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Oral history interview with Florence Kerr,
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Transcript

Interview

FK: Mrs. Kerr

HP: Dr. Phillips

FK: We just begun to hear about Works Progress, and it was a very odd name. It always was. Works Progress Administration - nobody knew what that meant. It was a very, very odd name. I don't know where they ever picked it up. It seemed to me that it hid more than it revealed, but he had had the appropriations when he got out to Grinnell that time. Congress had appropriated four and a half billion dollars for the unemployment projects administered by Mr. Hopkins. The townspeople couldn't believe it. They couldn't believe the figure. They couldn't believe it because it was just too big, too big, too big. Harry, Robert and I were at Fred's house for cocktails in 1935 and he was talking about the program. Chet Davis wasn't there. I wish he had been, but he wasn't there. I was somewhere else. Hopkins said (this was by the fire) "The President told me last week that he wants to hurry this work program and get jobs for unemployed musicians and artists - people like that. God, if I've had trouble before, what do you think I'm going to have now? But it's the thing to do". "Well, are you trying to fit skills into jobs, workers into various skills?" I thought he wanted a retraining program because workers have been shelled out of what they have been doing because of surplus. At that time I was on the governor's unemployment committee. We didn't do much. We just met. We deplored the situation, asked the legislature to do something to me, very casually, about coming in and doing something about the project, things like this. I didn't know anything about it, so with that he left. It was a month or so after that he called me from Alabama. I was then up at Hanford McNeider's hangout, and you know how the McNeiders hated the New Deal.

HP: Oh, boy!

FK: I thought that was very interesting. Hopkins said, "Come on into Washington. I want to talk to you." Well, I had always been most friendly with Harry, as I would be with my next door neighbor, and I was utterly unprepared for the zones and the ring within rings within rings of Washington because when I got there getting to Harry Hopkins was about as hard as getting to the President. I holed up at the Dodge Hotel and then somebody by the name of Al called me at the hotel -- whoever he was. I never heard of Al before. I didn't have any idea who he was, it sounded like a woman's voice. That's as far as I could tell, and she said "Get yourself out of that Dodge hotel as fast as you can! Come up to the Mayflower." Which I did, and it was days before --

HP: That's a wonderful way to be met: "Get yourself out of the Dodge Hotel!"

FK: Yes, and I was really in a daze. That was my first trip by air, and I remember I came on American Airlines and the pilots wore holsters and firearms for the protection of the mail. We landed at that little - funny little airport down there at Marietta, but it was great days. I got up to the Mayflower Hotel. I tried to find the Walker Johnson where the headquarters were, and still I couldn't see Harry. Harry had asked me to come. I wasn't going to talk to anybody else. They asked me to talk to Aubrey Williams and I wasn't interested at all. And I wasn't interested in Ellen Woodward. Where was Harry? Well, Harry was just incommunicado. I couldn't see him for a long time and I finally decided -- well, I got told that Ellen Woodward would be my boss, so I hung around and finally I did see Harry, and he was terribly involved in all of this. They were just starting the NYA and he said, "I don't believe you belong in the Women's Division, I think you belong in the Youth Administration. I think maybe I'll tell Ellen Woodward you better work for Aubrey Williams." Well, I didn't know about that, but it was all news to me. I didn't know what NYA was going to do. I didn't know what Ellen Woodward was going to do. I didn't know just - what - nothing. Then he said, "No," he said, "that would cause friction, that will cause trouble, Mrs. Kerr. I can't do that. I've told Ellen Woodward that I have the woman for the Midwest states, and you'd better stay put." On that basis I was assigned the Chicago region, thirteen states, and I went out there and met Howard Hunter, who was the regional director, and started in.

HP: With no more orientation than this?

FK: Well, with practically no orientation, practically nothing. I had some idea that the FERA had started a work program and the first thing I worked on was to find out how much property FERA had around, sewing machines and stuff like that, which they would turn over to the new work program. Sometimes they were very cooperative. Sometimes they weren't. Well, it was at least something to talk about when I went into the states. Like "How many machines do you have?" "Have you any inventory on material?" It wasn't much of a handle, but it was the only one I could use.

HP: That's marvelous!

FK: Oh, gee whiz, gee whiz. I soon found out that I got along better if I always talked to the man first. Of course I had - there was a state director, but they were so suspicious of what this was all about. "It was bad enough to put these men to work, but these God-damned women that have no skills, no nothing, and the rangle-tangle of broken down ministers and half-politicians who couldn't work anymore." That stuff was dumped in our division. We had the women of the "patient project," they called it. So we never, never stood very high in the esteem of any state administrator. About the only person that I would except from that would be Dale Greenwell out in Utah, because he was a most unusual chap and he saw the philosophy of the work program and the fitting of people to skills, and so on. He would work, you know, give up a portion of his time to try to find out what would be the best thing to do for Utah. Consequently, Utah had an excellent school lunch program early, and when the art project came along, which it did right away, he welcomed that too. He worked very hard, particularly on the Music Project, and he tried to get Bernard Devoto to come out on the Writers Guide, but Bernard wouldn't have it. He wouldn't buy that at all. He said that you never were any good as a writer and that you wouldn't buy that at all. He said that you never were any good as a writer and that you wouldn't do it. Why do you shake your head?

HP: It's an incredible set of circumstances - the way something unfolds. This is the kind of information that isn't available in any form, and yet it is part of the story.

FK: It's part of the climate in which we worked. Well, I remember that Jake Baker was put in charge of the Art Project. Do you know Jake Baker?

HP: Yes, I do.

FK: He had the professional projects, and Mrs. Woodward had the work for unskilled women, mostly sewing jobs. So that went on. Then there came this rift between Hopkins and Baker. Baker wore black shirts to the White House. Harry didn't like that because it kind of bent the air. When you dress like that the President sort to bristled at that, you know. If he was going to embarrass him at the White House he was just going to get rid of him, and sooner or later he shelled him out. He offered the direction of the arts projects to me at that time, and my husband said, "Please, Florence, don't do that!" I was to leave the women's division and take over, and I just didn't do it. It was given to Ellen Woodward. I don't think Ellen Woodward knows that, but it wouldn't make much difference to her now. So it was transferred from Jake Baker to Ellen Woodward, and about that time - it was very obvious that they were going to fall flat on their faces if they weren't protected as far as a quota and appropriations were concerned - they were federalized.

HP: Yes.

FK: You know, that was certainly a thorn in the side of every state administrator. Here was an amount of money over which he had no direct control, and a chunk of employment over which he had no control - all managed from Washington. "You may have so many musicians. You may have so many and you use the money for that! You just don't get the money for anything."

HP: Right. This is Federal Project Number I?

FK: Federal Project Number I, yes, which was subdivided into the Writers, the Music, the Art, the Historical Records, and for a while we had the HABS, the Historical American Building Survey. But that was finished up. It didn't last too long. Well, when it was federalized, then I tell you the liaison work really got tough.

HP: Did it?

FK: Oh, sure, but meaningful. You see, you had a leverage - that is, we had a leverage.

HP: Yes, you had it.

FK: And without it we never would have gotten off the ground anywhere, with the possible exception of two or three cities. You would say, "Well, you can refuse it, but you want to increase your quota, your state quota." They would take it, and they really had a lot of headaches, the state administrators did, and of course that was the point at which the reporters came swarming in and there were bad appointments, bad administration, lousy work, and oh, God, you just looked and looked and looked for a bright spot, but federalization was necessary to the life of that project. There was no doubt about it. Then they - about that time Henry Alsberg and Luther Evans came at each other, so they were separated - the Writers Project and the Historical Records. I want to say I have never seen such an administrator as Luther Evans. He was terrific. He was autocratic. His hands were in everything. I don't know how he ever found the time, or strength, or energy to read all the reports he required of his field man, or his state director, but right down the line he knew what everybody was doing. He had that project just like that, and of course Henry Alsberg was Henry Alsberg.

HP: Yes. Lovable - -

FK: Lovable and just - oh, he and I got along just beautifully up to the place where he went off. This is skipping. Do you want me to do this chronologically?

HP: As it comes, pursue an idea.

FK: Henry Alsberg and I were great friends when I was out in the region. I really liked him, and I liked to spend time with him. I liked to listen to him. I liked to hear him - you know, just talk. He was a great talker, and I knew he wasn't much of an administrator, but he had Reed Harris and later Larry Morris, and they were devoted Lieutenants. They tried to keep the payroll straight and the employment records straight and all the paper work with which Henry bothered himself not at all. Henry was a perfectionist, you know, he threw away the first year and a half work of the Writers Project because he recognized it as a bad outline and a bad framework. You can't do the state guides that way. Nobody else but the Federal all over again. Not quite all wasted work, but we worked everything we had according to this new outline. Then he had this what I considered excellent outline for the project. Have you read it?

HP: No, I haven't.

FK: Well, they all have the same outline. Every single state had the same outline. That was Henry Alsberg's idea. So he knew good work, and he knew what he wanted. That went along and he gave entirely too many more contracts to Random House than he did to any of the other publishers and we began to hear from the other publishers, "What's going on here between the central government and Random House?" By that time they were saleable items, you see. Well, I came in here as Assistant Commissioner in the beginning of 1939 and by that time Henry Hopkins was Secretary of Commerce - that abortive chapter in his life.

HP: Yes.

FK: Francis Clark Harrington was the head administrator of the WPA who had been an honor student of the Army Engineers Corps and he had been director of operations and I had known him. He took me, not because he liked me or knew me very well. He took me because Harry told him, "That's the person," and Mrs. Roosevelt said, "Now, I think you had better take Mrs. Kerr for the - - ? Ellen Woodward had been appointed by FDR to be Molly Newsomes' successor on the Social Security Board.

HP: Yes.

FK: So, there was a vacancy created and I think if there hadn't been a vacancy created there would have been a very difficult situation there. I don't believe Harrington and Woodward would have worked together happily. They would have worked together, but it wouldn't have been a very fruitful association. So I came in and with a brand new administrator and a very new point of view. I remember in one of our early talks Harrington said to me, "You know, Florence, I don't believe we can make a decent work program for more than two million people." I said, "What will you do with the others?" "Well, they can go on relief." I said, "That's just the basis on which we get money from Congress. We get money on the basis of such unemployment as there is, and it is our problem to expand the work so we can take them all in." "Well, maybe so," he said, "but have you seen the project out on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago?" I said, "Many times". He said, "It just makes me sick - just makes me sick." _____ the men were standing like this, you see, white washing the walls of these underpasses. The reason was that they were getting \$55 a month, and nobody get \$55 a month unless they were downing their uppers. The alternative was to put them out on some of these great Parkway Extension Programs and just kill them off. You see, they would die of exposure, or whatever - I don't know what all. I had a great time getting permission to make windbreakers on the sewing project so they could be issued to the WPA workers, but I didn't have a complete victory on that. It was done state by state, and when the state administration was willing to do that, we could issue windbreakers to the workers, but in the other states it was a strict interpretation. If you were off relief, you had no right to anything other than your WPA wage - none. This was all according to interpretation. Well, to come back to Henry Alsberg. We went up there to testify for our appropriations, and of course congress kept us on very short tether. They would always give us part of the year's appropriations and then say, "You can always come up for a deficiency." Well, you knew well that they meant, "you are going to come up for a deficiency because that will give us another chance to give you a good going over."

HP: That's right.

FK: "We'll use the whiplash on you." Which they did and so Harrington was new and I was new and we went up there to present our case. I had a real soft spot in my heart for Clarence Cannon, who was Chairman of the subcommittee, John Tabor, Wigglesworth, and some others fuss at me for awhile, then he would say, "I'll take the chair now."

HP: To the rescue.

FK: To the rescue of a damsel in distress and I knew what he was going, and everybody else knew what he was doing but that's the way it worked. Well, we got up there that day and John Tabor started in on the Writers Project. Well, I thought they were in for that, but I knew it was a nest of extreme radicals that, you know, worked on the New York Writers Project. That wasn't it at all. He had taken it out on Alsberg. He had a copy of the Nation for, oh, it must have been six or seven years back, and in the "Letters to the Editor" in the back pages of the Nation there was a letter from Henry Alsberg. I'm sure he wrote this rather clever letter in which he suggested as a prison reform that the inmates of Federal penitentiaries be allowed to set up self-government. Nobody paid any attention to it. It just was a kind of a little intellectual whimsy. Can't you imagine Henry Alsberg doing it?

HP: Yes.

FK: I think, "Well, that's a cute idea. I'll fiddle it out and see, you know, what happens." Harrington just got pale, just pale and the - - ohhh, I didn't know anything about the letter, but I told him that I wouldn't pay any attention to it, since I knew the man. Well, what did I think of Alsberg? I thought he had done a very distinguished job. Harry did a very good thing. So when the session was over and we got back to the Walker Johnson, he sent for me and he had been so courteous and affable up to that time. He stood by me and he said, "This is an order. You fire Henry Alsberg!"

HP: Wow! That was a crushing thing.

FK: Just dreadful. I said, "It's a going concern, Colonel." "I'm not discussing it with you. You're to get rid of that man. I don't want to hear his name again." That's what happened.

HP: Holy smokes!

FK: The Project had enough momentum within itself by that time. They had this framework to work on, so we did get all the state guides out. I remember the one in Missouri was extremely hard to handle. Nat Murray was the administrator down there and he was very high in the councils in regard to the Prendergast organization. There was a chapter on the political complexion of the state - a very good, straight-forward statement about how machine-ridden Missouri was, particularly Kansas City. Blankety blank, he wasn't going to have anything. He was just not going to have any. I said, "You can't stop it. You just can't stop it. We can't have a row of forty-eight state guides and Missouri just vacant." "Why? Why isn't Missouri there?" "Because the guide said something against Prendergast." "You can't do that. You've got to swallow this pill." Well, he wouldn't do it. He absolutely wouldn't do it. I said, "You can't stop it." "I'll see about that," he said. But of course I had some help on it. By that time I rarely ever saw Harry except outside on other things and I said, "Harry, just call Nat Murray sometime and tell him to get off his high horse." I don't know when he did it, but he must have done it. We got the Missouri state guide.

HP: What did you do when you walked in to see Henry Alsberg? I mean, how can you make something palatable with his suggestions?

FK: I couldn't. I called Henry in to see me and he was just frightened. He trusted me, he really did. He did trust me, I think. He may not say so now, but he did then. Anyway, we were on friendly terms and he used to send me extra copies of the Guides. I would always get one as soon as one came off the press. Even when I was out in the Region I would get a box of books from Henry Alsberg. Well, I didn't know any other way to do it, but just to tell him what had happened. Well, is there any other way?

HP: No. None.

FK: Just the way it happened.

HP: Cold turkey.

FK: Cold turkey. I said, "Some devil," and he knew. Maybe it was Wigglesworth. Some snake in the grass, you see, had done some research on Alsberg to find something that would sound discreditable to the Republican members of the subcommittee, and Alsberg knew that. He said, "Don't think anything about it." It looked so ridiculous, so completely ridiculous that he refused to take it seriously. I said, "I'm afraid this is the end, Henry." He said, "O, no, no, it isn't." And he left me. I said, "Well, I'll go back and talk to Harrington again. I didn't want to, but I'm not promising him I can do it because this was as much as my head was worth to talk to him about it because he was so furious. He was scared - you see, he wasn't used to Congress. What Harry would have done is to say, "So what."

HP: Yes.

FK: But Harrington didn't know how to say "So what" to a Congressman. Harry always went on the principle that you never apologized to a Congressman. NEVER! You did it, and you did it because it was the right thing to do

and by gosh, you're glad you did, now what can you do next? Don't ever say, "Well, I wouldn't do that, Mr. Congressman." He never said that. NEVER!

HP: That's no way to operate.

FK: No way to operate with Congress, but you couldn't tell that to Harrington.

HP: I see.

FK: Because he is a military man and he saw it just one way, and he saw it very intensely, believe me.

HP: Well, his training was in such fashion as to make him obsequious to the mighty.

FK: That's right, and anybody in authority and certainly the people who held the purse strings in his book were the authority. They carried the tune. Well, it was a very unhappy severance when Henry had to accept the fact. He was just heart-broken.

HP: Crushed.

FK: He loved the Project, and of course I think he felt I was a weakling and everybody else was a weakling and we never did have a director that amounted to a hill of beans after that. It was carried by the state, by the quality of the state project.

HP: It's rather surprising that in the design of the state projects originally no provision was made for publication.

FK: Yes, it is. It wasn't very business-like from that point of view. It really wasn't.

HP: but it was only in the light of the work that was done that lent itself to publication, but it put the burden on administrators to find the means for the sponsorship or the interest to gain publication.

FK: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, and what a difference there was. For instance, out in south Dakota people went along just because they had to. There was no faith in it at all, and they got some State Library Commission, State Board, or something to be the nominal sponsor. So they ordered five hundred copies. Now, of course, to get an original South Dakota State Guide is worth something, extremely rare.

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: And, I - - -

HP: Well, there was no provision made for what happened to the royalties - that is, it was a very difficult problem.

FK: Yes, yes it was.

HP: As to when you get a collective group - -

FK: There was no contract drawn up.

HP: No.

FK: That's Alsberg - well, it was my fault too. It was everybody's fault, but we didn't foresee what we had. We didn't know that we had an extremely.

HP: Well, the program - purpose of the Writers Project wasn't really to make a profit, but to put them to work, and in this sense the - -

FK: And that's where we stopped, and when these other problems came up, why, it was all loose ends.

HP: Yes.

FK: But we began, all of us, to realize, when people like Archibald MacLeish was so anxious to keep it going. He wanted the originals there, and so on.

HP: Out in Chicago when you first went out there as regional director on these programs, when Public Art Project Number I began, were there any continuing carry-overs or hold-overs for the musicians, or writers or the artists?

FK: You mean after the program was over?

HP: No. When it was first introduced - the Public Works Project Number I, and you went out in Chicago, the regional area, was there then in existence any programs for artists, writers - -? There was not? Oh!

FK: There was a Treasury Art Project, but that was back here. It wasn't out in the Midwest. We started from scratch.

HP: And, moreover, the Treasury Department program was on the basis of some competition. There was no competition on the - -

FK: No, we started and processed those workers just as we did the general worker. They were on the relief rolls as employable, and, of course, I've always felt that one of the weaknesses of the WPA was that we drew our labor supply from relief offices. It should have been from the employment offices. If we had worked with the U.S. Employment Department, you see, and the State Employment Offices, some of the stigma that always attached to a WPA worker would have been removed. I've always felt that Aubrey Williams had something to do with that because he felt that it was only because of their extreme need, proved by the fact that they were on relief rolls, that we could get the Congressional appropriation.

HP: Yes.

FK: So you see, there was a read honest-to-goodness difference, honest difference of opinion, and Aubrey's point of view prevailed. Senator Lehman talked to me about that once and said he sat down at this typewriter and pecked out a letter by hand to Harry, begging him to use employment offices instead, but I don't know if Harry ever read the letter.

HP: Hum - -

FK: It hurt Lehman's pride a little that he got no response from Hopkins, you know, and his place wasn't taken either. No, we had to start from scratch. In the Midwestern states, of course, we had two excellent programs. One was in Chicago and one was in Milwaukee. The one in Chicago had a very good art unit, and the subdivision there was a group of Negroes. They weren't too good. They did posters and they did murals and they were really very talented and, of course, a muralist would go around and things like that. So they had a lively art project. After they got on the Project they just turned their backs on the rest of the world. They just worked in their own medium, and so on. They set up a little gallery on the North Side and that was a going concern. I was very proud particularly - - -

HP: Yes.

FK: - - because they were mostly young men. That was a bright spot. The Theater Project in Chicago - Hallie Flanagan had nothing but scorn for it. It was not much better than burlesque - what was the name of that man? How could I forget it? He was kind of a broken-down producer, and someone who was the head of the project, and he worked up this Hot Mikado.

HP: Oh, did he?

FK: Yes. Oh yes - again with Negroes, and it was really an experience in the theater to sit there and see the Mikado start off just according to classic procedure and then, along about five or six minutes after the start, the chorus began to swing and it just broke away into this jazz piece. It was simply delightful. Every audience - well, it caught you. It became very popular.

HP: yes, I know.

FK: Very popular, but you see, we had very low prices.

HP: that's what it was for.

FK: It was given at the Blackstone Theater which would have been dark if it hadn't been for the WPA foolishness.

HP: Is this Harry Minturn?

FK: Yes, that is the man. That is the man.

HP: Harry Minturn.

FK: Harry Minturn, and Harry couldn't see him for nothing. He didn't have new ideas; he wasn't aggressive, he just had this one cute idea, so the rest of it was warmed-over Broadway plays and stuff like that.

HP: Well, as regional person you had how many states then?

FK: Thirteen.

HP: Thirteen! It must have put you on the road quite a bit.

FK: I was on the road a great deal - a great deal of the time. I don't know how much, but I did it. That regional job was exhausting, and how much could I do there? I was supposed to act as liaison between the Washington office and the states, and to interpret one to the other.

HP: Yes.

FK: And in talking to Washington I would be brutally frank. I just said anything I wanted to say because, as far as Ellen Woodward was concerned, she wanted it straight, not frosted over. And when it came to interpreting Washington to the state administrators, I couldn't be as frank, and I wasn't.

HP: That's the diplomatic tightrope that you walked.

FK: It certainly was, certainly was, and I have no idea how well I walked it, or how, but walk it I did.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I had a great variety of people to work with. Some were a headache. I had a state director out in Kansas that was an absolute weirdie. She was so funny. She was a next-door neighbor to William Allen White in Emporia. She was really a real odd-ball. The tendency of the Democratic politician was not of a very high order. Of course, I inherited her and I had to keep her. This was part of my job - - you know, you had to work through such, and I got awfully discouraged.

HP: I'll bet you did.

FK: Awfully discouraged. Another thing that I always worried about was this great mass of unskilled women. They couldn't all be given sewing jobs, for Heaven's sake, we didn't need that much sewing. What to do? How to break it up?

HP: Hum.

FK: Of course, the school lunch project - I can't say too much about, but the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture, because through the surplus commodities and so on, we got the school lunch project started.

HP: That's been a growing concern even to this day.

FK: Yes, but the WPA doesn't get much credit for it. But the WPA during its existence, eight years, met the payroll and did the training and fought the early battles. They really did! I tell you, we really had some battles on the school lunch project, but you don't want to hear about - -

HP: Certainly, I certainly want to hear about the administration of the WPA from the regional point of view. Well, I've skipped about. I told you the essence of it; that I was very frank with Washington and not so frank with the states. I did learn the techniques of pressure. Well, I did. Of course, if there happened to be a program in a certain state, then I didn't go to Congress or anyone. I went to the sponsors and I said to them, "Paychecks won't go out next Wednesday if you don't say something about it, or do something about it". And they did it. They would raise - they would raise Ned if they thought the school lunches were going to be stopped, or something else. They would say, "More damned fuss made about one little old canning project down in southern Alabama!" Well, that was the way we did it. We did it through the sponsor. I learned that. I learned how to work with sponsors, but they had a stake and the more they fought for their program, the more they would understand it and the better support we would have for the future.

