leader I was pleased that the open meetings legislation we passed in 1973 required for the first time that conference committee meetings be publicly announced in advance and that the proceedings be open to the public and press.

Nothing I saw in this conference committee convinced me that Congress is an exception. In closed session, the conversation turned on statements like, "We'll give you this, if you'll give us that." There's a slim line between hammering out a noble compromise and plain horse-trading. It was also a surprise to see how the parochial fetishes of individual senators or congressmen could influence the conference. We almost had to accept the lifting of the deadline imposing a ban on federal flood insurance in flood-prone areas because two senators-- Garn and McIntyre -- had a number of communities which had not complied with HUD requirements in advance of the deadline.

I had written to every community in my district weeks in advance, calling their attention to the deadline, warning them that federal insurance would be cut off if they had not complied with HUD by July 1, and offering whatever staff assistance I could provide. By the time the conference met, I was proud that all but four communities had complied and that the remaining four were cooperating with HUD. Fortunately, the House conferees unanimously argued that it would be unfair to communities that had worked hard to bring themselves into compliance to now extend the deadline for the foot-draggers. In the end, the Senate was forced to back off. But it bothered me that such narrow parochial issues could come so close to influencing a conference. I guess that's the whole point. I saw no real political abuse in this conference, but I saw rich opportunities for it. It made me pleased with my vote on last December's caucus to amend the House rules to ban closed conference committees. It passed, but it will not be effective until the Senate adopts a similar rule.

During my trip home this month, I had dinner with Stan and Joyce Cohen in Lake Grove. Stan is a flaming liberal and I used the opportunity to hypothesize what the United States' response should be to a North Korean invasion of South Korea. He knew my stand on the Vietnamese war and that I had worked for Gene McCarthy and participated in the moratorium marches. Inasmuch as the U. S. has an airtight mutual defense treaty with South Korea and inasmuch as failure to honor it, coming on the heels of the collapse of Southeast Asia, would clearly raise doubts as to our willingness to honor any difficult commitments, I asked him how he would vote as a congressman -- if his vote were the pivotal one. I was amazed that he said he would vote to honor the commitment. That's precisely how I feel and events could force such a vote. If so, given the mood of the times, it could be a political disaster. But the inescapable fact is that such major questioning of American willpower would make it politically imperative for nations which have depended on U. S. protection to build and expand their own arsenals. And if a nation such as India can possess the Bomb, I have no doubt about the content of such arsenals in even the most obscure nations of the Third World.

Bob Krueger and I had a good talk about two fascinating subjects -- congressional spending controls and the way the congressional system is geared for power plays rather than for a full exploration for the

Truth. The latter has certainly been my experience on the Banking Committee. The committee leadership will conceive an idea, drop a bill, rush to hearings, and through partisan peer pressure try to rifle the legislation through the committee. We'd do so much better by holding general hearings on a problem, establishing a definition of the exact problem, consider a variety of proposed solutions and then write a bill which could be debated in subsequent hearings and markup sessions. On spending, I observed to Krueger that if Democrats felt huge deficits are no political problem, they will be rudely awakened next November. Neither of us could understand why so many Democrats thus far have shown no appreciation for the fact that the Treasury has to enter the private money market to finance deficits and, in so doing, it deprives the private sector of capital for expansion and jobs and also produces the higher interest rates we all loathe. There are times, such as now, when well-reasoned deficit spending is necessary to stimulate economic recovery. But there must be limits. It pains me to hand the GOP such a beautiful issue.

All of which means, in my judgment, that there must be a new dogma in the Democratic Party -- a new impetus for cost-consciousness and performance accountability in government programs. The old pork chop vote of the New Deal days is gone forever. You just can't spend a million dollars for this, or that -- or create a new federal office for this, or that -- and win the hearts and minds of the voters in either party today. I had a union business agent tell me last month that he'd be willing to take a cut in pay if government and others would tighten their belts, too. A local labor leader! I see the same phenomenon among Democratic party workers whenever the subject of a new federal agency is raised. People just distrust government -- they distrust its morality and ethics and they distrust its ability to solve problems. I've been following Governor Brown of California with fascination. I'm convinced it's that kind of thinking the national party needs. It can lead to that new party point of view I think is needed so urgently. Certainly, the party cannot thrive in the '70s and '80s if, intellectually, it's still serving warmed-over New Dealism.

The lack of time one has to think in broad terms or in depth about where the world is headed is a very real disappointment. On the floor beside my bed sits a two-foot pile of fascinating articles and books I've marked for reading. I have made barely a dent in it in four months, and it keeps growing larger. It's sobering. I remember a national columnist once saying it can be dangerous for a busy officeholder who has only limited reading time to do any serious reading at all. He said it wasn't until LBJ read an indepth history of World War II that he began the major escalation of the Vietnam War. The columnist's point was that the danger occurs because the public figure has no time to read other works that could provide balanced points of view. Maybe it is true that scholarship must be left to the academician and that political figures must be "men of action" rather than "men of thought," running on sheer instinct. Why am I revolted by this? I suppose it's my college administration background. I'm still determined to do a better job of carving out time for thought. And one of the best things I did, for sure, was to establish a cadre of Oregon experts in higher education, business, labor, and the professions.

The week before the vote on the override of the veto on the farm bill, I responded to a telephone whip check as "undecided." The morning of the vote, I had made up my mind to vote to override but hadn't instructed my L.A. to tell Bob Duncan, my regional whip. A few hours before the vote, I got a call from the Speaker, himself, asking me for my vote. The leadership's pulling out all the stops for this one, I told myself. That afternoon, the override lost by 40 votes.