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: And it did work. So maybe I did that. Others did it too, but I did it over and over again because the Midwest was not favorable to the WPA - that is, they were not favorable. They would follow FDR for the first hundred days, but after that they cooled off very rapidly and the press was horrible out there! The Chicago Tribune. We didn't have much press out there.

HP: I would imagine that part of the test was a search, a continuing search for personnel to implement a program.

FK: Oh yes, oh yes, we had that ten percent not on relief which was our salvation, you see. For instance, on the school lunch project, to get some really good young woman, home economist who could go in there - this gal Eleanor Lee, who was on the Post, she was the Food Editor of the Washington Post and was the state dietitian for

the state of West Virginia.

HP: Oh, was she?

FK: And she and I talked about the program a great many times because she said that's where she learned food values and how to stretch a dollar, and how to use dried milk and all that stuff.

HP: yes.

FK: So that was it, and of course I did have a few really tough battles on top personnel. I never did dislodge that woman in Kansas, as hard as I tried, but I did make some changes. And that was hard. Some I had inherited from FERA, some had been handed down by the Democratic National Committee man, and so on. And you see, the Democratic party in the Midwest - - I'm a Democrat and always will be - - but the Democratic Party in the upper Midwest was not - I mean, they just didn't know the good people. They weren't in touch with them. The nice people of the community were all Republican.

HP: Yes.

FK: That's a broad statement, but you know what I mean.

HP: Yes, I know when you're looking for local support - -

FK: When you're looking for local support and want somebody good to head up your outfit.

HP: Sure, sure, for the psychic influence.

FK: Yes, and if you could get somebody of real stature to take the job and stand for it, it would have helped a lot. But it wasn't easy to do. You see, I was in the regional office from July 1935 to the end of 1938.

HP: Yes, yes. Then when I came down here that awful mess from the Federal Theater Project was practically over and done with.

HP: That was the - Senator Harry Byrd mentioned in a rollicking lampoon of some kind - - ?

FK: Well, it was a little more direct than that. Byrd was in it, but Andrews of Florida was in it and he was another fellow who was caught straight between the eyes. They had this living Newspaper, which I thought was a very interesting techniques and we were awfully proud of the Living Newspaper. We thought it was a contribution to the performing arts, and they had some scenes in which people impersonated members of Congress and spoke lines which people had spoken on the floor of the Senate right out of the congressional Record, WORD for WORD. Of course, it made them sound like the biggest fools that ever walked, and Hallie thought she could do that and come up in a couple of months and get an appropriation. It just doesn't work that way, and the people who were lampooned might turn mad: "We just don't have to take that kind of nonsense from this blankety blank outfit up in New York. Probably it is mostly Communists anyhow."

HP: Yes.

FK: And Hallie, I think, will always feel very bitter because she was not permitted to go up to the hill and lobby for her own project. She is a very persuasive person. She is still living, but quite ailing, and - - but she is quite a gal.

HP: But part of the trigger of the destruction of the Federal Theater project was the Dies committee, that is - -

FK: Oh, yes, the Dies Committee - yes, oh, yes, Martin Dies, and who was that fellow from West Virginia? Colt?

HP: Rosh Holt?

FK: Whether he was a one-termer down there, he carried the ball down there in the Senate, and they had Ellen Woodward up there. I never appeared before the Dies committee, but, yes - - Worker's Alliance, and it was concentrated and a good deal of its strength was in New York city. They got after that, and Mrs. Flanagan had had a Guggenheim to study the Moscow Art Theater, you know.

HP: Well, that's - -

FK: And I remember when this man from West Virginia held up the book and said, "See, it's got a red cover!" He did, he did.

HP: That's unpardonable!

FK: Unpardonable, and you can hardly believe it happened, but it did. Well, now do you want me to go back to the regional job?

HP: Yes, I wondered how the - there is one project floated - the Index of American Design.

FK: Yes, oh yes.

HP: And there is a story on it. I wondered how that emerged in the regional area.

FK: Oh, it did extremely well in the East, and then they had a unit in Ohio which was good. It didn't get so far in the West or Far West because the early American didn't have the same feel. It was, I think, an outgrowth of Holger Cahill's work with Mrs. Rockefeller on that Folk Art Museum down in Williamsburg. Cahill was an idea person too, but a sort of a gentle dreamer type. The Index of American Design was his - his contribution.

HP: there is a woman mentioned by the name of Ruth Reeves in conjunction with this origin. Now I don't know anything about it - -

FK: I don't know Ruth Reeves.

HP: No. Well, in any event it is a superb thing.

FK: It is, and it was superbly done. I had my office in the Walker General. I had one wall that I think was interesting, just beautiful. The original, of course. They went to the Library of Congress.

HP: Hum - - they're really gorgeous things.

FK: They are gorgeous and they're executed - I don't see how they could be any better, do you?

HP: No.

FK: What they did with the textures of fabrics, wood, metal.

HP: It would appear on a - - certainly have indicated on the Writers Project why there was a design program outline which came from the central office which those who worked in this field, you know, had formed the purpose and procedure which was to follow. Now, I would assume that the same thing was true of the Index of American Design.

FK: yes, yes.

HP: that is, from the point of view of approach wherever your work was done.

FK: Yes, yes, and there was a - they just didn't copy of anything that was old. It had to be of some importance and significance that was not left entirely to the local people, but they had, I must say, a good deal of non-relief labor.

HP: Yes.

FK: The Index of American Design - the non-relief labor in those days, you see, got very little pay. They might not be technically from the relief rolls, but they did need the employment very badly.

HP: Yes. Was there much attention, other than the lunch program, paid to children - art teaching to children?

FK: There were children's - Chicago had that. They had art classes for children and they were very popular. Then, I didn't tell you about the work done in Milwaukee where there is this tradition of arts and crafts and - am I using up too much tape?

HP: No, but you go ahead. I'm going to have to put another reel on. Are you getting tired?

FK: No, no. The State College was the sponsor, and the Art Department of the State College took on the active supervision of the arts project there. It was Wisconsin, but particularly in Milwaukee. It grew and then they had a beautiful project there. They got space, and they got middle-aged women whom they trained to do certain things, and they made some dolls. I have one of those. Would you like to see one of those Milwaukee dolls?

HP: Why sure.

FK: they did block printing way and above the best in the country, the very best. Everybody was so jealous of Milwaukee.

HP: While you're getting the dolls I'll put anew reel on, right? [BREAK IN INTERVIEW]

HP: With respect to these dolls which you've shown me. Is this the Walker Art Center in Milwaukee?

FK: No, it's the State Teachers College, and Miss Broadbent was the sponsor. She was responsible for the beautiful work and she taught these women, who really were recruited in the sewing rooms, how to make these - the bodies, feel how firm that is - a wonderful piece of workmanship.

HP: What intrigues me is where did she obtain the material. This didn't come off the project, did it?

FK: The material? This? The Federal government.

HP: Really?

FK: We gave all the yardage for the sewing rooms, so we gave the yardage for this. We met the payroll. We met the non-relief part of it. The sponsor usually furnished the space, some technical supervision if we could possibly get it, which was true in Milwaukee. The sponsor did give the teaching, but we bought all this. All of it. You don't know how - - well, look at this. I had children - they just loved these Albuquerque, they have a certain substance. Marshall Field thought very highly of these dolls, but when they went into manufacturing costs it was too much. They couldn't get - the retail price would have to be around \$35, and they couldn't sell them. They couldn't sell a doll for \$35.

HP: When you found in a region like this a project that had local leadership and drive and dynamo in it and developed momentum and created interest and following, were you able to take wisdom from that and plant it in other places?

FK: Oh, yes. Oh, my - at least we could try! And we did.

HP: That's what I meant.

FK: We made up sample kits of everything they made on this project and sent it to every arts and crafts project in the thirteen Midwest states. Now they made dolls all over the place: never as good as these dolls, but they made lots and lots of dolls which were given out to the local - I'm sure they did lots of good. I don't have a sample of it, but one of the other states worked out a very light weight doll, just a matter of ounces. It had little yarn here and a cute little dress and they issued those to children's hospitals for children who were too sick to play, but who could get a little comfort and something out of these. They were a great success, these little hospital dolls that were made on these projects. That was an outgrowth of it. Iowa tried very hard to get some designers out there so they could make these little block prints for hangings, and so forth. They did a very handsome set of curtains for the Governor's mansion, I think, under the inspiration of this Milwaukee project.

HP: So it did snowball where you had local interest.

FK: It didn't exactly snowball, but it certainly did bring up the standards of the region because of the fine work done. And the carving, I have some of it here.

HP: I know Jay du Von yesterday told me that the Writers Project in Iowa in pursuing folklore, folk songs and various aspects within the outline as prescribed by Washington, found it useful through various Chambers of commerce and so on to publish little brochures. Of course, this put a premium on the creative ability of the local director to farm this out and that somewhere along the line he was asked to share what this experience had been in Iowa with other states in the region where they ran into difficulty, or didn't have imaginative bent or the know-how as to how he'd done it. It was like a haring of profits.

FK: Yes, yes, there was a lot of that. I remember Jay did that, and on the strength of that he was brought first to the region, stayed there very briefly, then went on to be Larry Morris's assistant in Washington. Later he became my administrative assistant. I found him an extremely interesting man to work with. I wonder what Jay thinks about the WPA now.

HP: He thinks it was the period in which opportunity was given to keep skills, ideas, creativity, originality, however bizarre, alive. I'm paraphrasing his view and I have perhaps more spirit in what I am saying than the careful way in which he would announce it, but virtually an American renaissance, a sharing of appreciation beyond the mere keeping of skills alive and the opportunity for talent.

FK: Yes, well, I think that's every word true. And such interesting ideas would be batted up to you. Maybe I can tell you a couple of anecdotes on FDR. When I came here as Assistant Commissioner I was supposed to keep - well, Harrington was very ill at east at the White House. I don't mean to say that I felt just folksey, but I didn't feel as ill at ease as he did, so it was my job to be the liaison over there, and I reported over there actively every week. I never got over the butterflies in my stomach when I had to go into the President's office because

sometimes he would be affability itself and sometimes he wouldn't. One day he said to me, "I know what you ought to do. What we ought to have would be tree-lined highways all over this country. We've got all these roads, this system of highways." He was just playing with these "lovely tree-lined highways. Now instead of having these old biddies sitting around in the sewing rooms, why don't you have them plant trees? Take a wheelbarrow of dirt, a shovel and whatever you need and go out and plant a tree." I said, "President Roosevelt, I could do that, but you wouldn't be elected next time if I did."

HP: Really! What did he say to that?

FK: Oh, he just threw back his head and howled. He said, "I wouldn't?" I said, "No, you wouldn't. That's against the American mores for women to go out and do that heavy labor, digging a hole. If you sponsor that, you couldn't be elected next time." Well, that's the kind of talk he really enjoyed, but he dropped the idea of having women plant trees. He knew. It was a kind of left-handed way of letting me know that he knew the problem of the unskilled woman had not been solved. It never was - the middle-aged woman who couldn't do much of anything. When WPA was liquidated, though, it was a great satisfaction to me that several sewing projects, one in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, were taken over in to by the Navy to make stuff for the Navy. Out in Los Angeles, a very large project was taken over by a parachute factory that had a government contact. There they had several hundred women who could operate power machines, because that's one of the things we introduced gradually from hand sewing to treadle machine and then to power machine.

HP: this was really a rehabilitation program.

FK: It was rehabilitation, retraining, and so on. Around St. Louis, of course, they went into the overall factories. When employment picked up, why they had a skill. I never will get over how quickly we went from a labor surplus to a labor shortage. When war came all of a sudden labor was at a premium and - -

HP: The scene shifted.

FK: Oh! The shoe on the other foot. The other story I wanted to tell - what was it? Oh, another one of the FDR Projects. This Music Project. Once in a while he'd pick out something to talk to me about. "This Music Project - I don't think it's getting out to the people enough. I don't think it's being heard of quite enough. There isn't enough community service in it. I tell you what you ought to do. You ought to see that every town one night a week ropes off a block and gets the local WPA band, or whatever their music is, and have a community dance and have them dance in the streets."

HP: What did you say to that?

FK: Well, I didn't tell him - I wasn't as saucy as I was about the other idea. I said, "Thank you for your interest," or something like that. I didn't feel it. But you know that would make you feel as though the President was very trivial in his attitude. I don't think he was.

HP: Well, it's comparable, I think, in a mind that spins and sends off sparks, some are brighter than others, and so on.

FK: Yes, and some of them aren't - well, they're hardly sparks at all.

HP: It's not quite comparable to Alsberg's letter on self-government for prisoners. But it's in that tradition, is it not? "I don't have any other detail, I don't face your problems which are the deliberate day by day running of business, but what about this as an idea?"

FK: "Can't you - couldn't you - maybe you could try this - maybe you could try that." You weren't supposed to be too scared by the fact that he said it, so you had to go out and do something about it, which I didn't do.

HP: Well, was Sokoloff much in evidence here in Washington?

FK: Oh, yes, and he was in evidence out in the regions, too. He did a lot of traveling. Nicolas Sokoloff. I never understood him very well. I felt much closer to Alsberg and Cahill. He did some work, but he really never got his professional attitude in hand. He went to some rehearsals in Chicago and was terribly upset at the backward performance turned in by these fellow, who, you know, just hadn't handled their instruments long enough to do what they should do. He always wanted a national symphony. He had dreams of getting the best, you see, and bringing them here under Federal sponsorship and having a national symphony, but we never could do that. Of course, Aubrey Williams and Stokowski almost did that with the NYA Orchestra - you know, it toured South America. Boy, did they put the money into that! It was very costly - too costly - money was no object when they were recruiting those young people for that orchestra.

HP: I would suppose that the problems involving musicians were somewhat different than those involving a

writer who can sit I his own corner and write.

FK: yes, it had a problem of space, rehearsal halls and all that sort of thing. One of my vivid experiences in the region was going to see Petrillo. You see, he was head of the Musicians Union and the object of fear and detestation by some people. I was young in the job and I didn't know enough not to do things that I thought of doing, so instead of clearing it all over the lot, I pinned my hat on one day and went over to see Petrillo. The project was not prospering. Of course, I had some bargaining. He wanted employment. He wanted to get as many of his union members in the music union as possible so they could keep on paying union dues, and so forth. He had his stake in it and I had mine. I'll never forget, I stayed there quite a while and we talked and talked and talked and talked very frankly about the unemployed musician and what he could and should do. I told him that he would have to let down some of his bars that he wouldn't go into a place, you know, that used any recorded music and all that - jobs are too scare. Well, what was I willing to do, and so on and so forth. I made him an offer about increasing Illinois employment and seeing what I could do up in Minneapolis where the situation was very bad indeed. I said, "Can't you just look the other way?" "No," but he did. That's the only way we could get jobs for musicians. They couldn't hire out to d a municipal thing because of his strict rule. I know Minor, who was administrator said, "Oh, if I had known you were going over to see Petrillo, I certainly would have gone with you. I thought, "Thank God, you didn't know" because it was much better - just direct person to person. And he had a big Scott radio on, a beautiful machine, and he had that monitored 24 hours a day. He had that silver thing in his throat. You see, we'd been taken for a ride, thrown out in the - - the gang. He was undoubtedly a Capone lieutenant.

HP: Certainly.

FK: Sure, and he had done something he shouldn't do. They rolled him and threw him out for dead, and he'd come back - and he was so scared if he got a cold and he wouldn't shave if he got a cold, and you could see the whiskers on his jaw and his face.

HP: He talked Dutch, though.

FK: yes, he did. He did, and he didn't seem to question my - well, he may have thought I didn't know too much, but he didn't question the fact that I could do what I said I'd do, that I didn't have any axe to grind. So he did that . I saw Prendergast - I'm talking now about my regional job. I bearded Petrillo and then I went to see Prendergast in Kansas City. That was the only time in my life I ever got frisked. There were quite a few people in the outer office and they said he was very much afraid of women - Prendergast was - he thought that some woman would shoot him. He had that fear.

HP: He must not have been kind to his mother.

FK: HE probably wasn't. He thought one woman would take a pot shot at him. That I remember. I was really frisked, but I had no concealed weapons. So I went in to talk to him. Oh, he was loosely fat, oh, just terrific. He wouldn't let me talk about what I wanted to talk about for quite a while. He wanted to talk about Reed and what had gone on with him, you see - he used to be in Iowa and then came down to Kansas City and he talked about that. He spoke very admiringly of the Administration, and so forth. Finally, I just said why I had come to town: "Mr. Prendergast, we've just got to do something about this Kansas City sewing project." He said, "I don't know anything about it." I said, "Well, won't you please find out something about it, if you don't know, because we have these hundreds of women sitting around hemming dish towels by hand. It's a disgrace." He said, "Well, what do you want?" I said, "I want 300 Singer Sewing Machines and I want the contribution of a sponsor." He gave them to me, eventually, not that afternoon, but we got them. Those were the things you did in the region - a few of them. I'm not telling you about all the disappointments I had, the things that didn't go well, the things I tried which flopped and the compromises I had to make, the discouragements - a lot of them.

HP: Well, I think you have indicated that there was a search for personnel with whom to work and this was a testy thing always.

FK: Always, somebody to run a project - interviewing him, writing and jerking up the local people.

HP: With get up and go as to how to manage it - this kind of thing - plus the complex political context in which the whole thing had to run over which you didn't have nay control and through which you had to operate and work. And I've heard from other sources that the Missouri situation, the St. Louis situation was really something. Even with art they were willing to accept art project provided, what they meant by art was paint the walls of their buildings, so that you had to work through limitations.

FK: Yes. Well, you know - oh, you know the man who build the Pentagon - Somerwell - said to me one day, he said, "They say I've got to have an art project here in New York City." I said, "Yes, you do." He said, "I want to tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to knock out the whole business, except for a unit which will have for its job architectural ornamentation. There are a good many buildings in prospect, and whatever they need in the way of

ornamentation the Art project can provide, and the rest of it - out!" I said, "You can't do that." "I can too," he said. I said, "Oh no you can't." He said, "Do you mean I've got to keep this?" I said, "Yes, sir!" He said, "Well, I'll see about that." Harrington told him he could not do that. It was too touchy a place and too prominent a spot and his touchiness had to be forgotten.

HP: Well, the art in general in New York City received a bad press.

FK: Very.

HP: But his outspokenness and his narrowness with respect to the problems of artists also received a bad press, that is, there must have been continuing pressures, I would assume, from Washington that there had to be some withdrawal of the Number. You know, there was always this playback as to whether we would have an appropriation, or whether we would not have an appropriation. You've indicated that Congress kept you in a position so that they could give you a good going over twice a year or more.

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FK: Yes - very short - yes - yes.

HP: So he announced in effect that he was cutting - paring back 33 1/3 percent - something to that effect. Well, you know, by this time artists had been working with a continuity of wage. They had a common employer they somehow or other became more social and collective-minded than they had ever been theretofore, talking about common problems, and so on, but there were organizers in there for other purposes, too, but I mean artists generally had something which they hadn't had therefore, and so they organized.

FK: Yes, that's right.

HP: And they had voices on all conceivable topics, you know. But Somervell was - -

FK: It was lively, it was lively. And those people - they were young people who were in absolute despair when they started. They married and they established a home and they became citizens in the best sense of the word before the project was over. They took a very, very upset generation and steadied them down. I don't think there's any doubt. I know it.

HP: Yes. You know they developed a kind of interest in the very process which had aided them, so when somebody mentioned 33 1/3 percent, this was a mathematics they weren't prepared to accept. It was like creating a kind of vested psychic interest that you would not see destroyed and so they sat in Somervell's office.

FK: Until he locked the doors.

HP: Right! But he had - -

FK: He was a very, very difficult man, very able.

HP: Oh, very able. But a military tradition does not necessarily grant a hearing.

FK: No, it doesn't, he and Harrington didn't see eye to eye, thank God! I mean Harrington outranked Somervell and pulled rank on Somervell when he had to. He did, he really did, and that's the only thing that kept Somervell behaving even as well as he did.

HP: I have no reason to suppose that he had other than a desire for an efficient management on the whole.

FK: I don't believe he did either, but that much made him very, very tough.

HP: He overlooked the fact that he wasn't dealing with peas in a pod, he was dealing with human beings.

FK: And human beings - I really don't think he much approved of human beings. We had a row with them on the school lunch project.

HP: Oh, did you? In New York?

FK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Margaret Botcher went up there. Of course she was the national dietitian, and she went up there to look into it because I'd been having reports that the children were just turning their faces away from the

- oh, it was just such unpalatable food; the same lunches and they stuck to them day after day after day. Somebody - you know, there was just dirty work somewhere around there because they had enough. There was no excuse for that kind of thing. So Margaret Botcher, who was a tall Texan blond, went up there - she feared neither God nor man - and she looked into this and read the menus and visited the projects and she made up her mind that she had a real case and a real cause, so she went to see Somervell. She called me to see if she should go. I said, "Absolutely." Somervell called me and said, "Who is this Botcher you sent up?" Well, you know, that was one of his pleasantry remarks. They sat across a conference table and Margaret Botcher said they had this big book document of the school lunch project, you know, all the paper forms we went through. We certainly did our share to initiate the century of paperwork, and Somervell couldn't find this place in this, so he spun the thing across the table to Margaret and it hit her smack bang in the stomach and said, "Find it for me!" She spun it back to him and said, "Find it yourself!"

HP: Good for her! Good for her! He sounds very much like a man who would say to you in the midst of a discussion, "When my mind is closed, it's closed!"

FK: Yes, indeed. Well, we had a project visiting day and we got pretty good reports from all over the country, but I got sinking letter from Somervell about what a silly infantile idea it was and it was just an interference with the operation of something that wasn't needed. It wasn't working too well anyway. I incorporated that in my report to Harrington. But Harrington understood Somervell. Really Somervell was honest about that; He thought having project sponsors and things come in and look at an operation, going in to see the library project, or to see the school lunch or something was just silly. And he wouldn't do things like that.

HP: He sounds like a man who fundamentally didn't like his own kind.

FK: Yes, I don't believe he liked - he was very unhappily married. His wife died, and I understand that his second marriage was happy, very happy. Of course, he did the Pentagon just splendid. And that man Mitchell was WPA Employment Director, you know, and Somervell said that nobody had a better way of keeping track of where people were - their address and the facts about them than the employment division of WPA, so he took over their facts about them than the employment division of WPA, so he took over their procedures and used it in the army, which he did, and Mitchell did it for him. I think if Harrington had lived he would have had at least the opportunity to do what Somervell did. It was his untimely death that cleared the way for Somervell's very rapid advance.

HP: How much did you get into the Historical Records as a regional person?

FK: Well not too much, because of this Luther Evans technique. By George, I didn't have to worry much about it! I knew who the people were and saw them when I'd go into the state offices, but they had these clear explicit directions from Luther Evans. You knew exactly what you had to do by the end of the next pay period. You never saw such a good layout of work as he gave them - real direction. And so when he came out to the region, which he did quite often, he really was a master at firing the incompetents and getting somebody to take their places. He would clear up his personnel problems in - -

HP: In no time at all.

FK: Yes. He was effective, very effective, Luther Evans was. Wasn't always well liked. He was feared, but he really did the job.

HP: By comparison Eddy Cahill, while a more likable person, was less effective, or within the - well, let me dilute that.

FK: Entirely different approach - just entirely different. Cahill, the content of the program and what the people wee trying to do and what the trends were - he wasn't an administrator to compare with Luther Evans. Luther Evans was the best of the lot, way and above the rest.

HP: Well, stories I've heard would indicate that Cahill because of his previous experience had a kind of litmus paper approach to people and could soak up what they were saying and absorb it.

FK: Yes, I think that's a very shrewd observation - he could. I think maybe he was better as a historian of the project than he was as a director of the project. But he knew - oh, he had a richly-stored mind, and he had contacts. When the national art show was here he had the man at the head - Taylor - came down and publicly laid his hands on Holger Cahill and blessed the project. He knew how to do the gallery thing. He got his people exhibited, I think, very well indeed - very well.

HP: Oh, yes. And one of the great consequence of this whole thing was a system of community art centers for the kind of sharing of a total experience which but for him would not have been there.

FK: Yes, yes. I think his philosophy was very, very good.

HP: Yet he was hesitant to deal with situations that were ugly.

FK: He hated to fire people - to have any unpleasantness.

HP: The history of any collectivity is the history of some sparks somewhere.

FK: That's right. And he would just kind of disappear. There were times - you know, he suffered acutely from insomnia for awhile. He had pleasant relations with the directors of the other art projects, but not close.

HP: I am told he would sort of come in out of the wings with a small group of people. He could rub shoulders with the boys and he could - - -

FK: Mildred Holtzauer - she was with him almost constantly. She later married Jake Baker. Yes, he did have a coterie.

HP: He could let his hair down with the boys, but he found difficulty in standing up in front of a large audience. It was a frightening kind of thing for him.

FK: Yes. And the state administrators and all - I think he just thought they were the bane of this life - and they mostly were. I mean, they just weren't there to make his life happy.

HP: I don't know whether this is a kind of intemperance, or an impatience that he might have had, too. Because, you know, the science of getting things done sometimes is your ability to hang on, stand on the position you've taken and let other people worry about theirs, and suddenly circumstances alter so that you find chinks in the armor somewhere, and this is the steady and continuous process of negotiation. Whether he had the physical stamina for that I don't know.

FK: Well, I think he was doing all right. And the Community Art Centers were successful. His national showing was an outstanding success. He did some fine programs on radio that got a good response. Whenever that happened, you know, that would soften up - you know a good word for WPA was treasured, oh, it was treasured! So I would say that he was pretty successful - pretty successful.

HP: The task was complicated by the organizations of artists. Yet he was friendly.

FK: he couldn't get along with Ned Bruce.

HP: Well, Bruce had a wholly different concept.

FK: I know he did, and he just couldn't see Cahill. No, he just felt that Cahill just cut across all the things he'd hoped and dreamed about - spoiled it.

HP: Well, there's a feeling I think that Bruce's standards for him, as he understood it, were important. Cahill's was to put people to work first and worry about the content later.

FK: Kingman was born and raised in San Francisco and he did that on the project. Cahill always thought highly of Kingman, especially the early Kingman, not what he's doing now - the Hallmark cards, and so on, but he must be making pots of money. I think he is.

HP: Was there ever any attempt in the regional area to offset the kind of hostile press?

FK: Well, yes. It was done - Howard Hunter - did you ever meet Howard Hunter? He was the regional director. He was my boss in the Chicago office and Ellen Woodward was my boss in the Washington office. They didn't get along too well. So I was used to being in between. I was in between all over the lot anyhow. So that didn't make too much difference, but he felt, you know, that he wasn't effective; he'd give out interviews, but they never got any play at all. We didn't get very much favorable publicity in the papers. We'd get these routine notices that the Federal Government appropriated funds for the dam at Lake ? And what not. They'd get that kind of publicity and still do; that's going on right now. The Senators and the congressmen and the State Administrator would have their pictures taken, and we'd get that kind of publicity. We were routine all over the regions. They never missed a project of any size whatsoever, but I never felt that that really made friends for us. That was just more proof that we were spending a lot of money. I can't honestly say that while I was on the regional staff that I think we ever did anything effective with the press. I did have one - there were some columnists on the Chicago News that visited projects and wrote in their columns human interest stories about housekeeping aids and stuff like that. But they didn't come to grips with the philosophy of the program.

HP: Did you get any self-support from personal knowledge of the effect that the program had on those who were

participating in it?

FK: Oh, lots of that - just lots of that.

HP: Well, it helped in a way I would think to compensate for the absence of public relations.

FK: Oh, yes, it did. There never was a time that I didn't have a feeling that this project was just a lifeline to a lot of people, and you know, little conversations about this.

HP: Well, anything that was casually said about the effects can be said in a very brief way, but a meaning full y on the part of the person who was a participant.

FK: Yes, yes. Like this story that came up from Georgia about the woman - - well, the statisticians decided in the state office that a project for less than 5 people was inefficient to run." I think you can prove that up to the hilt. If you haven't got any more employment than that you'd better return them to the relief rolls and forget about it." Well, this was a combined school lunch during the school year - and of course school lunch, though a terrific service to the community, isn't a very big employment project. This woman was working by herself, and she got her dismissal notice, you see, her little pink slip saying that after the next day she was through. But the garden was full of tomatoes, you see, which had to be used, and they had been raised for the school lunch project for the next winter. She stuck the dismissal notice in her apron pocket and went over to the canning kitchen, and when Blache and I went to see her that afternoon there were baskets of tomatoes on the floor. She was scalding them - had kettles heating - just a big operation of canning tomatoes, canning them by the 100 quarts, and she said, "I don't care what the slip says, we're just not going to waste these tomatoes." The next time we had a national meeting of the administrators with flourishes and footnotes and what not I told that story, and I said, "Damn the statisticians who just don't know the score! That woman understood the employment problem a good deal better than anybody in the state office up here. And she salvaged an operation just because she had character and sense." I said, "Don't say that an employment of five isn't worthwhile until you know what those five are doing!"

HP: It's a good story.

FK: It is. Well, it's true - it's absolutely true! The front of the place where the project had quarters was locked. Blanche and I went around to the back door and there she was, just stewing away on that hot summer afternoon canning tomatoes like made because she knew it was wrong to waste those tomatoes; they had been raised for the school lunch project and they had to be on the shelves. There were a lot of stories like that. I remember in a library project up in Wisconsin a woman took me tone side and she said, "I've bee a widow for so many years and the children are such and such an age and this next pay period the supervisor's going to give me an intermediary raise." That meant she went from 55 to 63 dollars a month. She was pretty proud of that because she wasn't getting the minimum wage. She was getting 63 dollars a month. I gathered she had been accustomed to consulting with a social worker about every our of the ordinary expenditure, so I probably looked to her like another social worker, which I'm not, and she said, "Do you think it would be all right for me to spend that \$8 and whatever I add to it to buy a pair of corrective shoes?" Then she showed me her feet. They were just dreadful. She just needed a support for her ankles, you know, and she was just crippling along on perfectly horrible shoes, and she said, "They'll cost 20-odd dollars. Those corrective shoes are expensive. I've got the \$8 and I think I can make it if you think - -" I said, "By all means get the shoes, get the shoes, and if anybody says you shouldn't, just stick out your tongue at them and say you earned the money.

HP: So by '38 the atmosphere in the nation had switched. We had gone through a - -

FK: They were not scared any more.

HP: No. We'd gone through a period of organizations - the Wagner Act had been sustained. As a nation we had put on the shelf for all time the question of whether people could organize, or could not organize, but deeper than that the difficulties that were looming abroad suddenly came back in focus. I wonder in the regional atmosphere in '38 whether there was any way to anticipate continuance of the program in keeping with the new atmosphere. It may have still contained crises from the point of those who were on the project, but saleable and marketable as an idea to an institution like congress. Was there?

FK: Oh, yes. You just put your finger on it. From '38 on it was very much more difficult to sustain the case for the number of unemployed that remained in the country, much harder to get the appropriations and they were cut. Beginning in '38 they were cut, and they continued to be right to the end. I don't see but what from the national point of view that was a proper thing. Don't you think so? I remember that Jay du Von and I talked about this one weekend out at his place in Manassass and he said, "Do you suppose we could use a kind of fire sale technique and take the people who aren't ready for much of a job in at the front door, train them and then out the back door they'd go into this war preparation work?" It was a whole would look upon the WPA as a proper agency to re-train the labor supply. We might be able to do it and in certain cases we have, but we are always

considered an emergency stop gap, aren't we? And the sooner we could get rid of the WPA the better. So I don't believe you can use WPA in that continuing way." We used to talk about that. We were conscious of the fact that employment was opening up. I remember the administrator of the WPA I in North Dakota and he said to me, "Are you going to make a talk at this meeting of state administrators?" I said, "Yes, I'm on the program for such and such a time." He said, "Well, you know what I want you to say? I want you to say that we're just like Old Man River - he just keeps going along." Well, I didn't quite say that, but I did show them by charts that the shift in employment had been marked in the last 12 months and that now more than half of the program - something like 60% was women and professional people, and that the other group had moved over into the labor market.

HP: I wondered, you know, because - -

FK: Now does that answer your question?

HP: Yes, because there's a certain feature about the warm and the familiar. You're a regional director and there's this desire to keep this alive. One becomes identified with it, and while facts may vary, there's a reason for it. It's like a ? Proposition instead of a reasonable one. I wondered about that.

FK: Oh, yes. Oh, yes - there was a lot of that in the WPA: "don't stop us now we're just getting going and we're doing such - - Don't stop this library program. I don't care what the - - This library program has got to go on. This housekeeping aid has got to go on - the school lunch mustn't be stopped." All that kind of thing. The service for the service's sake, not for the employment. Of course, people didn't want to lose their jobs and all. Did you see that in your - I don't know how much research you've done on that, but I made a talk in New York once and the New York Times picked it up, in which I said I thought the WPA should be liquidated. Did you see that?

HP: Yes, I saw the item in the New York Times.

FK: When I got back I got a call - "What the heck had I been saying, "and I said what I had been saying that we were moving from labor surplus to labor shortage, and Harry said, "would you like to draft a letter for the President to sign?" I did, and he signed it. Quite a famous letter.

HP: Well, you know, the original context of the WPA was emergency - a need.

FK: Yes, it was emergency. The country was in a bad way, a very bad way, so bad that people were frightened, really frightened. They weren't frightened at WPA.

HP: Well, there were no invasions of grocery stores by Longshore-women with their Longshoremen and who's going to quarrel with a Longshoreman who picks up the necessaries at A & P. There were no farmers standing around in a forced sale for a foreclosure, and this is a frightening thing where constituted authority must meet this kind of sullen resentment.

FK: I know that happened at the Winterset. Now that I look back that was gone. You know what the politicians say, that when a farmer has wrinkles in his bell he's a Democrat, and when the wrinkles smooth out he's a Republican. Of course, there was a lot of that in my home state of Iowa. Individuals like my uncle who was saved - it was all very well for awhile. But I think they were reverting - reverting. The sense of emergency disappeared completely. I just don't know how WPA got its appropriation in the last couple of years. It was momentum and local pressure, and so on.

HP: Were they imaginative out in the local areas in attempting to relate WPA to the emergency now on an international scale?

FK: Well, I don't think so. I don't think that we did nay leading or teaching. Our work was essential and we were proud of it, but our day was done. It was time for something else to come and take its place. That kind of leadership we didn't have. Harrington was dead and there was eleven months of no administrator at all and then Howard Hunter was put in as a stop-gap. I can't imagine Howard Hunter saying anything. He didn't have the voice. As far as the local reaction to it was concerned, that again was spotty. I think down there in Los Angeles they did a fine job of selling it on the hoof, so to speak, like the power sewing project going to the parachute factory. And lots of places where all of a sudden, when the government contracts began to hit the locality and they needed 300 or 400 extra workmen quick, fast, where did they go? To WPA because that was the only place that had that many people around. And so the absorption was very rapid. But the kind of leadership you're describing, I don't think it was there. I think that thinking may have been in the minds of a few people. I think Tom ? Saw it, but I think Howard Hunter would have disciplined me plenty, except he found out that I had White House backing.

HP: Well, this is a process then of retreat that you described from '38 on when coming to Washington, that is, retreat from - -

FK: From the high point.

HP: Well, from facts which are now discernible, namely - -

FK: Well, retreat from the point of view of emergency, but I would say that the curve went up as far as the quality of work done on the projects was concerned. It did improve. I really think so, don't you? So the reason was dwindling, but the performance was improving.

HP: But the sale of this commodity now vis-a-vis Congress was rough, terribly rough.

FK: Yes, it was.

HP: so that you almost stared a kind of forced liquidation in the face.

FK: Well, I did. I just knew that it was inevitable as - - well, the day was over. Well, when you were the small end of the program and all of a sudden you became the big end of the program, what were the other people doing? Gone into the labor market. What else could you conclude? But vested interest certainly showed its hand.

HP: In a wholly different way.

FK: We've done a good job, why should we be - and these people are doing fine community services, and why should that all be stopped. Maybe it started as an employment problem, but it's now a community service program and it should be kept as a community service program. Some of the people fought it pretty hard - some above the table and under the table, trying to save their jobs, trying to save their programs. It wasn't vicious. You could understand it, but it was a losing fight. It had to be.

HP: Well, did you remain here until it was in fact liquidated?

FK: No, I went over to the FWA in about '30. The Lehman Act was passed then and I had charge of the maintenance and operation funds for the Lehman Act, which was the war impacted areas, you know.

HP: Yes. And the health thing.

FK: Yes, well, the health centers. We also had day-care centers for the children of working mothers.

HP: Sort of like a forerunner of the Hill-Burton Act; it was also construction too, wasn't it?

FK: Yes, yes, it was construction because they built roads and schools and hospitals and sewers and everything that was needed.

HP: Sure. The movement of population to industry.

FK: Yes, and where the local tax base was absolutely inadequate. I remember the processing of the funds for what they called the Quinton Iron Works, which was Oak Ridge, you see, because there was a huge maintenance - a huge construction grant made and then my part of it came along with maintenance and operation. There was an interesting sidelight to that because they were recruiting the personnel for Oak Ridge from Westinghouse and du Pont to get the young scientists, and they were young men with young families. They refused to go down there if their children had to go to the small town schools in Tennessee, which - you know what their educational standards would be and what the teachers' salaries would be. So that was agreed to, so in Oak Ridge the schools had a salary schedule and a curriculum standard way above any of the standards of Tennessee.

HP: New wrinkles all the time.

FK: New wrinkles all the time. Nothing ever smooth. They were just tumbled around.

HP: You know, a clash of social forces fluidly operating on a - - though all of them related to the essential purpose that was abroad in the land it had period and yet still conveying interest.

FK: and just as the people didn't know why they were out of work in the beginning, they were almost equally like weeds before the wind when the war came along. The forces were so much better than the individual.

HP: Well, interestingly enough, there is a comparison between the early 30's and early 40's and that's this emergent doctrine of necessity, namely, that for years in the 20's the government should do just as little as possible and let harmony emerge from this conflict of personal interests. But suddenly there was this doctrine of necessity that we must do something. Well, usually is it true in '30 and '39 that is what really shifted the wind was by '38, even though we were saying peace with one hand, with the other we were getting the tools ready just in the event.

FK: Yes, starting Lend-Lease.

HP: So this was the doctrine of necessity again.

FK: Using the power of the Federal government first at home and then abroad.

HP: Just supporting the vast construction works. It's really the movement of people to a new area with all the attendant problems which public health, and so on, sewers, air pollution and the rest of it.

FK: I got to smell Henry Kaiser during that time.

HP: Oh, did you!

FK: Was he a - - gee whiz, what a guy! There was a time when I think FDR was seriously considering appointing him the economic - I think the papers called it "czar," but economic coordinator. And who did he finally select? Of course he didn't select Kaiser. That impossible Jimmy Byrnes, who didn't know from nothing about business. I don't know why he ever - well, he must have been losing his grip on personnel by about that time. He really made some very odd appointments: Stetmans in State; Byrnes as economic czar.

HP: I think on some respects - look he put Biddle in there as Attorney General, but he had Sam Rosenman in the White House. He had a personal attorney. He had a personal economic person, and he had his own State Department. He was it. So perhaps working through lesser people was far better than working through, let's say, Secretary Hull or Robert Jackson, so that - -

FK: but it made a mixed - -

HP: And the proliferation of government agencies one on top of another.

FK: And let the best man win. That was cruel - a cruel way to administer. Mile Perkins certainly thought so.

HP: This was in BEW - Economic Warfare. Well, there were so many people and institutions that had a piece of that kind of pie that it didn't make for smoothness because you didn't have the time to work out the procedures to smooth them. And Milo Perkins, I think, really did have to walk the plank.

FK: Oh, he did.

HP: So did Biddle for that matter, ultimately. And for reasons which were not wholly on the surface.

FK: I know. I know.

HP: Well, as you look back on this WPA era I suppose you had rare experience and excitement that - -

FK: I did. I felt that I was completely caught up in it. I had no - I was so engrossed in what I was doing - just swimming for the shore, never knowing if I'd get there. I just don't know how I had the courage to start out on some of these trips and to face up to some of them - I really don't. I look back on - it's the courage of I don't know what. But there was never any lack of interest, nor any lack of belief in the importance of what I was doing. I was thoroughly convinced that I had to get it done, had to get it done the best way I possibly could. When I came down here, some people asked me if I liked Washington and I said, "I haven't seen it. I haven't look at the it." I didn't. I couldn't.

HP: You didn't have time.

FK: I didn't have time. I just zipped back and forth and then did what - you know, if I went out socially it was because of something connected with the job. If I had official invitations, why that's all I did, and the rest of the time I worked: Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and not with any sense of martyrdom, just couldn't get to the office fast enough to try to get on top of whatever it was that was on top of me. And then the feeling - of course I missed Harry like everything because we didn't have inspiring leadership. We had directions, but we didn't have inspiring leadership, but there were a lot of us along the line that I think knew what it was all about and I certainly wasn't alone in my attitude. There were just hundreds of us that were completely sold on the idea of work vs. The dole. We believed in it, and if we possibly could we wanted to make a success of it.

HP: Well, it's that kind of spirit that sustained you through difficulty, and there were difficulties.

FK: constantly! We never were without them. We were just snowed under with difficulties. We never had an easy time; never on much of any front.

HP: No, but every situation would be a unique one anyway, dealing with different personalities.

FK: Different personalities and a different background, and the states with attitudes about their prerogatives. I often thought of what Paul Appleby used to say: "I'd leave everything to the Stats, but their lines."

HP: A shrewd one.

FK: I thought so. If we just abolished state lines we would be all right and then they could just talk, but we wouldn't have these - - -

HP: These very weird jurisdictional claims.

FK: Oh, just without much rhyme or reason. And you're up against that.

HP: Well, did you get a deeper spell for patience? - it's harder to be patient than to be driven by a sense of dedication.

FK: I didn't understand your question - did I get what?

HP: A better spirit as a consequence of this experience in patience where you had to work through such a - - - -

FK: Well, you know, I was just like a man on a tight rope. I couldn't talk about patience or anything. I just had to stay up there, didn't I? So I don't know whether it was patience or luck or - - Harrington taught me a few things. He said, "Now you have two major jobs. One is liaison with the White House. The other one is testimony on the Hill for the appropriations, because you have to be the spokesman for your program - I can't be." I kept those two things, and then my staff had to process those projects and know whether - all about the day to day operation - whether it was good, bad or indifferent. When I kept those two things in mind - I had to let the white House know what I was doing and why and why and why, and I had to be ready for Mr. Wigglesworth and Mr. John Tapor and people like that. So I don't know whether I was patient or not. Is that what you mean? Why should I have patience?

HP: Well, I mean when you ran into difficulties where known problems take time.

FK: Well, I accepted difficulty as just the natural order of existence. After I'd been in it six months I didn't expect anything but difficulty, and oh, so many difficulties. Every time we started a new program, every time we closed down one - that was the normal atmosphere in which we did our work. Of course there were very fine people working then to whom I was devoted and who I trusted a lot. I absolutely trusted them - ad to. John N. Grierson used to get figures for me when I'd go up on the Hill, and I'd say, "John, if you send me the wrong figures I'll just make a horrible fool of myself and you."

HP: I was thinking of when you start from scratch, as you did in Chicago, and you establish an instrument, a means whereby you can gain some insight as to what you have to work with by way of people. Then the sort of frontier work you do in the states in an effort to get the thing established where communication - your understanding is what they hear and when they do not hear what you're saying because they have their own interest to convey and working out some means whereby this is going to be good beyond the two of you to the people for which it's designed - this is what I meant by patience and perhaps a kind of perseverance.

FK: Well, I believe I have that. I believe I did. I don't think I ever doubted but what we would get something done, and I think I really did understand what the President and Hopkins meant when they established FERA and why they changed it to WPA. I was grounded in the philosophy of the program and the background and the reasons for it and had quite a little insight into some of the quips, and so on, that went back and forth between those two men before the CWA legislation was passed, and why FDR did not want to repeat England's experience, and so on. That was great source of strength; don't you think it would be to anybody?

HP: Oh, sure.

FK: Just that you knew why there was a WPA. He never questioned why, nor the necessity for it, nor the absolute urgency of that necessity. So that much does give you a certain steadiness.

HP: Sure. In any event, when you had to speak with those who had not had your orientation and background you were in a position at least to design and fence in what it is you wanted to say.

FK: I used to talk - to wax very eloquent about the importance of the job we were doing. Sometimes I think I got it across. Sometimes I didn't. I don't know. You can't tell, but I certainly tried.

HP: And the proof of one's ability to get across the footlights is in the pudding that someone else eats in this instance. And this is why I think that while the press was certainly vicious with reference to what was going on, the individual recipient of an opportunity under this project was again a kind of stimulant to further effort.

FK: Oh, yes, yes. I remember Marian and I were driving back to Chicago one night and I said, "who do you suppose is the happiest person in Illinois?" She said, "Somebody who got on the WPA, who got a job today." You know, when you've had nothing but a handout and they assigned you to a job and you had to work - we're reporting for work - it was a happy moment. The happiness may not have been long-lived. They might have got dissatisfied later, but the satisfaction of being put to work must have been an intense satisfaction. Many people said, and I said, that very few family problems wouldn't be solved by having the breadwinner of the family have a steady income - that straightens out homes: a job, a worthwhile job, a steady income.

HP: That was the thought.

FK: That was the philosophy and I really didn't forget it. I talked about it when it was old hat. I still talk about it because, you see, that was great stuff in the early days, but not later on.

HP: Well, you could understand the shift in circumstances later on.

FK: Yes, I could. Oh, I could feel it when I'd be over at the White House. They were nice to me personally, but that employment program! Huey Long was right when he said that nobody could get anywhere in politics who ever had anything to do with the Relief Program. You just write that down in your copy books. If you administer relief you're dead politically. And you are; no ifs, ands, and buts.

HP: "We're glad to see you today, but we're quite busy on other problems."