On the day before the May recess, the Speaker announced that the House would go into recess for a few hours, awaiting Senate action on a conference report on the Second Supplemental Appropriations Bill. By 5 p.m., the bells rang us back into session, but we could muster only 202 votes on a quorum call because most members had already taken off. After waiting for over half an hour, we adjourned, leaving the final disposition of the appropriations issue in limbo for ten days until we reconvened.

The veto override on the jobs bill -- considered a key test of the strength of the Democratic Congress -- failed today by four votes. Albert, O'Neill, and Burton had all passionately urged the override, but failed. At the computer screen after the vote, Tip O'Neill said, in looking at the number of Democrats who went south, "Only one of them had told me he would be with us -- the rest were against us or undecided."

Someone at the rear of the crowd gathered around him said, "Then we knew we didn't have the votes to begin with?" The question was never answered. John Jenrette, the freshman whip, was dejected as he stood at the traffic light across from the Cannon Building after the session. "If we can't override a veto on a jobs bill with 8 million unemployed, we can't override any veto," he said. He reflected the gloom seen throughout the Democratic caucus the instant the GOP burst into cheers when they hit the magic number. The entire Democratic side sat in frozen silence. That was the moment when it hit home that all the confident talk of "congressional government" had been an empty promise.

On the other hand, I wonder whether Ford's unexpected strength is cause for complete despair. A bloated majority that is dead-certain of an automatic two-thirds can soon become a smug and lazy majority. Such certain knowledge almost guarantees that legislation need not be drafted carefully or conceived responsibly. The jobs bill is a case in point. It had some weaknesses. There was a risk that a good part of its thrust would not be felt until next year, when economic conditions might not warrant it.

On the day after the veto of the jobs bill was sustained, the Press was full reports of the "new momentum" captured by Ford. It was his second veto sustained, one that appeared to be easiest to override, and it followed the Mayaguez affair and what the Administration touted as a very successful European presidential trip. A disheartening day to be a member of a party which -- despite a two-to-one majority-- simply has not been able to get its thing together. Under special orders, the one-minute speeches were

filled with bitter backlash attacks at the GOP. First O'Neill, then Wayne Hays. Hays said that Republican debate on the jobs bill convinced him that the GOP economic policy is a "cut and paste" job" from newspaper articles of the 1930s. John Rhodes stood up and responded that the GOP program takes the long view -- to solve the recession without overreacting and triggering another vicious round of inflation . . . to hold spending in line so as to create jobs in the private sector in stores and factories rather than in the public sector "raking leaves." Rhodes had the supreme self-assurance of a man who knows he's a winner and expects to continue to be.

Later in the day, the House approved the conference report on the Emergency Middle-Income Housing Act. Lud Ashley, one of the senior members of the Housing Subcommittee, joined the GOP in blasting the bill on the Floor, saying it was too much, that it was a political charade because it faced a certain veto. The report was approved by 19 votes less than the two-thirds needed to override. What is the responsibility of Congress? To pass legislation in an ideal form, knowing that it might well be vetoed? Or to trim and tack its sails and pass legislation that falls short of the ideal but has a chance of being signed? In any other time, it might be appropriate to follow the first route to make a political point. But with the country rapidly running out of answers, now is no time to be trying to score political points for the 1976 presidential elections. Partial answers are better than no answers at all. Had I been seasoned enough to know where the votes were on the Floor, I would have been on Ashley's side in the conference more often. As it was, I had attributed most of Ashley's opposition to personal pique with Reuss, who had climbed to the chairmanship with less committee seniority than he had. I left the Floor today wondering if the Democratic strategists would also come to this conclusion or if we would harden the lines and escalate the battle. I was brought out of my preoccupation with these questions when a member came up to a group of us and said, as we were about to walk off the Floor, "Have you heard the definition of a safe cracker? A girl from Georgia who takes the Pill!"

That night, I got home from the office around 8:30. Sue had kept a dinner plate warm. We each had a gin and tonic in a darkened house and watched the electrical storm move in from Montgomery County. After climbing in bed, we watched the Republican National Committee's first-in-a-series, half-hour special entitled, "Republicans Are People, Too." The program was filled with well-scrubbed, comfortable people who hammered on two issues I know as a Democrat I'll hear more of next year -- big spending and big government.

I learned today that the Select Committee on the Outer Continental Shelf is scheduled to go to Scotland during the July Fourth recess to inspect programs proposed to deal with the reportedly rich offshore oil resources there. I told my A.A. to get the full trip agenda for me to read before I made up my mind. I have the feeling that I should be in the district, holding more Town Meetings, such as we started during the Memorial Day recess in Dallas, Oregon. Judy Miller, Dallas City Councilwoman, told the Portland district office that she's been receiving telephone calls from people who attended the Town Meeting and the informal coffee Judy held at her home earlier in the evening. They said whenever they had seen congressmen before, it was on a tour, smiling and waving. They had never had a congressman come to town to talk issues and they wanted to know when we would be scheduling another such meeting.

On the Saturday following the sustaining of the jobs bill veto, David Broder quoted Barber Conable, a Republican member whom I have grown to respect. Conable said what the vote shows is that political power is no substitute for political leadership. How very right he is. Broder concluded his piece with these words: "All of which raises the interesting question--Which does the country need most in 1976: its third president in three years, or fresh leadership in Congress?"