FK: yes. Well, one day the President said, "I think Florence has the orneriest administrative job in town." I said, "I think she does too." "Well, let's give her some minor diplomatic post." Well, it never happened, but they just felt sorry for me when they thought about me at all in those days, but they were kind to me - yes. I went up to Hyde Park every summer. Of course, Eleanor Roosevelt didn't ever take such - she was interested in continuing community service and was worried about what would happen. It was ideal for the communities to take over their own housekeeping aid and their own school lunch and their own nursery school projects and library extension and all the rest of it, but would they? Mostly they didn't. Some did. Most didn't; they were dropped! But you see, in a war situation it wasn't missed.

HP: No. The headlines changed. The interest changed. We had 22 million men and women in the armed forces.

FK: Yes, and all of a sudden Rosy the Riveter was the hero and we had to worry about her.

HP: The whole complex changed.

FK: It certainly did. And that makes it very hard now to go back and make WPA seem real and vital, which it was at the time.

HP: The context is almost unknown except by the participants. I talked to some artists who never had it better. A real creative person who wasn't selling. There was no market for what it was he had in mind to say, the statement he wanted to make, and suddenly this is the Elysian fields. It enabled him to continue with his originality because no heavy hand was put upon him from the point of view of directing what he should or should not paint.

FK: no, or say - and you know we got some real, real extra dividends out of it. There's a volume put out by the Virginia Writers Project called the Negroes in Virginia, and it's a classic. Of course, it takes it up just to a certain point, but that's a fine bit of historical writing. Just a fine piece of work. One of the offshoots of the Virginia Writers project.

HP: Sure. I think people in almost any community learned more in the way of identification with their state and their section within their state as a consequence of the project than they would have without the project. They had reason to sustain their parochialism. They could take a tour of their own section that's warm and familiar and see things which perhaps they had overlooked for years.

FK: Yes, and how odd it is that the chapters on which we spent so much money are the least valuable chapters - the tour chapters, What good are they now? The Maps they're just practically of no use whatever. But the general chapters are just as good as ever. You know, during the end when I felt much freer in talking with the State Administrators I asked them, "How many of you state administrators would like a complete set of the state guides?" Up went every hand. Well, I said, "You just go out and buy'em. I don't have enough to give you. But if you're smart, every single one of you who've administered a state program ought not to fail to have in his personal library the complete set. Now you go out and get'em." the boy from South Dakota - he had no faith in his project so he only ordered 500 and thought it would be awful hard to get a South Dakota project, but you put the pressure on him. Well, I think several of them did. Of course, when they put their hands up they felt, "Well, within the next 60 days she will ship to all of us a complete set of the Writers Project." But of course I didn't

have that kind of money. Another thing that maybe was a minor virtue, there was very little rascality. Very little. There was a couple of administrators up in New England that pocketed some funds that didn't belong to them, but honestly - it just was remarkable. No sticky fingers. Nobody thought of cheating.

HP: Well, it wasn't a 9 to 5 proposition.

FK: Never.

HP: It was an 18 to 24 hour day.

FK: It was, it absolutely was - summer, winter, spring and fall.

HP: And it had to be done yesterday, like - that kind of urgency.

FK: It certainly did. You had to make some kind of a decision NOW.

HP: On the basis of almost wholly inadequate information, but you had to make it.

FK: Yes, but there are only two answers to a problem: yes and no, and you choose one. Gee, I don't know - I don't know where we got the - but we decided right a lot of the time.

HP: By and large I think so.

FK: Most of the time we did. Some of the people who came in for very ignoble reasons really turned in a better job than I would ever have thought they were capable of. There was something about the bigness of the concept and you don't matter, but this national situation is terrible and you contribute to make it better or not. They would straighten out.

HP: I think sometimes when you're conscious you're an example you're inclined to be a better one.

FK: I think you are. Some bad political appointments turned in pretty good jobs. You can't tell. Sometimes the technicians will give you a bad steer just as well as the politicians.

HP: Besides there's no rule of thumb that I know of in knowing before the experience what's going to transpire.

FK: No. It's like choosing a President. You are always taking a vote. You can't help it.

HP: I know, you don't know what the detail is. Neither does he when he's running.

FK: No. Neither does he.

HP: Well, it's like choosing a wife. It's like choosing a career.

FK: Yes, it's a gamble.

HP: And there's not much in the way of elbow room, but that's all you can do.

FK: That's all you can do. And you find yourself able to make a success of what looks to the outsider as though it couldn't succeed. By George, it does. It really happens. You know, MacLeish had this idea - you probably know about his calling together people like Edwin Cammon and Van Wyck Brooks and John Steinbeck and one or two of the composers proposing that out of the Federal Art Project they establish an Art Academy - Academy of Fine Arts. He really was all ablaze for that idea. But there again we were heading into a war period and he couldn't get any hearing. I'll bet you that every time there's been a political convention that somebody has had a set of mimeographed pages to distribute to the members of the Platform Committee proposing a Department of Fine Arts in the Federal Government. Usually it's some unknown congressman from New York, but it's been done over and over and over again. And nothing came of it.

HP: The time isn't ripe for it.

FK: Well, when it's ever going to be, I don't know. Maybe that isn't the answer. I don't know. But verve and drive and momentum and devotion - oh, Harry was a wonderful leader - just a wonderful leader. That kind of a wry funny way he had of saying things, you know, that had all kinds of punch, and he was so fearless in a man-to-man combat that they were afraid of him in a way. He was really quite magnificent.

HP: He did certainly shut up some reporters who were after him on the subject of boondoggling artists, and so on, and he said, in effect, quite quietly, "We employ carpenters, plumbers in our Works Program. They're hungry, and we find work for them, put them to work. We do the same for artists because they're hungry too." Boondoggling had nothing to do with it. The purpose was quite clear. I mean this was a kind of soft, but right

down to the bone.

FK: Yes, down to the bone. Have seen this book put out by ? Called Minister of Relief?

HP: No.

FK: Would you like to see it?

HP: Yes.

FK: He didn't know too much about - - - END OF TAPE

HP: You were indicating the idea of the plan for liquidation.

FK: Yes, I think the circumstances were that I was spending the weekend with Jay and Mary, his then wife who later died. His idea was that we had - what had been surplus labor was in the process of becoming a very essential part of the labor force of the country, but they could come in the front door of WPA and go out the back door of private employment. It actually happened in the case of a good many, many projects. I've cited a few to you - sewing rooms in the Brooklyn navy yard went over in to the Navy and the Los Angeles sewing rooms went to the parachute factory out there, and the Missouri programs went over because of the use of women trained in the use of power machines. Well, that would mean that we would quickly liquidate just as much of our personnel as we could, and we could have whittled it down fast, you see, if we could have gone on an active selling of the whole project program, but I think by that time people were completely fed up with WPA. They wanted to forget it! That had all the earmarks of the depression and failure of the economy to meet the challenge. They just didn't want to be reminded that there ever had been a WPA, or the need for WPA, and when Leon Henderson came into the Office of Price Administration I talked to him about it. He said, "We just can't touch WPA. We can't touch it because it's relief, it's unemployment, it's breadlines, it's Hoover Mills, it's boondoggling, it's inefficient work, it's high labor cost and no results from it," and all the long list of charges. Leon Henderson said, "I wouldn't touch it and I don't think any other administrator would." That was out. Maybe it was a fanciful idea, but I know that in six months we could have reduced the labor force in an orderly and good way, but we were never permitted to accept these things that happened locally. Locally it happened, but we never got it embodied as a national policy.

HP: How receptive was the WPA Administration here to this idea?

FK: Oh, you see we had gone eleven months without an administrator after the death of Harrington, and there was just an acting administrator, which was a measure of the lack of interest and the lack of support at the White House. Nobody bothered to even look up and appoint an administrator for us. It was a very bad period for us and indicative, of course, that the President had lost his interest in WPA - just lost it. He was in the war effort then, and he was completely in the war effort and he would not be pulled back to consideration of our problems at all. When after eleven months, and sort of by default, Howard Hunter was appointed administrator, the deputy became the administrator, but you see, he didn't have any stature or standing. It wasn't his fault. Maybe if he'd had real backing - he was a bright fellow and able and devoted to Harry Hopkins, just idolized him, but he didn't have a chance. So as far as the WPA was concerned I got no support. I just didn't get anywhere with it, not anywhere at all. I talked to Hunter and was rebuffed and then, if course, we were in the midst of what really was the terminal period. People were just leaving the projects, as they should have, for private employment all over the place, both the men and women. So the liquidation came about in another way, rather disorderly, disorderly.

HP: Well, was Mrs. Roosevelt of any help?

FK: Yes, she was. She never lost her interest in training and retraining. And you could talk to her about training and retraining any time, and she could always see you and she was very, very appreciative and I think told her husband about the power machines and what a good thing that was. She enlisted me in an idea she once had. She had an idea of a sort of draft of women power comparable to the draft of man power, so I used to go there evenings and we'd try to draft a form, you see, for every woman to come and register - every woman (phone interruption - "Will you take that Ellie mac? Will you answers that, please? If that's Freddie, I'll handle him.") That also didn't get anywhere, working on this national draft of women, mobilizing the woman power of the nation, and she was very much interested in that. No, she never seemed to completely lose her interest in WPA because they were always people to her. One of the jobs that we had was to answer the mail that came in. She farmed it out to other agencies, too. If it was a farmer's wife, that went to the Department of Agriculture, but we got a large mail from her every week to answer, needs - and leftovers of one kind and another, and so forth, and she just dumped those all in our lap. She said to me, "You won't write form letter, will you, because if you do, I'll just take it away from you, because I'm going to have form letters sent out to these people!"

HP: good for her! Bless her heart!

FK: Oh, yes, she was something, really, and yet that was quite an administrative burden, but it was very good for the Washington office - very good for the people on our staff to have to draft a letter - you know, which wasn't a bland statement of policy and "thank you for your interest, sincerely yours." They didn't dare write it that way.

HP: Dehumanize nothing.

FK: Harrington told me, and I wrote a great many letters for him when I first came here and I wrote in the first person and active voice, which I prefer, don't you? And he said, "No, indeed. You write in the third person and passive: 'it is thought, not I think'". It's West Point. It's the Army. It's the engineer.

HP: It's in keeping with the theory, "don't commit yourself, committee yourself."

FK: Lovely! Exactly - committee yourself! What was it? What did somebody say? He didn't understand how Jesus Christ ever accomplished anything because he never belonged to a committee. I think Harrington thought protection. Also he was trained. That was his habit of thought, his habit of behavior, his habit of correspondence, and he wasn't going to have me write these brisk little confidential, "I appreciate that so and so is a so and so, but you don't say so" things! I learned, too, you know.

HP: Oh, yes, that's one of the great things about this period - America's capacity for growth and learning.

FK: Yes, and there was an amazing amount of it - you know, people who took on the job with a kind of oh, "I'll stay 6 months," and then get so interested in what they were doing. A great many people wanted to stay in the program. One of the hardest parts of the program to get the local people to let go of was nursery schools.

HP: Was it?

FK: Oh, yes. They wanted to keep the nursery schools. They weren't sufficiently well established that they were financially secure. They were not financially secure. They had to have that Federal payroll and a good deal of federal supervision, but they were locally popular. When I went over to the Federal works Agency and had the maintenance and operation end of the Lehman Act to administer, which was loans and grants, that was one of the first things that we looked into - how many of the nursery schools we could keep because they strategically located with many of them in the places where there was a big new influx of population, like Milledgeville, Georgia, and places like that. Now you told me last week that you wanted to ask me some questions.

HP: Yes, I thought maybe it might be useful, since I ran upon a collection of names, for me to indicate who they are and it might help you to either put an incident in its context or reveal more by way of something specific that people might have handled. Now these are state directors: Illinois, George G. Thorpe - do you remember him?

FK: Yes, I remember him. I remember his wife, Sylvia. I remember what he looked like. I think he had a lot of ability. He got mixed up in a marital business which did him nothing but harm, and after that I didn't see too much of him. But that's all general - - what kind of incidents do you want me to tell about Thorpe?

HP: Well, as a regional director in Illinois, you had 10 states to watch - 13 states to watch. There's two things I would suppose, namely, there was the state institution itself, plus the Federal Project #1 which by-passed the state - that is to say, they had no discretion as to how the funds were to be spent. They were earmarked from Washington.

FK: The quota was earmarked, the funds were earmarked, but at the same time the states were directed to find space. They usually officed them, so they couldn't disown them, and they didn't. That had its problems, too.

HP: Well, Illinois - - the administrator was Charles E. Minor. I gather he had certain holdovers, or was he appointed for this work?

FK: He was a holdover, and just an average guy. He wasn't very up to that job.

HP: Not a whirling dervish in ideas.

FK: Oh, no, mercy not! And a little timid about a lot of things. Nice enough fellow, but that was the day that Kelly and Dunham and -

HP: Didn't help matters.

FK: - - and he was in awe of both Mayor Kelly and of Dunham. The first time I visited the regional office in Chicago the reliefers were picketing the regional office and signs were against Dunham and Kelly. They just ignored Minor. The charge was that they were getting all this Federal money, but the reliefers weren't getting jobs, and it

was true. It was awfully slow shifting over, setting up the projects and getting the men on the payroll, which is what they wanted. The whole thing was to get on the job and get their name - that's what they wanted and it was awfully slow.

HP: Get money into their pockets.

FK: Yes, that's right, and the prospect of having it regularly.

HP: Right. They'd worry about the design later on, but the first thing was a crash program.

FK: that's right, and I suppose you've heard this story about this idea, and I think that again came from the White House probably from some evening conference between the President and Harry, that they ordered every single WPA person to have a paycheck by Thanksgiving - you see, whether they had done a day's work or not they were to get that paycheck by Thanksgiving. It was a lovely sentimental idea, and it was done, but oh, I tell you, some of the local resistance was fierce! Yes it was. They didn't have the jobs ready. They didn't even have the wheel barrows or the chalk lines, or anything for the boys to go out on the farmers' market road job and yet they had to issue them a paycheck. That just seemed - you know - doing everything backward, and I remember the district director down in St. Charles county in Missouri said, "this will just give the Works Program a very bad name, very bad. This is just a handout, nothing but a handout and can't something be done to persuade Mr. Hopkins that this is a great mistake? You don't pay people for work they haven't done."

HP: he misunderstood the psychic lift, didn't he?

FK: Absolutely. He could not see any reason why Washington wanted anything like that done - but Washington ruled over the whole business and the checks went out and they were delivered. There were a great many dramatic stories about getting the check out the day before, and so on and so forth. Now somebody in the press should have picked that up and either approved or disapproved of it. But they were disgusted. It didn't get much support.

HP: Not at all?

FK: Well, no, not to amount to anything.

HP: You were busy at the game of feeding people and not worrying about public relations.

FK: I was busy about getting a room, getting enough sewing machines, getting enough chairs, and when the relief offices really got going they referred people to us in droves. In Cleveland they sent out word that applications for the sewing project would be received at a certain time and they said 8 o'clock. It was so blurred it looked like 5 o'clock instead of 8 o'clock and there was a crowd, a big crowd of people down there at 5 o'clock, and some of the women fainted before time for the doors to open. It was rugged - it really was. So were busy, terribly busy, but on administrative details. Well, now, Thorpe - he was an able fellow. He was a sculptor, but I don't feel that he - yet he was sympathetic to the people on his project and he did have some very able people, both white and colored.

HP: In the Women's and Professional projects, Mrs. Mary G. Moon.

FK: yes, she's been my friend from that day to this. She was a holdover from FERA. She was a social worker. A great many social workers I didn't get along with too well because they looked upon people as clients and case histories and things like that, but Mary Moon wasn't that way. She was a very incisive, direct person and she got the respect of Dunham's candidate, and so when they were told they would have to take Mary Moon and couldn't have Walter Roy - he was a very able chap, too; he was head of the Recreation department in Chicago and he'd worked closely with the City hall and he knew his way around very well, but we couldn't have Walter Roy. We had to have Mary Moon, but she was good. She got the respect of - there was no nonsense about her.

HP: She could call a spade a spade.

FK: Yes, and she had the respect and liking of the people who worked with her. Yes, I think she was one of the best.

HP: Well, that's Illinois. Last week we talked something about the theater project in Chicago - this was Mintern whom we've already talked about, but do you remember the Albert Goldberg who was director of the Federal Music Project?

FK: Yes, I do. I remember him. He was Jewish and he really was a writer, a music critic. He was good. I think he was a very good buffer between Sokolov and the music units in Chicago. He told me that the morale would drop as soon as Sokolov came - that he could build it back up. Goldberg and Mary Moon were good friends. Goldberg was - what shall I say - industrious. He was working.

HP: A stem winder.

FK: Yes, he was. He had ideas and he was always pressing the Washington office for twenty more jobs, or so much more. He was good. He is now music critic at the Los Angeles Times, I think. He went to the West Coast after WPA was over, but he worked hard. He was good. Thorpe worked, too, but not as effectively as Goldberg.

HP: Was his assessment of the appearance of Sokolov on local morale an accurate one?

FK: I think very much so. Very much so.

HP: Isn't that interesting! Is there any reason that you'd care to risk as to why this was so? The personality of the man?

FK: You see he would act as guest conductor, we'll say, for an orchestra and be obviously dissatisfied with the performance. That's what he did - "You're just not any good," or "you're not much good."

HP: And he conveyed this?

FK: Oh, indeed he did! Of course he did! He certainly did!

HP: He overlooked the fact of apparently bringing musical joy and appreciation beyond the - -

FK: He knew that and he would probably pay lip service to it, but the inner core of his mind and philosophy was that music is not to be tampered with. When you play, you should play well - that was Sokolov.

HP: he had a carefully tuned ear.

FK: Yes, he did. He married while he was National Director a very fine woman who was - what was her title? I've forgotten. It had something to do with music teaching, and I always felt that she had a good influence on him. But of course the formative years of the project had come before that. Now, Sokolov was good, you know. He really was a musician. There's no doubt about it. We got out to Seattle once and he wired back and he said he'd like to take six months annual leave because he saw a symphony orchestra out there in Seattle, and he wanted to be their conductor for a while. So he would leave the project for six months and give full time to that Seattle Symphony.

HP: It's kind of hard to have musical standards so high that one conveys distaste with the efforts of those who were - -

FK: Yes, it is, it is. It's unfortunate. It's unfortunate for Sokolov because he couldn't have been too happy. He knew that he had a job to do. He knew what that job was because he was not stupid. He was a bright man. And yet there was this other streak.

HP: That's interesting. The human story.

FK: That's right.

HP: Well, there's a John P. Frederick who was the writer.

FK: Yes, John P. Frederick. He was Illinois, wasn't he? I haven't thought about him for a long time. I saw a lot of him for awhile. He tried to patch up things after Alsberg left. That was cruel and awful really, and Frederick knew exactly what happened. Quiet chap. I wonder if he is still living, do you know? I don't know. I don't think he is. I'm trying to remember something about Frederick. I found him very sympathetic to the idea of the Writers Project. Of course he didn't touch Alsberg's master plan which was the outline of the guide. It was just a holding operation.

HP: There's Howard E. Colgan in the Historical Records Survey, and there's a story somewhere in the division that sprang up between up between the Writers Project and the subsequent development of the Alsberg - -

FK: Oh, yes, Alsberg and Luther Evans. They just had all they could do to keep from scratching each other's eyes out. That was a real personality clash, and Alsberg thought that what Luther Evans was doing was pretty picayunes and unimportant anyhow, but he wanted it, you see. He wanted administrative supervision of this Historical Records Project because they are all empire builders and the more activities they have in their projects the better it is for them. And Alsberg certainly didn't want to give up Historical Records, but he wanted it to be minor. He wanted it to be housed over here in a corner somewhere and make no fuss - "don't bother me, because I have more important things to consider," and it was getting a very, very, bad deal as far as employment quotas and as far as money was concerned, but of course Alsberg reckoned without Luther Evans. Luther Evans was, as I told you, an administrator par excellence. Nobody pushes him around - but nobody! And

if it took a little fight, some unpleasantness, or whatever, "Alright! That's what we'll have." I remember at the Dies committee one day when Mrs. Woodward was testifying before the Dies Committee. You know, she'd go up there with a battery of people to support her. Both Alsberg and Luther Evans were there and I was sitting with Hallie Flanagan and Hallie said to me, "Isn't Luther Evans lucky! He'll never get in anybody's hair." She was controversial. Alsberg was, to a degree, controversial, because he had too many Commies on his project, particularly in New York City, so they say. But Luther Evans was after something different. So it was decided, very wisely I think, to separate the projects, to separate the two guys and let each go his own way. And really Evans turned in a very fine job. I think that a good many counties in this country owe their first vital statistics to him. They'd go into a county courthouse and they'd have a pretty good record of the transfer of property, but the birth and death registry just wasn't kept up. Vital statistics were a very patchy picture. I don't mean to say that Luther Evans cleared it all up, but he did an awful lot to get counties to keep the proper records. Well, that's no small accomplishment! And that's what he did.

HP: And that has continuing validity even today.

FK: Yes, oh, yes. I think that birth and death registers in a good many county court houses started under WPA.

HP: He seems to have had a strong plan and a strong idea of the procedures to follow. How much discretion did he allow at the local level?

FK: Practically none. He was an autocrat. He was a dictator. He was a - - well, you might argue with him. He was a good-natured sort of a guy and chewed a cigar all the time, but he wasn't afraid of any administrator, and of course the women that swarmed around he just considered them a nuisance. I told you that every field man wrote a report to Luther Evans every single night he was out in the field - every night - and Luther read it, too. He knew what was going on in his project. He knew. Sokolov didn't know. Cahill didn't know, but Luther Evans knew. He really knew.

HP: He made himself master of - -

FK: Yes. Hallie Flanagan was - I think her administrative memos are a very interesting phase of this whole business. She would combine rules with the reasons for the rules - what she was aiming at. She was the teacher, and she had a spark. She always had a spark, so when people worked with her they did it because they were all fired up with what she was trying to do.

HP: And she could put it out in a large picture and frame it and give it a sense of direction.

FK: Yes, she could, and did, and her memos were, I think, unusually fine.

HP: But she was not an autocrat in the sense that - -

FK: Oh, no, she wasn't; no, she wasn't an autocrat. She was firm-willed in herself, but she couldn't change a situation like the Mintern situation in Chicago. She ignored it and when she went out in the field she wouldn't come to Chicago. You couldn't get her to come to Chicago. What would she come to Chicago for? She wasn't interested in it.

HP: Well, did you have something to do with Indiana?

FK: Yes.

HP: There the state administrator was a John K. Jennings.

FK: And he was a - - he was a something! Before that it had been Wayne Coye and Wayne Coye was a protégée of Paul McNutt, and he also was a personal friend of Hopkins. I think Wayne Coye never was sure that the move from a relief program to a work program was the right thing. There probably was merit in it, but he wasn't completely sold on work vs. The dole. I don't mean to say that he undercut the work program in Indiana, but he didn't push it too much, and of course when it came to putting unskilled women to work he thought that was the silliest idea ever. They might just as well stay on relief. It was cheaper in the long run. While he was a pleasant enough chap to work with, he wasn't very helpful - that was Wayne Coye. Then, of course, if you know anything about the politics of this country by states, Indiana is just on a thug level. Wayne Coye was going home from the precinct meeting and he was worked over. They broke his jaw. The injury around his eye - he didn't lose the eye, but they thought he might - and he looked awful for a long time. He was a pale-looking chap to begin with. And the first thing you know he came down here later as Director of the Budget. Eugene Meyer on the Post looking chap to begin with. And the first thing you know the came down here later as Director of the Budget. Eugene Meyer on the Post -- and I know his wife now. Well, that was Wayne Coye. He wasn't there too long. The first few months I didn't have Indiana. That was added to my region, and I had a Mrs. Carter down there. She was a holdover from ERA and the first order that I had -- every time the projects met they had to have a little devotion,

a little reading of the Scriptures and a little prayer. Well, I didn't consult anybody. I suppose I should have, but I just stopped it. After all, it was a work program and I just didn't want to get all mixed up in that kind of thing. She had a line across her office with children's garments hung up. They had been there so long they were dusty. That was Wayne Coxe. Then Come John K. Jennings, and he was from Evansville, and rough, tough and nasty, but I got a lot more done with Jennings than I ever did with Wayne Coxe.

HP: How did you stampede him?

FK: I think one reason -- I told him early when he came up to Indianapolis that I thought we ought to have a change in the state director. He all but threw his hat in the air he was so pleased. He couldn't stand Mrs. Carter. She was a lovely little lady, was sentimental, should have been teaching a Sunday school class.

HP: Goodness is self-executing.

FK: Yes. And then when the scope of the Women and Professional Project was widened her inadequacies were just too, too much, so I talked that over with him. That's the first time we had a meeting of the minds. I don't have to keep this one. Well, one secretary of Paul McNutt's was considered, and I said, "Mr. Jennings, let's not do that." He came up with a man, a friend of his who had been on the project, and I just agonized over that one because I was supposed to hold the line for women. But I didn't. I accepted that man and I think that was the beginning of a pretty good working relationship with Jennings. I fired the person, or I supported him in terminating this nice little Mrs. Carter, who really was awful nice, but that was all you could say about her, and I got somebody in that he would work with. After I did that I said, "You'll see to it that a fair share of the sponsor's contribution and the quota and so on goes to him. You can't give him this job and then yank everything away from him like the guy does down in Tennessee." God, we had an awful administrator in Tennessee. He took every bit of the sponsor's contribution away from our program. We couldn't even buy a yard of gingham. The ten percent non-relief that we were supposed to have -- he took it all for his airport program just arbitrarily and decreed that we couldn't even have the sponsor's contribution and the non-relief personnel on our project. Isn't that something?

HP: Well, it made it rather shaky.

FK: Shaky! We had a perfectly lousy program. Of course we did. And he didn't care because to him the work program was just a heaven-sent opportunity to build up airports in Tennessee. He was crazy about flying but of course all those airports are passe now, but he didn't know --

HP: They sure are. The person listed here as Director of the Women and Professional Project, and this is as of 1939, was Mildred Schmidt.

FK: Not in Indiana. It was Carter.

HP: This is as of 1939.

FK: No, I didn't know her. She was before my time.

HP: Well, they didn't have a Theater Project, or an Art Project in Indiana, according to this.

FK: They had no unemployed actors. They wanted to have some performances, but they had nothing to do it with. I think they could have had an art project, but they didn't have any leadership.

HP: There is an interesting fellow listed in the Writers Project -- Gordon F. Briggs. Do you remember him at all?

FK: No, I don't remember Briggs. But they got out a good guide.

HP: Indeed they did.

FK: And another good guide that I think lifts itself up above the rest is New Jersey. That's a good guide. It wasn't a good program, but that's a good guide.

HP: Well, you had, I gather, Iowa, too. George Keller.

FK: Yes. The man who preceded him was Steve Hill. Harry said a few times when I saw him when I was in Washington, "Now there are two appointments that I must make that have got to be top notch; can't make any mistake on these two. One of them is New York City and the other is Iowa, because one was my home state and the other was my city." And what did he do? He put Steve Hill out in Iowa and "Iron Pants" Johnson in New York City. Hugh Johnson, and of course he was on the skids then, you remember, drinking heavily.

HP: I gather from the expression on your face that the Iowa situation was --

FK: Oh, Steve Hill was impossible, and it was just as miserable for him as it was for us because he was just as unhappy as we were. You see, Iowa was Republican and when the Democrats came in, why really some of the people thrown into offices were just unbelievable, and Steve Hill was appointed Postmaster at Des Moines. He might have been a fair Postmaster with what he'd been doing before. He was kind of holding the party organization together in Iowa and his pals were not anybody that you saw anywhere else, and he was old and suspicious and he and Howard Hunter -- they just fizzed they were so antipathetic. They had a violent antipathy for each other, and so I would say that we got off to a bad start. Then under Steve Hill, George Keller was Director of Operations of the engineers and he came from Iowa City. He was Republican background but not terribly political one way or another, you know, so during most of the time he was the Administrator. He never felt at home with anybody. A couple of times Harry came out to Ginnell and stayed with us and I had George Keller come over to have dinner with us, which of course was something for George Keller to have a chance to talk to the big boss.

HP: To get the large picture.

FK: Yes, well, you know, he just didn't -- he was stiff. He was friendly enough, but stiff with Harry, so it was just a golden opportunity missed, because Harry was very receptive. He wanted to have Keller tell him the political story in Iowa and the WPA story in Iowa and anything else about Iowa that he thought was important. Keller couldn't do it. I suppose he wanted to, but he just didn't know how.

HP: It was suddenly asking him to speak a language he wasn't instructed in.

FK: That's right. Just as Harrington was not instructed in social problems at all. Neither was Keller. Keller was a professor of engineering from the School of Engineering at Iowa City; a handsome fellow, nice-looking and a nice way with people, but there he was.

HP: There's a woman listed here as Director of the Women and Professional Project, Mrs. Jessie Hanthorne.

FK: Yes, well, that's a mixed picture.

HP: The development there?

FK: I think she had some ability -- she didn't have strength. She could think a good program, but she didn't get it done.

HP: She couldn't make it walk.

FK: No, she couldn't make it walk. She should have been replaced before she was.

HP: Iowa must have presented a problem in these terms different from, let's say, Cleveland or Chicago -- taxed resources a little bit differently.

FK: Oh, yes. Iowa participated in the work program, but never understood it, never. And it didn't get local acceptance. It just didn't. It didn't get a good press. Jessie Hanthorne was much enamored of the Milwaukee craft project and she wanted to start one like it in Des Moines and tried, and it was just a pale and feeble imitation of the real thing. She didn't have any outside support. Milwaukee had arts and crafts standards, you see, it was just in the community. It's not in the community in Des Moines.

HP: It's something that had to be superimposed?

FK: Yes, superimposed and you had to begin away back and teach an appreciation and all that sort of thing. We just didn't have the time of personnel to do it properly.

HP: Well, when you think of Iowa and Chicago or Milwaukee as population centers, in Iowa was there any project that would have been acceptable for women?

FK: School lunch. School lunch would have been acceptable. One day John Steinbeck came into my office. He hung around quite a lot for awhile and he said, "Now you get a lot of kicks and complaints and all. I can tell you how to wipe them all out. You take your whole quota and all the money you can lay your hands on and put it into a school lunch program and nobody can attack you -- nobody -- just nobody. They'll be building statues to you in the parks. Feed all the hungry school children in America." Well, it was a magnificent idea, but you see, not a very big employment program. You couldn't _____ feed 500 children with a staff of 12 women -- cooks and waiters and cleaner-uppers, and so on. It's not a big employment program. That would have been popular in Iowa. We had a _____ success with a housekeeping aid in Des Moines. And of course I do think that Jay did a good job on the Writers Project, but Steve Hill heard that Jay came from that knot of little left-wingers down there in Davenport and he was always suspect with Steve Hill -- always. And the Tribune sent a reporter out there, and they had some rather bad personal publicity about Jay. And, oh, that upset Steve Hill, oh, gee! That

was just pretty hard for him to bear.

HP: Well, they didn't have a Music or Theater Project in Iowa. They did have an art project with Francis Robert White. Do you remember him?

FK: I don't remember much about him.

HP: And I gather that Mr. DuVon was replaced when he went to Washington by Raymond Kresensky.

FK: Yes. There was a McLaughlin. Kresensky didn't last very long. McLaughlin finished up the job, and he's now in Washington. I don't remember much about Kresensky.

HP: You had enough problems with the women's group in Iowa.

FK: Well, yes. Then besides, by that time I was deep in this Washington business -- Congress and the white House. I had --

HP: And an endless array of detail. Kansas -- Clarence G. Nevin.

FK: Yes, yes. I remember him very well, very well indeed. He got hooked on an earthen dam. Where was it? It really worried him almost into his grave because he never should have accepted the project in the first place -- an earthen dam -- and it just swallowed up money and quota and everything, and he worried about that so much. He knew about the rest of the program, but he didn't pay too much attention to it. And that's where I had this Mary Parkman. She had her points, but she certainly didn't work for money. She told me about rummaging around in her dresser drawer once and she found five or six monthly paychecks that she hadn't bothered to cash at all. Her husband, Parkman, was one of the assistant Postmasters-General.

HP: Harrison Parkman?

FK: Harrison Parkman, that's right. Lived at the Raleigh Hotel. And they were very political. One of the the most interesting encounters I had with Mary Parkman was when she applied for a theater project. In Kansas there wasn't an unemployed actor in the length and breadth of the state -- where we'd get a director, where we'd get anything and why was she applying for it? Because William Allen White wanted it. William Allen White. The Parkman's lived in Emporia and their house was next door to the White's and William Allen White wrote a very eloquent letter to Hallie Flanagan and he said, "If you will establish a repertory theater here in Emporia, I will put my arms around it (that's the phrase he used) and see to it that it is accepted and loved and honored and used." Well, we couldn't transfer labor over state lines. It was a lovely letter and a lovely idea.

HP: In days of few victories, this is one to remember.

FK: he really wanted the theater project because he could see how nice it would be to have a repertory theater in some of the smaller Kansas towns.

HP: According to this directory, Mrs. Parkman wore two hats. She was also, according to this listing, Director of the Federal Writers Project.

FK: Yes, and that irked me, but Nevins just urged me to let it alone. I don't think it was because she wanted the double salary. It was because there was no one available and she was fitted to it. They got along. They didn't flourish, but neither did they do much of any thing else. I mean she took as good care of that project as she did the others. Now she tried to have an arts and crafts project and she turned to furniture and I was always getting notices about a chest that was coming, or a highboy, or a lowboy, or something from the Kansas project: and they went into a regular paroxysm of activity making stuff out of cowhorns -- you know -- pipe rests -- and I was supposed to take them over to the President and give them to him. I refused to do it, so she had Harrison do it. The White House must have been something -- on the President's desk those darn Kansas cowhorn some-or-others. And I think it was the funniest thing you ever saw -- that was made on the WPA.

HP: Well, there's a Harold J. Henderson in the Historical Records survey. You don't remember him at all?

FK: No. Don't remember him.

HP: Did you get into Kentucky?

FK: Oh, in the Region I did, yes, just at the last.

HP: George Goodman?

FK: Yes, yes, a gentleman of the old school, a member of the Pickwick Club. Yes, I remember George Goodman

in many ways very pleasantly. The thing, of course, that upset him was when Tom Stokes won the Pulitzer Prize for exposing political activity from the Kentucky WPA. You know, it could just as well have been anyone of the other fifty states. I mean, it was a pretty mild business, you know, but Stokes made a great thing of it.

HP: To Mr. Goodman's -- ?

FK: To Mr. Goodman's discomfiture, and Goodman, I think, as far as the local scene goes, was quite an aristocrat. He brought -- he really brought some prestige to WPA that we wouldn't have had otherwise.

HP: In Kentucky?

FK: Yes, because George Goodman was George Goodman. Elizabeth Fullerton was the Women's Director there. Sharp voice. Well -- really, you know, some of the best programs were out West. Do you have any --

HP: yes. One has to -- this is one of the great things that in a crash program one works through the kind of variety of human experience that can be thrown up to the surface and one must do the best one can.

FK: I know. I think about that when I realize that Stalin killed off all the intellectuals in his purge trials, and up come the Kruschev types, but out of those types there develops some surprisingly able people. You never can tell. You couldn't tell -- sometimes your political appointee would be a tower of strength and understanding. You never knew. You'd get a recommendation, say, maybe from the university and you'd get a weakling. You'd get somebody who just wasn't up to it.

HP: Didn't have fire in his belly. Well, the art project was under Adele Brandeis in Louisville. Did you bump into her at all?

FK: Yes, I did.

HP: I don't know how extensive it was.

FK: Well, she was a relative of the Justice's and talked about him a lot, but she did a job mostly in exhibitions, not very much creative work there. But she did have traveling exhibits down there. It was a little project.

HP: Were you able to get anything established for women in Kentucky?

FK: Oh, yes. We had a big unskilled woman's -- you see, the social situation there was that maybe the wife could get a job and the husband couldn't, so we had had a good many cases where the woman was declared the breadwinner. In the first place our projects ran during the winter months, and that assured a family income, so the referral office would often give us the wife. Then we had a big sewing project. We had housekeeping aid there. We had school lunch. Of course, I can't speak too highly of the cooperation we had from the Department of Agriculture on those programs, because we could always count on surplus commodities, you know -- a good big start on food. Of course, they sent it to the relief offices, but there was always enough for us to have a good start on school lunch. That was a very easy program to start because you could get local support. It was popular. Senator Robert Taft stood up on the floor of the Senate one day and said that there were no hungry school children in the State of Ohio and they didn't need a school lunch project out there. He's not my idea of a statesman. I don't care whether he is Mr. Republican. Maybe he's Mr. Republican, but he's not a Mr. Statesman.

HP: Well, the worst thing about him from this kind of comment is that he was not open to conviction on the facts. He had his theory and the facts had to adjust to it.

FK: That's right. They certainly did. And I don't think he thought much of the idea of work vs the dole. The dole would be cheaper, let's take it. And he wasn't about to help the new Deal in any way he could. One thing, though -- up there in Cleveland they had a series of very able men: Burton was Mayor, you know, and he was awfully good. And the man who is now Senator, Lausche, was mayor there for awhile -- a very popular mayor and from the point of view of the Federal Work Program very, very good to work with. He was prompt with sponsor's contributions. He had his staff present to the engineers suggestions for things the City needed, you know, so Cleveland got sewers and all kinds of good basic things, because the mayor worked with the Federal programs.

HP: And wisely.

FK: Very wisely and with some planning. There was a man down in Indiana who did the same thing. He was a Purdue and when the work program went into Purdue they found some blueprints there: what Indiana needed in the way of roads, bridges and over passes. There was no lack of work. There was just nothing like that in Iowa -- nothing. Ickes and Hopkins got together once and decided to offer Grinnell, Iowa -- I suppose Ickes was going to do something handsome of Hopkins -- a City Hall, or a school house or both, and they went out there and the City Council turned it down.

HP: How blind can you be!

FK: Turned it down because they weren't interested; they were so anti-New Deal that they wouldn't take the new school house which they very much needed and the new City Hall which they could have used.

HP: Incredible, isn't it!

FK: yes, it is, it really is. Harry tried various probing operations to get a way in to get past the local prejudice there in Grinnell, but he never did. Never could -- they weren't going to have anything to do with reckless Federal spending.

HP: Even from a local boy?

FK: Even from a local boy. Well, he was the son of a harness maker. "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" you know.

HP: Nothing but a horse trade.

FK: Yes, and his father sold cigarettes under the counter again in those days so what could be expected of the Hopkinses.

HP: Did you have anything to do with Michigan?

FK: Yes.

HP: Abner Larned as Administrator.

FK: Yes, Abner Larned. He came late. Nunn was the Administrator before that. Abner Larned was little on the same sort of person as George Goodman, a very, very handsome chap and had entree to the right clubs and the right businesses and that, and he was quite sympathetic.

HP: He gave the program a sense of tone.

FK: Yes, he did, he really did and was very interested in the Federal Project, and he was very fine to work with.

HP: Well, Michigan during this period was largely torn apart work-wise. The automobile industry -- the state goes as the automobile industry goes.

FK: Detroit was so flat -- so flat -- so flat, but I think it was because of the program there -- that any time I had a national advisory committee Walter Reuther was on it, and the reason he accepted was gratitude for what we had done for Michigan. They had a big quota. They really did, because they _____ a tremendous unemployment problem. What was odd and wrong in Michigan was that upper Michigan business, the piece the other side of the lake. They were flat, too. The mines were down and there was real suffering. To get up there and get something done was hard. I remember one time I went up there and found they hadn't paid the project workers for, I think it had gone over the second pay period, and I called Detroit -- no, the office was at Lansing -- and none of the state administrators knew. I had to tell them what had happened. I said, "Do you want me to call Washington this afternoon and tell them that you've let these project workers go for two pay periods?" -- there were men and women -- "Because I'm going to do it. I'm just going to do it. This is absolutely beyond the pale. All the administrative personnel have had their paychecks, just the project workers have not." That was up there in the Upper Peninsula. It was a breakdown in some local office. Of course it was the finance man's fault. "will you promise me you'll get hold of him right away and get these checks out, because I'm just going to raise all the trouble I possible can and I can do it." I didn't know whether I could or not -- I didn't know if I put a call into Washington if I could get anybody or not, but you can try and threaten, can't you?

HP: Washington is a long way off.

FK: Yes, and they didn't know whether I could or not, but I might do it. That's the kind of breakdown that I thought was awfully bad, when they didn't pay the projects on time. The state officers could wait for their pay, but not the \$55 a month worker. They're the last people who ought to be asked to wait, don't you think?

HP: Yes. You worked where, I think, _____ a Mrs. Bessie Garner?

FK: Yes, she was late and she was a friend of Abner Larned and Mrs. Hall Roosevelt, and I really accepted her through the White House. She wasn't so terribly good, but she wasn't so terribly bad, either. Catherine Murray was the holdover from FERA and she was entirely too much of a social worker. I had the sister of the Governor for a while -- Marie -- the one -- the Democratic governor -- Mur --

HP: Murphy?

FK: No, no, no. Before Murphy. He was a one-termer out there. But Bess Garner I remember the best, and she was very sympathetic to the arts project and she was a very good friend of Larned so they were just a basket of kittens.

HP: Which is good!

FK: Yes, very good, very good indeed!

HP: Detroit being what it is and Michigan being what it is they had a full Federal Project #1, with Sylvester Jerry as the art man. Do you remember him at all, or is it just a name?

FK: It's pretty much just a name. I don't remember much about him.

HP: Then the music is Karl Wecker.

FK: Yes, I remember Karl Wecker.

HP: Then the theater is Verna Hall Dane.

FK: I remember it wasn't much of a project, I'll tell you that.

HP: Well, she's listed here as acting director.

FK: yes, she was, but that was pretty abortive, I mean, it didn't get anywhere. It really didn't.

HP: Then there's a John D. Newsom as the Writers --

FK: Yes, Writers, yes -- he was much more of a fellow. John D. Newsom and John K. Frederick -- they were both around when we were trying to patch up. We never got that Writers Project patched together again. After we lost Alsberg, you know, the heart was out of it. And anybody who came in and tried to put it together again --

HP: Couldn't fill the void.

FK: No, couldn't fill the void. Frederick did a lot better than Newsom, but neither one of them really wanted to do it, I don't think.

HP: Well, it's tough to follow in the --

FK: yes. Did you ever have your attention called to the director of the Writers Project in Ohio -- Hatcher?

HP: Hatcher? No.

FK: He's now president of a university. He did it because as a scholar he just saw possibilities in it and he just did it while he was at the university. And I tell you, he wasn't bothered. They left him alone with his workers, and he just ran his show the way he wanted to and turned out a book.

HP: He carried a mace.

FK: yes, he did. mind you, I wish I could have had Harlan Hatchers all over the country. That would have been wonderful. But we didn't. You know that Alsberg would stumble around and find people. He didn't really stumble around, but he was so relaxed and casual in his way of doing things. He didn't always hit'em but --

HP: No, but you feel the process he went through was misleading, the ease with which he operated.

FK: Yes. He would have a good project when the rest of the program was no good at all. That happened to Cahill, too.

HP: Oh, did it -- in the same way?

FK: Yes, he had bright spots. They had a good unit in San Francisco. They were pretty much left alone, but down in Los Angeles they were afraid of artists, and so on. Thought they were leftists. Do you know Los Angeles was very, very suspicious? No wonder they have John Birchers down there. That's always been in their tradition, you know. They didn't like the Okies. They didn't like -- well, at one time Los Angeles county had 11 per cent of the unemployment of the country. That's terrific. They were really inundated. I think they got scared.

HP: They welcomed Gerald L. K. Smith.

FK: Yes, and that ilk. Yes, they did. They accepted a program down there, but they didn't get the support that they did in San Francisco. Just an entirely different atmosphere.

HP: That's the conditioning thing often, isn't it. Well, in Minnesota there's this Linus C. Glotzbach as the state administrator.

FK: Yes. Before that there was this fellow who is now on the Social Security Board. What's his name? But Glotzbach was state administrator and then regional director and he came from New Home _____, and if I ever saw oppression in action, that was Linus. He was a little martinet and he had one of the ugliest sit-down strikes that happened anywhere in the program. In some ways he was a little like senator Roper, but much more appreciation of the program. One thing about Linus that I always liked was that he thought the way to be a part of the WPA was to be proud of being WPA, and so he insisted that every work project all over the State of Minnesota carry WPA signs. Well, that wasn't popular with a good many county supervisors -- you know, carry signs along the roads and on the school grounds and down town, and so on, so they'd take them down. Well, Linus would always hear about it and he'd issue, "The money stops until those signs go up!" He made them put the signs up. By the time he was state administrator I was in Washington, but we had been good friends in the region. I was one of his backers and he was one of my backers.

HP: He was a man with whom you could work.

FK: Oh, yes, you could, especially if you got to him first and got his mind made up. If somebody else got to him first and made it up the other way, it was just too bad. He was director of the New Rome district, and he decided he wouldn't have a recreation project. I don't know why. But when he got to the state office why they had the recreation project. Somebody got to him and told him it was a boondoggle and he wasn't going to have it in New Rome. But he was able and very devoted to the program and worked hard at it and his relationships with the people who came out from Washington were very interesting. First he thought he wasn't going to like Luther Evans, but when he observed him, why he just completely capitulated. "There was a guy that knew what he was doing. Luther Evans can come to Minnesota any time that he wants to." Some of the rest of them he didn't think so highly of. When he was the regional director he used to come in to consult with Harrington and later with Hunter. He was very vocal, did a lot of talking, and consequently was quite influential. He didn't always get all he wanted, but he did get a lot of it.

HP: He pressed.

FK: He did. He fought for what he wanted. And he had one of his good friends as the engineer and they really put over a program.

HP: Do you remember Mrs. Helen Bundy?

FK: Yes, very well, very well indeed. She worked under Linus there as Director of the Women's Project, and when Linus went to Northwest Airlines he took Helen Bundy with him as head of the women's employment division. Yes, she was good. Mildred Law was there for a little while. Alma Kerr. They had better state directors than most states. I think Mildred Law perhaps was the best of the three.

HP: But again Minnesota is not entirely, but largely rural. I wondered if it presented problems different from Chicago or Cleveland would.

FK: Oh, yes, quite different, quite different, because it had some -- of course Illinois has racial groups. There's that group around Duluth and the Iron Country and they were Finns, you know, they were quite different and unemployment was very severe out there, and the climate -- it was awfully hard to get a work project there. We had a very nice subdivision of the craft project in Duluth and _____ had the usual unskilled, but there again, we took the women as the breadwinners and expanded their project into winter time and contracted them in the summer.

HP: You adjusted.

FK: Yes, we did. I really think that Minnesota had a much better work program than either of the Dakotas.

HP: Well, they're even more sparsely settled.

FK: Yes. But they were so prostrate, both of them. Edith Darvel took me to a little county seat town in South Dakota once where the county courthouse was open, but there was nobody around -- just a deserted office building. You don't know how queer it is to go into the seat of government and nobody there. Nobody had been paid. They just walked out.

HP: A ghost town.

FK: A ghost town. Just like ____ a ghost government.

HP: That is eerie.

FK: Oh, it was, it really was. Of course you'd hear more about the agricultural program out there. "If we can get another seed loan, another seed loan, another seed loan -- "

HP: Not too promising, although the state administrator sounds like a whirling dervish. Rossbach?

FK: Oh, he was. He was a real -- he was a doer and a preacher of the word.

HP: Do you remember Clement Haupers, Director of the Art Project?

FK: In Minnesota? Yes.

HP: Did they have much of an art project in Minnesota?

FK: Yes, they did, they did. He got real support from the art patrons up there -- Defenbacher and people like that liked to come there and work with him. There again, it was more a museum project than it was a painting and sculpturing project. The creative artists seemed to be in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. There were a few down in New Orleans, but not as good as they were up North.

HP: well, they had the full complement in Minnesota -- they had a Dr. John J. Becker in music. Do you remember him?

FK: Oh, do !! I certainly do. He was a non-conformist. He felt that most of the rules and regulations promulgated from Washington were all foolishness. But he was a stemwinder. Was good. He fought the battle of Jericho all the time. John Becker -- gosh!

HP: A non-conformist off horse -- this sort of thing.

FK: Yes. "I know better than Washington does," but he kept it going. And Linus would have fits. But he kept it going. Of course, I always felt there was a leftover element of the farmer-labor Floyd Olson group of liberals in Minnesota. You could always find somebody who'd lift up his voice and define the work program. The sort of thing you couldn't find in Iowa.

HP: A sympathetic atmosphere.

FK: Much more -- an appreciation of the need, and so on.

HP: Well, did you run into Matthew S. Murray? In Missouri?

FK: Well, of course I did! I certainly did. He was the state administrator in Missouri and a friend of the Prendergast who later went to the Federal penitentiary, and he had assured the President through Harry that there was nothing in his political activities in the state which would in any way at any time reflect on the work program, and of course what he did was to handle funds without keeping records, and so on. But he was from Kansas City and Dykman was from St. Louis and it was just like -- well the two ends of the state were pretty hostile. Matt Murray was -- he didn't understand, but I liked him. I went down there once to Jefferson City and he put Charlotte Tidcoe -- who would make any man mad. I mean she just had a way of doing things that was irritating, and he got so irritated with her he fired her out of the state office and made her go to a couple of loft rooms across town where he wouldn't have to see her or hear her. I went in to his office and he had a couple of her state-wide projects. One was a toy-making project in which she proposed that the Federal government put a million dollars into a toy-making project for the state of Missouri and have units of it all over. She believed in state-wide projects. And Murray handed me this and said, "What do I do with damn fool stuff like this?" That was his reaction to it and it was sincere. He said, "What do I do with a woman like that?" I said, "What'll you do if I take her out of the state?" "Anything," he said, "practically anything." I called Mrs. Woodward and asked her if she could use Charlotte Tidcoe in a consultant capacity in Washington. No need for a consultant, but finally that was arranged, first on a six-months basis and later it became permanent. Then we had to choose a successor, and we took the director of the Red Cross activities in St. Louis -- Peter K. Hines. Murray got Inez Andrews, who was one of the camp followers of Prendergast, and put her in to watch Pete Hines. You see, Kansas City has to watch St. Louis, you appreciate that, don't you? All the time they have to watch them. So that was the situation. Later on, much, much later on, they became good friends. After the death of Mr. Hines the two of them lived together, but that was a sequel which we didn't see at the time. Matt Murray was difficult to work with, but not impossible, not impossible at all. He was the one who told me he absolutely would not have the Writers Project. That was out! I said, "You just can't do that!" He said, "Well, I'm going to." He had read some of the proof and the discussion of the political complexion of the state of Missouri. It dealt with the Prendergast machine and some of its operations, and it wasn't very flattering. It was true, but not flattering, and he wasn't going to let a

book like that come out about his sponsor. I said, "You have to have the Writers Project." Well, we just bore down on him, "There is no use fighting about it. You just have to have it. You can kick about it all you please, but you have to have it, you have to have a Missouri state guide." "Well, can I edit the stuff myself?" I said, "No, you can't. The editing is done in Washington. You can't edit it; you can't change it either, because when copy goes it is processed between the Washington office and the publisher." Oh, that was a bitter pill, that was a really bitter pill for Matthew Murray.

HP: How did you get him to accept Dr. Bell?

FK: I don't think he knew. He didn't know. A lot of projects that I think he worried about. What do you know about Dr. Bell?

HP: Well, he's just the director of the Federal project -- Writers Project.

FK: Oh, he didn't like him, but he was better than his _____ who was a woman. I don't know where they got her. That was an Alsberg appointment and she didn't know from nothing how to run a project. They'd send out forms, you know, for the payroll, and she'd just chuck them in her desk, wouldn't even do a thing about'em, and so there would be no payment for the workers, and all her fault. She was pretty, pretty bad really, and Bell was an improvement. If you read that chapter in the Missouri guide, why it's just the way Alsberg wanted it, not the way Murray wanted it. Can't blame some of these state administrators for wondering whatever happened to the President and Hopkins that they should have inflicted such a program on them!

HP: Did Alsberg journey to Missouri and deal with the state administrators?

FK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. He thought that woman was awful after he saw her in operation, but he would kind of say to me, "Can't you get her out?" He was tenderhearted. He didn't like to fire people. He really didn't.

HP: How did he and Murray get on?

FK: Well, they didn't get on, not at all. In the last years I don't think he went out there very much. He did it by telephone and letter. He didn't show up there very often.

HP: Well, this antipathy that Murray had to literate people?

FK: Well, he was a university graduate. He was an engineer. He was very proud of the job. He was -- not the architect, but the construction manager for the big municipal auditorium in Kansas City, which for many years was the great pride of that whole part of the country, so in his way he was professional and he was educated, but this cultural stuff -- and he wasn't much on the social amelioration business. He was very, very kind to me. One day I was in a taxi and I thought we were going to be run over and his car forced the taxi over to the curb and he got out and came over and what he had was a big Missouri country ham that I was to take back home with me. He scared the daylights out of me in his method of presentation. When he was sent to the Federal penitentiary --gee, that was grim -- he wrote to me and asked me if I would speak for him. Well, I did it, but I knew it was hopeless. They had already decided -- the White House -- that he had and it wasn't just the Hatch Act, misappropriated Federal funds, or allowed them to be misappropriated, and he was responsible for them. I was down at the Kansas City airport once and I saw Matt Murray across the rather small waiting room in the airport that they had in those days, and I just met with no recognition at all. It happened the second time, and I just made up my mind that he did know who I was because we had a lot of contacts and so I just marched up to him and I said, "I'm Florence Kerr and don't tell me you don't remember me!" He said, "Of course I remember, but I thought maybe you wouldn't want to speak to me.

HP: Sad!

FK: Yes, it was sad. So we had a heart to heart and I told him I thought they were awfully rough on him, that I couldn't see why they got so terribly righteous all of a sudden! He didn't say very much, but evidently it was pleasant to hear somebody from the old days talk as though he wasn't an arch criminal. That was matt Murray.

HP: He sounds like a man who understood his guerilla warfare.

FK: Yes, he did. He was a smart fellow, and how a fellow like Matt Murray could have been so stupid, so stupid about taking care of funds I don't really know. That shouldn't have happened to him. It really shouldn't have happened to him, but it did and they proved it up to the hilt. I don't remember that he ever said anything about Truman. I don't believe he ever did. They probably knew each other.

HP: The person in charge of the Federal art project in Missouri is James D. MacKenzie.

FK: Don't remember a thing about him. Not a thing about him, and it seems to me the project was mostly in the two cities and it was an exhibit program.

HP: They had no theater project -- no unemployed actors?

FK: No, no. That would have been a laugh. If Matt Murray had had to deal with Hallie Flanagan he would have lost his mind. He wouldn't have understood her at all. he really wouldn't. Her idea of using this heaven sent opportunity to get federal subsidy for a new art form in the theater -- oh, do you think he would have appreciated it -- a living newspaper? Mercy no! I remember when we had national meetings of the state administrators, they got together and commiserated with each other on, "Well, do you have that g-- d-- theater? Do you have that so and so?" They all had writers, but that was the only one. You just have no idea of the local resistance -- local support, too, like Greenwall in Utah, and what was the man's name in Oregon? He really supported the federal program and he got that Timberline Lodge built on the WPA in Oregon.

HP: well, in Montana, did you have Montana?

FK: Not until I got to --

HP: Joseph Parker?

FK: Well, he was art.

HP: He's listed here as the state administrator.

FK: I don't remember him. I didn't have anything to do with Montana until I came to Washington. I do remember him -- yes, but nothing much about him.

HP: Nothing to do with the Women and Professional Project, like Mrs. Annabelle Edinger?

FK: Oh, yes, I worked with her, but there was nothing distinctive about it _____ I remember -- nothing.

HP: Well, Montana was a strange state, too.

FK: Yes, and it was a long way from Washington and liked it that way.

HP: That tells the whole story, doesn't it?

FK: It does -- that's the way it was.

HP: Montana did have an art project, didn't it? Frank Stevens, on the Writers Project?

FK: I don't know him -- don't know a thing about him.

HP: Well, how about Mr. Felton in Nebraska?

FK: Oh, it was just like hiring a man in the last stages of nervous dyspepsia and expecting him to run this program. He was nervous, he was sick, he was scared, he was unhappy, he was one of the few practicing Democrats in the state of Nebraska, he was scared of his shadow. Oh, he was miserable! I used to feel when I went into his office that he just wasn't going to live the week out. He was a sick man trying to run that program, and worry? He worried intensely about everything -- not so much about my part of it because that was the small end of it as far as employment and money was concerned, but he just worried. The only press support we had was the Lincoln Star. The man there was very able and he was good for an editorial about every so often. That fellow at the Star -- what was his name? I can just see him. I was in his office many times and he had a special interest in the Writers Project. There was a woman there -- what was her name?

HP: The woman listed is Mrs. Ethel M. Sandman. Oh, she was the Director of the Women and Professional Project, and this Star editor didn't work very congenially with Ethel Sandman, but he did with the head of the Writers Project; she was an older woman. __: The one listed here may have been later -- J. Harris Gable -- this is as of '39.

FK: Oh, no, it was earlier.

HP: And he did support, then, the Writers Project?

FK: yes, the man at the Star did and because Felton owed so much to them they didn't have much trouble. They didn't have a very good personnel in the project. I visited it once or twice and I didn't think they could possibly get a volume on it. Really, when I look at the guides they really are kind of wonderful. They should have gone out and come up out of some of the weed patches that they did come up out of. Nebraska was one of them.

HP: Well, it's a terrifying thought.

FK: Yes, it was.

HP: Well, we've been at this now about, oh, an hour and a half or so and I think we'd better terminate today.

FK: All right.

HP: Can I see you in a week?

FK: Sure.

HP: Thursday morning?

FK: Let me look at my book. What I would like to know is -- I'm so voluble --

HP: Oh, it's wonderful! END OF INTERVIEW #3 TAPE #4

HP: I understand that Mrs. Woodward obtained a position on the Social Security Board.

FK: Yes.

HP: Opening a job, or a task as the Assistant Administrator of the Women Professional -- ?

FK: Commissioner.

HP: Commissioner -- plus the arts projects.

FK: Yes, she had charge of those, but she had them the year before. It was a triple play. Molly Ducen, a great friend of both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, was retiring from the Social Security Board.

HP: Yes.

FK: She was on the original Social Security Board and it was suggested that Mrs. Woodward succeed Molly Ducen on the SSB and that was arranged with the President and done. That came at the time that Hopkins left the WPA and went on the Cabinet as Secretary of Commerce -- a completely abortive appointment if there ever was one. So that -- let's see -- there was that new set coming into the WPA and that was when I came in.

HP: Well, you had been out in the hustings as sort of a roving ambassador and trouble shooter.

FK: Well, I was the regional director of the Midwest Region with headquarters in Chicago. We started out at 1319 S. Michigan in an old rattle-trap of a building, and then we went to the 22nd floor of the Merchandise Mart, which was finished off for us. I remember that my office was in the tower section of the Merchandise mart and I could look up and down the Chicago River. I remember they had to fix the elevator service and put in floors and partitions because it had just been completely open space before. It was leased to the government, so that is the way, you see, I came from the Region -- one of the Regional Directors appointed to be Assistant Commissioner.

HP: When the offer came to you, from whom did it come?

FK: Our daughter died about that time. She was a mentally retarded child and I was home during her last illness to the death. She had been in an institution for a number of years. That's the reason I was home. Harry called several times and then he called one afternoon and said, "Don't leave the house for the next six or eight hours." I said, "Why?" He said, "Just don't leave, that's all." I said, "O.K." Then that evening Harrington called me and asked me if I would come in and take over Mrs. Woodward's duties as Assistant Commissioner of the Women Professional Projects and the Federal Projects. I said, "Well, you don't know me very well, Colonel." "Well, Harry said we could work together and I'm sure we can." That was about it. Then in about a half and hour Dave Niles called me because he knew everything. He was the best little mouser in the world, and he called and he said, "You know, it is a great pleasure and satisfaction that you are coming." Then the press section called me. A man by the name of Felt came from the St. Louis Post-Despatch and he wanted a statement from me concerning what I proposed to do. I'd known about the position thirty minutes and -- you know, he wanted to know what my policies were and plans and programs. I remember that I came back to the regional office and they were friendly as could be and expressed pleasure and satisfaction that I was going to Washington and there would be somebody there they could talk to. Somebody that understands the field problems. I said, "You know, that' ___ last about only the first week and after that you'll accuse me of Washingtonitis." That's all there is to that. So I came down here in a rather unpretentious sort of a way, I would think.

HP: Were you at all apprehensive?

FK: Oh, sort of -- just fearful and trembling, literally, because I knew a little bit about the problem, I didn't know much about Harrington. Oh, I knew him as a director of engineers, but what he would be like as a boss and what his over-all philosophy was, I did not know. So I was filled with apprehension.

HP: What sort of legacy had Mrs. Woodward left you? She had had a pretty rough time.

FK: Yes, I think this -- I don't know whether I should even say it, but I believe that it had been very clearly indicated to her that if she was appointed Commissioner, he wouldn't keep her. And that isn't because she wasn't able and hadn't done her job, because she had. But the cut of her ___ and the cut of his ___ just would not have worked.

HP: Yes.

FK: Not a bit. And I don't know that Harrington was terribly enthusiastic about leaving it, but he owed his job to the White House and to Harry, and if they said I was the one to pick, well, it was taken. Well, it was going to be a headache to whoever he had. I don't know now that that is what he thought.

HP: Yes.

FK: After the year I don't think he changed his mind much, but we got along fairly well.

HP: What sort of organization did you fall heir to?

FK: Mrs. Woodward was an idea person. She was a wonderful public relations person, but her organization was just about as scrambled -- well, people didn't know what they were supposed to do. We were getting in each other's way, and being loyal to her and loyal to the part of the program, there was lots of cross-currents. It was kind of a messy shop.

HP: Well, in addition to the sort of administrative clearance of the Women and Professional operations, as well as the Federal projects, I think you indicated that you also had responsibility for congressional relations.

FK: I was supposed to take care of all the congressional relations for my part of the program -- that is, Harrington wasn't going to be responsible for testifying about any fool things we needed done, you see?

HP: Yes.

FK: Or, also, I could handle it the best way I saw fit. He really delegated testimony before congressional committees to me. Does that answer your question? Is that what you meant?

HP: Yes. I wonder what the general atmosphere was vis-a-vis the Congress and its committees? This is a hard question.

FK: Well, you see, by that time the Byrnes Committee was in operation which was investigating WPA. He was investigating WPA. He was the John C. McClellan of that day. He was investigating the WPA and had been since before my day. It was sort of a dilatory thing and lots of people wandered in and out of our office representing the Byrnes Committee. The one I remember best is Allen Johnson, who was also from South Carolina, and I think a good deal of the cost of the investigation was met by the WPA -- Johnson was reporting about the WPA to Jimmy _____ and Jimmy Byrnes was doing it for the Senate, you see. That was one line. Then I told you that we had this continuous relationship with the Appropriation and the sub-committee, because they never gave us a year's money. They said, "Here's the sum and if that isn't sufficient, you can come up for a deficiency appropriation," ___ Having told us that -- well, of course, I just burned with the unfairness of it -- they would say, "You had so much money to spend. How come you ran out?"

HP: I know, that's life.

FK: That's just the way they would do it on that committee. So that was the -- we had an investigating unit in the WPA itself. Roger Bounds was the head of it and I had very little to do with that. There were just very few cases where we had peculation or loss of property, or making away with payrolls. He was busy, but usually on trivial stuff. There were two administrators up in New England that got into trouble, but I didn't have much to do with that.

HP: Yes.

FK: Now the Congressional liaison was financial. There was the other business of mail. You were always helping out a Senator or a Congressman by answering a letter for him and giving him the materials he needed for it. I considered it a very interesting part of the job. It really was interesting because I found out a lot about my program from the kind of query that was coming into the Representative. And very often a Congressional letter

would prompt a memorandum from the Washington office. You see, "Look into this. How come so and so and so -- ?" ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH MRS. FLORENCE KERR, NOVEMBER 6

HP: Like a double check.

FK: Yes, a double check and a very valuable one. Sometimes there was nothing to it and sometimes there was. So I had the relationship. That's the only relationship I ever had with Truman because he would send letters over for answer to be drafted. Champ Clark was the other Senator from Missouri and he was hard to deal with because he wanted things the day before yesterday. He wanted things, and he was always making demands on us for jobs and money and projects. I had the feeling that he wasn't a very thoughtful man and that he didn't -- you know, "Just press for all you can get and if you get only five per cent, well, fine, that's five per cent more than you expected to get." Truman was not as interested in the program; didn't know as much about it, but he never made any -- except for routing service.

HP: Yes. Well, in replying to these, is it all by mail? Or did you meet some of these? You already met Champ Clark.

FK: Yes, I met Champ Clark, yes, and his wife was, or had friends in Marlborough and I met them there. I talked a great deal over the telephone. I was on the telephone with Senators and Congressman a great deal and I learned the hard way that I couldn't be in conference or couldn't return the call unless it was absolutely life or death or I was at the White House, or something. I had to take the call. Whatever that voice at the other end of the wire sprung on me I had to take it. That really -- really --

HP: Terrible!

FK: -- is being on the first line trenches. That fellow is all primed for you, but you're not primed for him. So I did a great deal of talking and explaining and promising and reneging, and so forth. That was all. And I did see a good many because, by that time, you would meet them at these horrible big cocktail parties and things. I think that by the time I left I knew every Democratic Senator and most of the Democratic Congressmen, not all of them, but most of them. And a fair sprinkling of Republicans, but I was quite partisan. I lost no opportunity to say that there wouldn't have been this program if it hadn't of been for the victory at the polls of a certain party, which I still believe. I don't think the Republicans could ever have put on the New Deal. I don't think they would have known how, and they wouldn't have wanted to in the first place.

HP: Philosophically, they wouldn't have been able to fit it in.

FK: Now, as I was in the office longer I realized how important these Congressional relations were. When I went out into the field, particularly on the West Coast, I kept a little card memo of which district I was in, to know whose district, particularly the Representatives, and when I got back then I had lists of people that I called up and made appointments with, and I trudged many a weary mile over to the House Office Buildings to go and see the Congressmen and say, particularly if I hadn't had anything to do with him before, "I was in your district and met so and so" (Superintendent of the School Board, or the Supervisors, or the people of the court, or all people that every Representative knows) and I would try to have something to say that was pleasant about things that I had heard about him in his district. I didn't have to make them up either, because you can always drag them up if you twist the conversation enough. Other times you didn't have to twist, and then I talked to him about the program in his district and if I had some misgivings about it, why I asked for his help, and that was very valuable. Oh, Boy! I mean, if you had time to do that sort of thing, liaison. What I lacked was time. I didn't have time to do it. I didn't have time to go up and see three or four Congressmen. In the meantime, you are not in your office and you're not covering your phone and you're not available in case anyone wants to see you and you haven't had a staff meeting for -- you know, you had to choose.

HP: You had to have nineteen lives.

FK: Nineteen lives. Well, of course, I had bounding health and energy and terrific interest in what I was doing. I like to do that.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I began to see how valuable even the most casual conversation might turn out to be. Sometimes that took me into, I remember, a Republican district, and I would either drop by or call. But I put more effort where I thought the goods were.

HP: Well, did you overhaul the staff in any way?

FK: Yes, I did, but not in any sudden way. I felt -- in the first place my first thought was that I had to get to know

them, and that coming in from the field you can see, wasn't as if I had been doing it for three and one-half years. I had an impression about all of them, but I really didn't know them. I made one bad mistake on a secretary. I brought my secretary from Chicago with me and she did well enough out there, but she was no good in here, so I had to get rid of her. I took Mrs. Woodward's very food administrative assistant, Agnes Crownin, and put her up in the New York Region where they needed strength. Yes, I made moves like that on the checker board, but I didn't have an administrative chart and fire them and get a whole new set of people. You see, the program by that time was -- let's see -- I went in the beginning of '39. It had been on since the beginning of '35, so a good deal of it was a going concern.

HP: Yes.

FK: And of course I walked right into the last, unhappy chapters of the Federal Theater stuff, and then, of course, I told you about the Writers Project.

HP: Yes. There is a Pepper-Coffee Bill somewhat earlier than this by way of legislation.

FK: That was Pepper of Florida. I had mixed feelings about Claude Pepper. What was that Bill?

HP: Well, now, I don't really know. I just know that there was a Pepper-Coffee Bill.

FK: Yes.

HP: Well, out in the field where the legislation was made, were there any attempts to refine it in the light of what happened and what transpired? It's one thing to write a Bill and another thing to make it walk.

FK: You mean the WPA Bill?

HP: Yes.

FK: Oh, yes, I think that was a continuous process.

HP: It was?

FK: Oh, yes. This was an evolving program. There is no question about it. I think the engineers showed a lot more courage in turning down funny little made-work things and getting at more worthwhile work and certainly our perennial problem was the unskilled woman and the unskilled woman, as you know, had always been herded into the sewing rooms and then fed out to various other programs, chief among which was the school lunch. We recruited from the sewing rooms to the school lunch.

HP: Yes.

FK: And to the housekeeping aid and other programs of that kind. We found that women could go into the library projects because it was a matter of cleaning up. Well, it was a book-binding operation. We did get into some trouble with the professional book-binders, and I inherited from Mrs. Woodward a real attack by the Simmons people because we were making mattresses on the sewing projects. I think that the Simmons people were dead wrong because if we had accustomed that level of people to mattresses, those who never had enough mattresses for their whole family to sleep on, we would have created a future market for them. We were not in competition with them. At the moment they couldn't buy mattresses, a relief family. A mattress is just a luxury that is unattainable, but once you become used to sleeping on a mattress instead of on a pallet on the floor, somehow or other the children get mattresses. That's what we tried to say, but they said it was an attack on private industry. I know Aubrey Williams talked to Mrs. Woodward. He was Deputy then. He didn't have the final say, but almost the final say. He said, "Now you are just getting us into all kinds of trouble and you just better stop making mattresses on the sewing project." That's where Mrs. Woodward combined -- well, she had resilience, I guess it was. She would say, "Well, I'll think it over." She didn't say she wouldn't do it, but she meant she wouldn't do it. But we cut it down and cut it back. We shouldn't have. That was an excellent activity for the sewing project.

HP: A lost opportunity.

FK: A lost opportunity. The Simmons people were blind. They could not see the social patterns that were involved in getting more and more American families used to mattresses.

HP: They blighted their own future.

FK: Yes, they did. Then we had not quite such a hassle, but we did have a hassle, with the book-binders. Part of their regular business, of course, from the big libraries, is to have books sent back to be rebound or refurbished in some way and if we did those on these projects, why, they lost business. We were operating mostly on the

level where the library budget was so low that they never could have thought of sending their books away to a bindery. That probably wasn't true in Indianapolis. That's one of the places where they got after us. Maybe Indianapolis would have used the services of the book-bindery. So there we were. Here was a government work program interfering with private business and that, of course, had a following on the Hill.

HP: I wondered if the --

FK: They did -- oh, yes, there were speeches made. You will find the record of these attacking us because we were doing things, taking bread out of private business and all.

HP: I wondered how, you know, in the Congressional relationship, whether this is another problem, namely, the pressure that is exerted by private groups against what you conceivably might be doing in a given spot.

FK: Yes, and those are two samples that I can think of: mattresses and bookbinding. Strangely enough, I don't remember that any of the dress manufacturers or clothing manufactures ever got after us, and that was our major activity -- making clothes for distribution to people on the relief rolls. Now I've mentioned the direct relationships with the appropriations committee and the correspondence and the field visits and, of course, the more people you could know the better. You see, Congressional relations was a very time-consuming though absorbing phase of a job. Yet it couldn't be -- well, you had to keep it in balance, too. You had to try to.

HP: If one has a sense of public relations, there is a public relations job to be done with Congress. No question about that!

FK: Absolutely there is, and it is so interesting how the bread comes back buttered so often. It does just because the fellow has talked to you first and you told him about the nursery schools and about what a fine teacher so-and-so was, she was a great friend of so-and-so. He is armed with a knowledge of the program, and then when the Catholic priest comes and says, "Are you going to support a program that takes children away from their mothers and mothers are no longer doing their duty -- ?"

HP: He is loaded.

FK: He is loaded, but it is just --

HP: Steady, steady, steady drain.

FK: It takes time, time, time, time. Time is what you lack.

HP: Yes.

FK: But time spent in public relations. Mrs. Woodward was very good at it, so I never had it against her that she wasn't a very good organization person and all that business, because she saw the continuing importance of putting her program in a good light with the public, if necessary, and certainly with Congress. A lot of us were afraid of a Senator and afraid of a Congressman. We'd just rather slip down the alley and not meet him if we could, but she had none of that feeling. She had been a national committee woman. Her father was a Senator, and so forth, and that was her natural sphere and theater operation. She taught her regional directors that when we went into a state we would call on the Governor. Oh, how I hated to do things like that. I had never done it before, you see. I had been on a college faculty. I didn't go around and see any of the political big-wigs, but I was under orders, so I went to see them.

HP: It pays dividends, doesn't it?

FK: O, yes! I'll tell you it does! And the things that you get asked! When I was with the Federal Works Agency out on the West Coast and pursuing my old WPA tactics I asked for an appointment with the Governor of California, who was Earl Warren. I went, and we started to talk and he said, "There's a committee meeting in such and such a place." I'm going to ask them to come in and we'll all talk together." There were about a dozen men and the Governor. Then he talked. He asked me questions and had me repeat some things and had me talk about the use of Lanham Act funds, and so forth, and where the state figured in. Governor Warren -- "according to the legislation it has to go directly from the Federal government to these war-impacted areas. It can't go through the state Board of Education. I don't care how much they want it. It has to go directly to Van Nise and such places." I said, "Since it affects what is going on in your state there is no reason why you should not have complete knowledge of what is going on at all times, and I hope you'll help." He said that he would, and he did and I -- really, the California Board of Education was a hard nut to crack. I didn't crack it particularly, but he helped me. So that they stepped aside and didn't raise a big squawk when the funds came in because they were by-passed.

HP: Yes.

FK: I remember one question he asked me that day was, "Have you been in Minnesota?" "Yes, I met Stassen." What are your impressions of Stassen?" I said, "Well, he is about the best presiding officer I ever saw." Stassen was excellent.

HP: Really?

FK: Oh, sure. Getting a meeting together, steering it, keeping it on the track. He really was good.

HP: Yes.

FK: He didn't allow his Republicanism to stand in the way of using whatever came his way -- a very shrewd man.

HP: Warren wanted to know.

FK: Warren wanted to know how Stassen handled this. That's what public relations is, isn't it?

HP: Sure it is. Meeting with someone and conveying --

FK: He may have believed all of what I said and maybe he didn't, but at least it was first hand testimony which went into the composite, which was his final opinion.

HP: Here is a set of eyes and a set of ears.

FK: Yes, and "there are other eyes and other ears that may bring in contrary testimony, but I'll get all I can."

HP: Sure, like litmus paper, "I'll absorb it."

FK: Yes, yes, and he was very, very able, I thought, and very gracious and very easy, much easier in his manner than Stassen was. So that's Congress. Now, do you think that covered it?

HP: Well, Congress also had, apart from the Appropriations Committee, there were these continuing investigations -- Thomas, Dies and so on. I wondered about the extent to which your own organization was put in a position of preparing testimony for Dies to the exclusion, perhaps, of doing the administrative job.

FK: Oh, I -- it happened, but I think Mrs. Woodward took the brunt of that. After they got the Federal Theater killed, why, they sort of backed off from the arts projects a while. They didn't bother very much. They kept up kind of a rat-tat-tat, but it was a repetition of the charges they made about the Workers Alliance organizations in the New York art projects, and so forth. But the Byrnes Committee was a nuisance.

HP: It was a nuisance?

FK: Oh, yes. It took a lot of administrative time, but there again I think I was in a somewhat protected position because they were not going to get the big stuff out of my projects. They didn't figure. I had the small end of the employment, and so it was administrators they went after.

HP: Was this a self-protective device from the point of view of the White House, namely, to have a Byrnes Committee?

FK: No, I think that was generated on the Hill. No, I don't think it was the White House. I think basically it was hostile.

HP: It was?

FK: I certainly do think so, and I don't think there was anything that they wanted or promoted.

HP: Because even so far as the Dies Committee was concerned the President had made some adequate, but disparaging remarks about it, as had others -- Hopkins, Ickes, Perkins, and so on, had all made some comment about the "un-American methods," at least.

FK: By the un-American Activities Committees -- yes, I know they were all on record, but I don't think Byrnes's Committee ever attracted nearly as much attention.

HP: No.

FK: Then it just burrowed around for years.

HP: It was a sort of choking operation.

FK: Yes, well, not knowing the right questions to ask, and getting the run-around, which they certainly did. One of the tricks that they -- I hadn't thought about this for quite awhile -- but the Byrnes Committee would hire one of our WPA people, maybe one of the investigating division, or something, and give him a good big increase in salary. Then they would use him for awhile to expose this. That happened; that happened. One reason, I suppose, they did this is that they just didn't have the people who could ask the right questions, or get at or find out where the treasure was buried.

HP: To get in the records is a thankless task to begin with.

FK: And to know and to be able to read them when you get them, to see what they mean!

HP: Yes, sure.

FK: I tell you, it takes a very specialized investigator to do that and that's where they got them. They got them from us, and they would be disgruntled. All of them, maybe, not necessarily disgruntled, just hire them for awhile.

HP: Yes.

FK: I don't know if I can give a few instances of it.

HP: What shape were the records in?

FK: That varied from state to state.

HP: And the records remained in the state?

FK: Yes, the payrolls and the employment records. The two important records were the employment rolls -- that was very important. That's what Somervell took over when he brought Mitchel down here, because we knew who and where the unemployed were -- and of course the payroll. Then, of course, if you wanted to burrow around into sponsors' contributions or whether or not we were putting more than our allowable 10 percent non-relief on the project, or more federal sponsors' contributions that the law required, then we could be attacked on that.

HP: Yes.

FK: But, like that man Berry down in Tennessee, who was such an ogre in my book. He just took all of the Women and Professional non-relief personnel funds and put them on the airport project. Just stripped us. Oh, we had a miserable time!

HP: How did Congress feel about that?

FK: They didn't care; they didn't. McKeller was the person I saw the most of.

HP: Boy, he was difficult to deal with.

FK: Very difficult. Didn't understand and would forget, and so forth. He liked Berry and Berry had been Governor of Tennessee and he was building these fine projects. You couldn't get anywhere with McKeller, not anywhere. We were defeated.

HP: Period!

FK: That's right.

HP: Even thought appropriations by Congress for a specific purpose were moved over into another purpose?

FK: I think the congressional act was pretty broad, but the administrative rules and regulations, which were nation-wide and were supposed to have applied to all states and all programs, were pretty specific. No more than 10 per cent non-relief on any one project, you see. Well, limiting the sponsor's contribution like this, limiting the federal contribution -- You see, there was no limit to the local sponsor's contribution. The more you could get, the better. Those were the things where the shenanigans were pulled.

HP: Well, in this instance there was no black eye for the WPA because if it was done, it was done with the knowledge of Congress.

FK: Well, I don't know if the Congress even knew about it, but it was done with the full knowledge of the Tennessee delegation, and they were all for it. Just never could reach them -- not a dent.

HP: How frustrating this can be!

FK: Oh, it is just maddening! It was so bad that you just hated to go into Tennessee. What could you do? The only remedy would have been to fire Berry.

HP: Right.

FK: And there was no chance of firing Berry.

HP: He was only obnoxious to you?

FK: Well, he was very obnoxious to me, but he stole from some other projects, too. "Transferred" was the word. He "transferred" the funds. Tennessee didn't cost any more than it should in relation to the number of unemployed, and so on and so forth. He was within the congressional limits, but not the administrative limits. He just was nowhere near the administrative limits. He really was hip on this one project.

HP: Double entry bookkeeping.

FK: Yes, and there was a lot of that -- just a lot of that. Now was that a criminal action or was it an administrative decision? What was it?

HP: Well, somehow or other, you give a man discretion to operate within the vague contours of a piece of legislation, he has the discretion.

FK: Well, he does, especially if he is situated as Berry was -- very secure politically.

HP: Couldn't touch him.

FK: Never did.

HP: Couldn't budge him.

FK: Nope. Now, like that man Felton up in Nebraska, you could have scared him. You couldn't scare Berry. Well, isn't that ---

HP: It's true.

FK: It's the human factor in this program. When I'd get, you know, just to the wall-climbing stage, I'd realize that the program always came back to the limits and the capacities of the state administrator and his chief lieutenants.

HP: Yes, and beyond that you couldn't go?

FK: Well, you could just hope that there would be break-throughs, and there were. There were.

HP: But that was the "given" within which you had to operate, which is not specified in the piece of legislation.

FK: Well, not as far as Congress was concerned. It was specified in all the policy statements put out by the organization when it was set up.

HP: Yes.

FK: But they were subject to a very wide interpretation and that explains the difference in the qualities of the state programs. There was such a difference!

HP: Well, one of the big troublesome areas, I mean apart from the differences that are discernible even in retrospect about the quality of the program, one of the real trouble areas, that created trouble was New York City, which was a problem all by itself.

FK: It certainly is.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I used to think it was the tail wagging the dog all the time.

HP: Really?

FK: Well, there was so much attention paid to it, and they were so vocal and so articulate -- both ways. Now in these Western states they had nothing to compare with the Workers Alliance or any way of, you know, the almost diabolical skill with which the unemployed skill with which the unemployed, under various leaders, would

let the merchants know that if the quota was cut the rent wouldn't be paid and the milk wouldn't be bought and the groceries wouldn't be asked for. They identified neighborhood business with the prosperity of the work program.

HP: Yes.

HP: They never got that across the way they did in New York City.

HP: I guess in that sense there was pressure in terms of the numbers committed to the program.

FK: Yes, they fought -- oh, New York City fought for quota. Oh, always, insatiable!

HP: Really?

FK: They would take quota from anybody, a starving family out in North Dakota, what is the difference if we can get ten more in New York City we'll take them and cut them off from Moody. So one of the chief duties of the regional directors was to come in and protect their regional employment quotas. It was broken down, you see, in the Washington office.

HP: And New York was eager for more?

FK: Eager? Well, sure! Why wouldn't they be? As many people as they could move off the relief rolls. That was one fight, you see, not for the quality of the program or the good that the program could do the city, but, you see, that meant more federal money coming into New York City every payroll period, which was every two weeks. They appreciated the importance to the economic life of New York City of the WPA quota, so they fought for quota and got it too. They got the lion's share of the quote on the federal projects too.

HP: What of the administration up there? Was it's loyalty to the loyal area as distinct from the WPA generally? That's a bad -- I don't mean that. What I mean is, did they -- as your Congressman would? He would work for the state of New Jersey, or he would work for Missouri, and so on, and perhaps lose sight of the overall effect of the program? Did you have administrators in New York who were blind to the total program, but wide open to equating the program with New York City's needs?

FK: I think -- I think -- yes, I think the later statement is pretty close to the truth. See, you have to do this in terms of personality, of course. Victor Ridder, who -- wasn't he a polio --?

HP: Yes, I believe he was.

FK: At any rate, I think he had difficulty walking and was in many ways a very fine person. He had a social worker point of view; was an admirer and an understander of Harry Hopkins, and he did the FERA program you see.

HP: Yes.

FK: And he set up a lot of the original work projects and his concern was with the unemployed. Then Hugh Johnson came in as administrator with that overweening sense of publicity and, of course, it came after the debacle of NRA. So the WPA got him on the rebound, you might say, and he was going to pieces personally. I mean, he was so disappointed and so thwarted, so unhappy. Of course, he drank very heavily, and we all knew that. So he didn't do much as administrator. Of course, he could come out with some rattling good speeches, and so forth.

HP: Sure could.

FK: Oh, he was a voice, but too bad about him! That was a tragic story, Hugh Johnson's crack-up, and slip down hill. Things went from bad to worse under Hugh Johnson. The projects ran themselves, and the supervisors did as they pleased. There wasn't much -- no strong leadership or direction. I'm talking now about New York City.

HP: Yes.

FK: And yet, they had lots and lots of people working.

HP: I know they did.

FK: Lots of them, and then, of course, when they got -- that came in about the time -- I told you about the parents of the army engineer. The first time I ever heard of Brehon Somervell he was one of the roving army engineers, you know, the kind that go around and see if they can find any work, or get some bad work turned into good work. He was down in Florida working on some of the engineering. They had some hydro projects

down there, clearing rivers and stuff like that, and he did know a lot about that. Then, when things were getting into a pretty sorry mess up in New York City under Hugh Johnson they picked Somervell to go up there and be administrator -- put the fear of God into everybody, which he did, which he did! You remember about -- were you ever up there? Were you ever up at his office, Somervell's?

HP: No.

FK: Well, he had a certain -- the elevators were marked with colors, and one was for the project personnel, and there was one with minor administrators, and one was for the top executives and you rode in the proper elevator. He was really -- he was really --

HP: Martinette?

FK: A Martinette of the first water! Handsome -- I thought he was very good looking, and that's always told about him. Remember when he left the program to go back into uniform? One of his personal manners was that he should wear the uniform in which he graduated from West Point. So he went on a vinegar and water diet, which was the same kind of a diet that Lord Byron once used, and by George, he made it. He was as slender as he was as a twenty-year-old.

HP: It must have been something.

FK: And he had -- he got interested in the program.

HP: Did he?

FK: Oh, yes, I think he did, particularly he was very much impressed by Mitchell's work, you see. Mitchel was his employment director. Somervell was a bright man and he saw that those employment records were unique, unique in keeping track of that huge number of people, and he said, "There is nothing in the army that can compare with it and if we ever have a draft, that is the kind of records we should use." That's why he brought Mitchel down here when he came down here to -- what was it? He built the Pentagon?

HP: Yes, chief of construction or --

FK: Yes, as I told you before, my own belief was that he never would have been given that job had Harrington lived because Harrington out-ranked him all down the line, but Harrington died, so Somervell came in.

HP: In the New York area you mentioned sending up a woman to be some administrator up there.

FK: A regional director.

HP: A regional director?

FK: Yes, and she had New York and New England and an extremely hard job.

HP: Yes, it must have been.

FK: A very hard job. She knew so well what should be done. Nobody knew better. And she knew the rules and the regulations, the proper thing, and the difference between what we planned and what she saw.

HP: Enormous?

FK: Yes, it was. And Ann Cronin, I think, really suffered over there -- the missed opportunities and the inadequate personnel.

HP: Well, her own powerless position, in that sense, to work through less than adequate people.

FK: Yes, yes, yes, yes. You know, when I was regional director I felt the same way, except that we were newer and we could make a few changes. She certainly was fearless in this sense that she was very much of a New England lady. She was a graduate of Simmons, and she had a careful way of speaking. She didn't waste words. She would go into the State Administrator and really tell him what he had and didn't have and be such a lady, but not mincing any words at all.

HP: That's a rare quality.

FK: Oh, it was wonderful. I just took my hat off to her more than once. She was fearless. They didn't have a rotten program because of lack of being told what they could and should do, because they were told. She later set up a business of her own, which was a personnel employment office in which she fitted special people to

special jobs -- very, very high, high, high. She worked with Max -- I want to say Lerner.

HP: Eastman? -- no.

FK: No, no. Anyway, he was one of the people that she met up there, and he staked her to this business of her own which she did when the program was over, but I don't know how Ann Cronin stood it, really.

HP: Well, her problems were certainly --

FK: They were manifold, just manifold.

HP: Well, she had New York plus New England.

FK: Yes, she would go up to Albany and just wring her hands -- horrible!

HP: A Democratic stronghold, but terrible to deal with.

FK: Yes.

HP: Yes, the O'Connell --

FK: And of course our top personnel -- they were just right straight out of the country court house, and then up in New England she would find spotty programs, good here, and surprisingly good somewhere else, because the right supervisor had been found. There was Twombly, who was the director of the Women and Professional projects in the state of Maine. That was a small program. Maine didn't have a very big program on our percentage of the employment. I suppose it didn't run for more than a thousand or fifteen hundred people for the whole state, but Miss Twombly knew where everybody was and what they were doing. She played down the sewing project and played up the service project. The administrator was about forty-five or so, and he was as old as most of them, and he really gave Miss Twombly a fairly free hand, and she did a job! She really did a job, because she was let alone. Nobody paid much attention to her. It was an honest program and it got a lot of school children fed. They put a lot of women -- all of them had to be indoor work and we had an upsurge in the winter, which was explained to her. Breadwinner changed hands come November and December, you see.

HP: Sure.

FK: And we put them on these various service projects.

HP: How was Mrs. McMahon in New York City.

FK: Audrey McMahon, head of the art pro. -- ?

HP: Arts Projects, I believe. That was one of the difficult programs.

FK: Yes -- oh, I don't know if she should have been there.

HP: Yes.

FK: But I think that was the combined fault of Cahill and Barr. I think they kept her there.

HP: Yes. She had had prior experience under FERA.

FK: Yes, she -- there is no question about her interest, but I never felt that she led the projects at all.

HP: Well, of course, she had this ceaseless organization among artists which was wholly new.

FK: Yes, yes, and they were together and she never made up her mind whether she was for them or against them.

HP: Right.

FK: So, I would say that left a lot to be desired. You know, as I think of all the things that I've said to you, I have down-graded this program. I'd like to correct that, because I've been honest to the point of really saying right damaging things about certain programs and certain people. It wasn't a perfect program. It was a very imperfect program, but I still think it was sort of an amazing program. I think we got farther with this business of fitting the work with the workers than, maybe, we could have been expected to. There was nothing we wouldn't try.

HP: My viewpoint is, you have done one thing for me. You haven't confused what was with what you now think was. You haven't altered it. Whatever there was in the given, wherever you were, whether you were a district

supervisor dealing with people, you could tell the difference between one program and another in terms of the personnel that you had to work with. This was part of the given, and if this has led to, let's say, an exposure of imperfection, this is the human story, but it is none the less what it is you had to deal with. Now you could have very easily gotten out the polish and polished it all nice and pretty. The fact is while you were living it, it wasn't all nice and pretty. Not by a long shot, and --

FK: But it was living.

HP: Growing, alive --

FK: And growing and evolving and improving. Not at a regular rate and not regular as far as geography was concerned, but it was getting better.

HP: Yes, yes. Remember one of the early talks we had, the sense of urgency that Harry Hopkins had was an order: "Put them on the payroll."

FK: Yes.

HP: "Let's wait until later --"

FK: Yes, to polish off what they do.

HP: Yes, and given the context in which that order emerged, it was a realistic one. Otherwise, they would have not been on the payroll. You would have been still wondering whether this was the proper project, or not, or whether it had the proper standing.

FK: That was Ickes approach.

HP: Right, and that --

FK: Honest Harold!

HP: So that in the way it emerged, it was to put people on the rolls and then find out: "What are we doing? How are we doing it? How can we do it better?"

FK: Yes.

HP: This has something to do with the process of growth and makes, as you put it, the whole process a live one.

FK: Yes, yes.

HP: An improving one.

FK: Oh, yes, it was. It was a growing lively thing. Can't you understand completely why Hopkins and Ickes just didn't see eye to eye?

HP: No. I mean, I can see that they didn't see eye to eye, but for no other reason than one had a not wholly lovely view of human beings, namely, Ickes, and the other was willing to take the risk.

FK: And a tremendous risk. His wife died and I stayed out at the house a good deal and looked after Diana. We were driving down to work one day, and he was going to go over to the Hill to testify. And I could see that he was as nervous as a cat. He said, "I'll tell you one thing, when you're dealing with Congress, never apologize for anything you've done. Just look them straight in the eye and say I did it and I'm glad and the reasons why I did it were such and such. Don't say 'I wouldn't do it if I were to do it over again,' because they will be at you and tear you apart. Never apologize to a Congressional Committee!" That was his tactic. Now, maybe somebody else could apologize and make it stick and make them understand the reasons, and so forth, and not tear himself down, but for Harry that was impossible! You always grab the bull by the horns, both horns. And he always got his appropriation -- always.

HP: Yes. But the difference between he and Ickes was that one was so suspicious and so worried and tied in knots.

FK: Yes, yes, and he had to have an honest job with an honest contract and an honest contractor. And he had to get the blue prints in and have them checked. In the meantime, here stands this poor devil with a wife and family to feed and what does he do?

HP: Yes.

FK: That didn't bother Ickes. But it did bother Hopkins. Wasn't that an odd name that we got? I've always thought that was a gasser. "Work Progress." Nobody ever knew what it meant. Now the Public Works Administration was easy to understand, but Work Progress wasn't.

HP: No.

FK: And when it was named, you see, he was sort of to be the expeditor of Ickes.

HP: Yes.

FK: And in becoming the expeditor of Ickes, he just took the work program away from him. And you couldn't expect Ickes to really like that.

HP: Well, Ickes couldn't get off the ground.

FK: He couldn't get off the ground.

HP: He was just personally incapable of developing a program.

FK: Well, he could do -- PWA project number one is that Interior building.

HP: Yes.

FK: Now, he could see the need for that, and he showed some courage because they attacked him for the tremendous size of that building and look at it now. They kicked out the office of education, kicked out the Indian affairs and all kinds of things out of it because they didn't have room, but that sort of thing Ickes could do, and out here at the University of Maryland they owe a good share of their campus facilities to Ickes. They used to call it PWA university.

HP: Sure, but this wasn't putting people on pay rolls across the country.

FK: It did not put people to work, but it was much more popular with a certain conservative element in the community, you see, which liked this business of a careful scrutiny of contracts. Just the same as the Treasury Art Project under Ned Bruce proceeded on the contest idea. You submitted your work and on the basis of your submitted work you were invited to do more. Now, that seemed the right way to go at it, and Cahill's and Hopkins' way of going to the local relief offices and seeing if there was anyone there who had an art background, or wanted to work in that, and then setting up an art project and putting them on it, and then herding them together in a bare room somewhere and deciding what you are going to do with them. What those project supervisors must have gone through in the early days!

HP: Incredible, isn't it? But you're right, I mean, the notion of improvement as you went along was introduced because of the very way in which the idea had sprung.

FK: It had to.

HP: Yes, sure. So that if you fell heir to a going administrative structure in the state that is just part of the given, but to get them to understand was partly a sales job, in a way, and that depended upon their readiness to accept conviction on a new set of facts.

FK: And the U.S. had never had a work relief program before.

HP: No.

FK: We had a great big hoop-de-do down at the Mayflower Hotel. One of my prize possessions is the picture of the head table. Mrs. Roosevelt was there, Harry Hopkins and Mrs. Woodward -- she didn't know how to sell -- I sat at Harry's right and he was terribly busy, and said, "I haven't made any preparation for this talk at all. What do you suggest I talk about?" I said, "Talk about retraining the workers (that was my soapbox at the time). There are too many of these to find something to do." I thought maybe he would take the bait, but he said, "Nope, I'm not going to talk about that. I'm going to talk about work vs the dole." He knew that this was the basic concept of the WPA -- "We'll try a work program instead of the dole program." So he talked about work vs the dole. One of the best talks he ever made, because he was a wonderful ad libber.

HP: He had an idea -- he could put variations on the theme.

FK: He could.

HP: Well, that's a rare quality. Well, did the New York situation ever get into a position where it was more tidy

than it had been?

FK: Oh, yes, under Somervell it certainly did.

HP: Yes.

FK: But they certainly moved us out into the outhouse, and he never had any use for our program. Well, that's too broad a statement. He knew that some women had to be put to work and there were probably a few ex-ministers, and so forth, that couldn't dig ditches, but he was very much interested in the work out on Lake Success, you see, and La Guardia airport, and so on. He didn't have -- what was her name, the little Irish woman? Victoria Ridder. She wasn't any good. She wasn't any good. I didn't have good people up there. I did not have good people.

HP: What about the mayor?

FK: La Guardia?

HP: Yes.

FK: He was a pretty darn good -- he was very helpful on the music. Oh, yes, he really would use his hands, or his fee, or whatever he needed to kick some life into that project, and he would throw his protective backing over it, which was great stuff.

HP: Indeed.

FK: And, yes, he wasn't bad at all. He liked -- I wouldn't say he liked the art project, but he certainly liked the music project. He certainly had no fear of the Workers Alliance. He was used to that kind of monkey business, too, because he had it all over everywhere. So that didn't scare him.

HP: No.

FK: It outraged Somervell. One of the things that I always honored Ellen Woodward for is the fact that when an art project would stage a sit-in strike in Somervell's office -- Gosh, what a stormy time that was -- she stayed down at the Walker Johnson and stayed on the telephone practically all night calling them and telling them what to do and getting reports, and so on, partly just to assure them that Washington office was behind them.

HP: Yes. Well, there was this testy time.

FK: Oh, it was.

HP: I think possibly Somervell had, well, didn't think really in public relations terms. That may be too broad a judgment. What I'm saying is he reduced the concept of his job to the whittling away of numbers.

FK: Yes, he wanted quality work and if there were a few extra people, why, put them back on relief and why worry?

HP: Yes, but it didn't make for a good press and when he removed --

FK: No, no, no, no.

HP: -- people, for example the art teachers, the sit-ins.

FK: Yes.

HP: Yes.

FK: And he wouldn't listen. He was a very impatient man and he didn't learn. He didn't allow himself to learn about anything that he didn't already know. I think he was limited, a really, truly limited man. Harrington was limited, too, but Harrington had pressures down here in Washington that Somervell didn't.

HP: Yes.

FK: So Harrington knew. Somervell called Harrington one day and said he was going to abolish all the arts projects, except keep a unit of the arts project to do architectural decorating on the public buildings. Harrington had better sense. He said, "Well, now, let's come off of it; you can't do that." He ordered him, just gave him a direct order which was against Somervell, "Keep those people working. I'll get Mrs. Kerr in here and see what is bothering you."

HP: Well, Somervell seems --

FK: That's the framework in which I worked with Somervell. "You can't fire my people." He would say to me, "They're no damn good!"

HP: He really didn't understand it, did he?

FK: And he really didn't want to either. He wasn't proud of his job, I don't think.

HP: And moreover he tried to run it with a bookkeeper's mentality.

FK: Well, he tried to run it with a West Point mentality.

HP: Yes -- heavy hand. Real heavy.

FK: And staff line and orders and no back talk, especially no back talk! They were afraid of him. I can't tell you the amount of fear at 70 Columbus Circle. I would really have to be awfully hungry before I'd work for Somervell.

HP: Well, it didn't deter the art teachers. They had a stake.

FK: No, I'm talking now about the people who worked at the office.

HP: The people who worked at the office?

FK: Not out on the project, because he never went -- he never followed those art classes, never! I think Audrey McMahon worked up a business of having Somervell go out to Belleview once to see the therapeutic work which was done by having the disturbed people taught to, you know, finger paint, whatever, and he went unannounced. This, I suppose, happens in mental institutions quite often. Somebody in the class had suddenly gone out and disrobed and Somervell came in there and saw this naked man. Boy! He went up like a torch. He knew it was bad, but he didn't know it was that bad! He had no conception of what he was looking at -- no conception of the force that mental illness takes, nor how little that mattered in the long run and he certainly ordered that stopped immediately. No more sending workers out to Belleview.

HP: Strange. But, you know, New York had so many wrinkles all located in one tiny little island and with large enough numbers so that they couldn't be overlooked. You couldn't stumble over them, and really, I think, from the workers point of view, a sense of identification, working for the government, and so on, which brought them closer together in a kind of social way.

FK: Well, I found that out quite by accident. I wasn't aware of it with my office context and telephone contacts, and so on, but I had a life-long friend who was living in New York City and at their home some of these art people, or people from the writers project, used to come to their house. Jean has told me of the way they settled down. You see, they were just completely lost before they got on the projects, or got a regular paycheck, you see. They were just lost, and she said, "Leonard and I saw those people get interested in what they were doing, begin to have a pride in what they were creating, whether it was working on the guide or in the art projects, or reporting regularly for rehearsals and La Guardia was going to schedule them around town to play and they had to be ready to play." Well, there it was. It was mostly in the art projects, and it kept on long enough so that they fell in love, married, had a home. They were people. They turned from just flotsam into citizens and that's what Jean has kept saying. She said, "I feel so resentful when I hear WPA attacked, because I know it saved -- absolutely saved -- the sanity and lives of a lot of people in New York City who couldn't have made it without that help coming when it did!" They were proud of their projects, and Somervell was just somebody who got in the papers once in awhile. He didn't really matter to them. They didn't know. He mattered to me, but it didn't matter to the project workers too much.

HP: Yes.

FK: Which is a blessing.

HP: Yes. Well, Congress was very much interested in New York.

FK: Yes.

HP: Very much interested in New York, not necessarily to the exclusion of every other place, but --

FK: Yes, they thought they could find every abuse in New York. Assured projects, improper references, subversion, and everything.

HP: They worked the Writers Project a little, but somehow or other they got hold of what appears in retrospect

to have been somewhat ill, dissident people who for whatever reason were removed from these projects. Like Jack Banta. Oh, man! I read some of his testimony and also looked at the reply brief which was submitted to counteract some of the things he said. Well, his own testimony about himself was so far from the factual document record that it gives you some sense as to why you would believe the rest of it. Well, that was used as a stick to beat the dog no matter what the reliability was.

FK: Yes.

HP: Well, I guess that is the history of any collectivity, particularly when it gets as large as it did in New York it is bound to have certain dissident groups grow.

FK: Oh, yes, and I'm sure they came in from the hinterlands. Another, not the same problem, but in Los Angeles they didn't really get on top of their jobs because they were just inundated with relievers of all kinds, but usually economically they go down scale. New York did a lot better job than Los Angeles.

HP: Well, was the problem in New York and in Los Angeles complicated by minority problems like the Mexican group in Los Angeles?

FK: Oh, sure, and Los Angeles there was community suspicion, and they formed the vigilantes, you see, to keep the "Okies" from --

HP: Oh, man, The Grapes of Wrath.!

FK: Yes, yes, yes.

HP: Well, was the same true in Harlem in the Negro population in New York?

FK: Harlem? I don't know. I don't know. I can't think of a vigilante group up there, but --

HP: Well, was the picture to some extent complicated by it? I can't picture Somervell thinking in two-tone terms, let's say.

FK: Dealing with Harlem --

HP: I may be wrong. I may do him a great dis-service, but anyone who --

FK: I don't think you do. I don't think you can, because boy, he was so opinionated and so stiff.

HP: But anyone who would reduce --

FK: He didn't learn. He didn't learn!

HP: Who would reduce the project to a series of numbers called quotas instead of humans has already exposed his hand. It was a continuing puzzle in New York.

FK: Yes, it was a continuing puzzle, and yet, of course, New York turned up some --

HP: Oh, magnificent stuff.

FK: Yes, it really did. They truly did. That series of books for children, and that Who's Who in the Zoo. They are perfect gems. They just never do and they don't make anything of that kind any better.

HP: Well, in your job you also had, as I understood you, a liaison with the White House, and you had this -- well, had Harry Hopkins moved over? No. He had not.

FK: Yes, he had moved over into the Department of Commerce, and then of course his ill health began to be more and more serious. He was not in the office very much, and I stayed out at the house a good deal.

HP: Traveling around the country like you did, seeing the various governors of whatever political persuasion, must have been a useful conduit for impressions.

FK: Oh, yes, it was both ways. If I was any good why -- I think -- I'm sure in a few instances I often gave the governor a view of the work program that maybe he hadn't had before -- why it was and where his state stood in it -- always trying to find something good to say about what his state was doing, and the benefits that might be reaped from it, and that's one thing Harrington said to me, "Don't talk about sewing-rooms all the time, for heaven's sake, and just to pretend that you know there are some engineers around. I would mention some engineering project with considerable stature, if I could find one, and then, you know, lead him into my end of the program, which I submitted was the small end numerically, but "nobody can tell me that the school lunch

isn't going to be just as influential in this state as the Farm to Market roads." You don't measure those things.

HP: Yes.

FK: "Oh, certainly, certainly, that's very true." You could always get an agreement on stuff like that.

HP: So that when you came back to Washington the bird's eye view that you had had of various capitals, various figures that you had met, like Warren, for example, or Stasson, would have been useful as an observation at the White House.

FK: Oh, it was, it was! And I really think that I could have done more of that. You see, I would go back to the Hill and putter around with these representatives, and there are an awful lot of them, you know -- between four and five hundred and that's quite a lot. See, there were 3027 counties before the two states were added, but I was able to talk to -- not so much the President, because he always wanted to talk about policy or something like that -- but while I was waiting for my appointment I would talk to Pa Watson, or somebody like that, "Where have you been? What have you been doing? Who did you see?" It was stuff like that and I felt sure that anything I poured into his ear, if it was any good, if it had any value and any color, why F.D.R. would get it and I'm sure he did.

HP: Pa Watson was a great character, wasn't he?

FK: Aw -- he was just one of the nicest guys, and this man MacIntyre was, too. Through Mrs. Roosevelt I had some not too happy relations -- not relations exactly, but times with Mrs. Louis Howe. He had practically abandoned his family and had come down to the White House and lived in a little bedroom there and devoted himself to the fortunes of his idol F.D.R. But he did have a wife and he did have a family, so the first thing they did was to get hold of Farley and he made her Postmaster -- wasn't it Lynn? no Fall River, Massachusetts, their home town. Well, then she began -- she felt that she was the voice of the White House and so she would write to Mrs. Roosevelt and a good deal of it was about my program. So, I would get those letters, and we would be called over to discuss them. Why we weren't doing more in Fall River and weren't doing it better. And she wasn't a very reasonable woman, nor a very pleasant woman. I think she had certain strengths and certain -- and F.D.R. just wouldn't see her, and Eleanor Roosevelt saw her as rarely as possible. When I had an invitation to the White House for lunch, I thought probably Mrs. Howe would be there.

HP: You had to run off with your little black bag as a doctor to administer to the unsuspecting --

FK: Well, I knew I couldn't handle her requests -- I couldn't. She wanted people who were not on the relief rolls assigned to the project. That could be only done for the people who had supervisory or special techniques to contribute and she just wanted to keep -- well, her idea was to keep them from getting on relief. "Now, Mrs. Kerr, the thing for the WPA to do is to keep people from getting on relief." Well, there you are.

HP: Fall River sounds very much like a desert.

FK: Oh, of course the textile industry was bad, and the shipping was down. They were locally very depressed.

HP: Sure they were. Sure they were.

FK: But I never saw Louis Howe, never.

HP: Never did?

FK: Never! I saw Ross MacIntyre over again and I saw Pa Watson. I saw other people around, but I never saw Louis Howe.

HP: When the change -- and we already talked about the change that came over with the shift in atmosphere --

FK: Which shift do you mean?

HP: The shift from the emergency program: "put them on relief, " to: "get prepared for coming hostilities."

FK: Oh!

HP: Yes, that change from '39 and '40.

FK: That was very apparent at the White House -- much more than it was in the rest of the country or Congress. I felt that difference between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. The White House was -- oh, sure, way ahead. One day I came back from a session at Harry's office and went up to see -- I think I told you this before.

HP: Which one was this?

FK: I asked to see Harrington right away and I said, "Colonel, I heard Harry say over the phone today -- he didn't say I couldn't repeat it to you -- but he and the President are thinking of an army of five hundred thousand men." I wish you could have seen the expression on Harrington's face -- it just lit up. And then he said, "I've no business in this job. I'm a West Point man. I'd go back into my uniform at the first possible minute." Isn't that something?

HP: You had both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue pulling in the same direction in that respect.

FK: Yes, before I ever read it in the paper I heard talk about Lend Lease, and one day Harry said, "We're going to have to talk about what the end of Lend Lease -- when the occasion for it is past, how shall we handle that?" and so on. I had a conversation one day with him about Averell Harriman. And I said, "Well, he is a railroad tycoon and a millionaire," and so on. Harry said, "I'm thankful for any democrat who is past the fourth grade."

HP: And Mr. Harriman qualified?

FK: Mr. Harriman got past the fourth grade. If you had a democrat who had some private means and some education, for heaven's sake be thankful for him and don't pick at him, is what he said to me. "You and your little mind!" I don't think he thought I had one, but he just loved it. I don't know what he thought, but --

HP: It may have been that he was just --

FK: Answering some of the other --

HP: Yes. Honing his blade on whatever came his way and eager for it because even the suggestion to talk about retraining workers, something had to go through the turnstiles up here and come out and --

FK: "Yes, I will, but no, there is a more important thing for me to do." I had great respect for Harry's insight and grasp. I thought he was a tremendous guy. He was an old college friend of mine, but I saw him in proportion, real proportion.

HP: He had capacity for growth.

FK: Yes. He told me once, and I've never forgotten this. When I was reporting both to the President and to Mrs. Roosevelt, he said, "You know, you're between the two blades of the scissors."

HP: That's an interesting observation.

FK: And by that time I knew exactly what he meant by it. Well, "When you came down here, Harry, didn't you take your troubles to Mrs. Roosevelt because you got this sympathetic understanding.?" He said, "Sure." But Harry made a choice and he saw less and less of Mrs. and saw more and more of the President. He chose which member.

HP: Well, this may have been, you know, part and parcel of his capacity for growth. I don't mean to derogate Mrs. Roosevelt.

FK: Oh, I don't mean to either, but it just had to be. You couldn't serve both of them with equal devotion because they both took all you had.

HP: Sure.

FK: I think Mrs. Roosevelt, particularly Melvin Thompson, got critical of Harry. I didn't think that Mrs. Roosevelt did so much because she just didn't allow herself to waste her time and strength on why isn't somebody doing better or different. Now, Melvin Thompson, of course, thought that Harry should have stayed closer to what Mrs. Roosevelt wanted done and worked on her aims. But Harry was with the President and chose the President's program, which was the war program. I just saw it. It was there. You couldn't miss it.

HP: Well, he had been in New York City, I guess -- Chairman of the TB Association.

FK: Yes.

HP: He had had a kind of social worker relationship.

FK: He was president of the American Social Workers Association at one time, and he was well known in the social work field and of course that is what he went to Albany for, to do a relief program. First, it was a relief program and then it had work phases to it and he came down here as a social worker, really.

HP: Surely, and this would have been a wide open highway to Mrs. Roosevelt.

FK: Yes, and then an alliance between them was as natural -- just inescapable, and he never lost his great admiration for her and a sort of a wondering respect, because he said once, "You know, the President says, 'It's just amazing. Everybody who comes here likes to talk to Eleanor.'" Now, you know, a husband sometimes thinks his wife is not just the most brilliant conversational partner. I suppose maybe he had those feelings, but he noticed that everybody who came liked her, from Churchill up, down, all around. They all liked her and the President noticed it and was pleased -- pleased.

HP: Well, with the shift and once Hopkins was involved with likes of Ickes and the Department of Agriculture, Morgenthau and the rest of them, you could get a better sense of direction and be on top of the news before it emerged.

FK: I think he began to spend so many evenings with the President that the President began to talk about --

HP: Testing.

FK: Yes, and --

HP: Test an idea --

FK: Yes, and kick things around with him before he handed it to the cabinet.

HP: Rip it apart.

FK: And, of course, Harry measured up with that incisive mind of his. Jeffrey Parsons, I think it was, wrote a piece for the New Yorker, one of the profiles of Hopkins -- one of the flattest, most inadequate profiles that the New Yorker has ever put out, and he said -- he was hurting around for help and somebody suggested that he look me up and take me to lunch with him, which he did. What he wanted me to do was to analyze the relationship between the President and Hopkins. What was the secret? What did one man do for the other? It is a little difficult, if you've never been present at one of their twosomes.

HP: All you can do is --

FK: Yes, theorize and he never did get any answer. I don't think anybody -- well, Sherwood did a pretty good job on Roosevelt and Hopkins. But did you notice how inadequate his book is on the work relief -- Roosevelt and Hopkins?

HP: Yes.

FK: Sherwood didn't even approve of it -- that way of spending public money, and he didn't know Hopkins in those days, and when he did get to know him, he was the Presidential advisor. That he understood and admired and was enormously interested in it. He did a fine job on that last phase, but not on the earlier phases.

HP: Well, your point was that Hopkins had this enormous capacity to grow with the demands made on him.

FK: Oh, he did. I wouldn't have dreamed that the fellow I knew out in the Midwest college campus could do what he did and could be as adequate as he was in some very trying circumstances. Remember when he went over to England for the first time? Have I told you this story? I was to take Diana to school. She was to be enrolled in a private school near Boston and I was taking her and we took a Sunday noon train and had lunch on the diner, and at the table Harry took out these two envelopes with the greatest possible pride. One was a letter from FDR to the King and the other was a letter from FDR to Churchill. They were just about three or four lines long saying, "Talk with this man." I think they are quoted in the Roosevelt-Hopkins book, "Talk with this man as you would with me," and of course I was ga-ga about it because it was pretty gorgeous stationary and gorgeous signature, and here was Harry. "Well," he said, "Joe Kennedy is not going to like this." And he didn't, you know.

HP: No.

FK: He was just furious and with good reason. No ambassador likes that kind of trick pulled on him. FDR was doing that sort of thing all the time.

HP: I know it.

FK: If he felt like it, and he quite often felt like it.

HP: That is, there wasn't any straight-jacket point of view for him in anything he did, no.

FK: But not for him.

HP: It was partly play by ear and it was a shrewd intuition. If I see this thing that needs to be done, I see somebody I could commit, that's it, and why should I bother with Cordell Hull when Sumner Welles has the answer. I'll just call him. Cordell Hull nearly lost his mind with jealousy and frustration.

HP: Yes. Although Cordell Hull was very influential and useful on the Hill.

FK: Oh, yes. And if you wanted to use him there, why of course you do use him. He was picked up and dropped and picked up and dropped and --

HP: Yes, this is a very strange wooing.

FK: Yes, it certainly was, and I was listening to my TV the other night and Allen Drury was on for a few minutes. Somebody asked him what he thought of FDR. He said, "I think he was the most complicated man I've ever known, and nobody really knew him." Well, that was a good way for Allen Drury to get out of that question, but I kept thinking about "a complicated man," one who was never known by anybody completely. Do you suppose that's true?

HP: Well --

FK: But, he had so much -- his power to run things --

HP: Yes, it is like Justice Frankfurter said, "He couldn't do many things, a lot of things, he couldn't run, but he could be President of the United States."

FK: He was a top notch, just top notch.

HP: Well, things got a little sticky once in awhile, you know, where he would bail himself out of perhaps a --

FK: Oh, he wasn't always fair, and he certainly wasn't always kind, either.

HP: No! No!

FK: Not by a long shot!

HP: But the creation of a new organization rather than face the error --

FK: Yes, and then throw them all in the pot.

HP: Let them stew.

FK: And let them fight it out, and it was a heart-breaking thing for the people who were involved, but that was the only way he worked.

HP: Sure.

FK: So, as far as my liaison with the White House was concerned, it consisted of -- well, the idea was a weekly, or a fortnightly at least, report, usually to Mrs. Roosevelt, about this, that and the other, all kinds of things, ask her questions and enlist her help and tell her things and then once in awhile with the President, when his appointment schedule permitted it. Mrs. Roosevelt said once that he just liked to talk to me. He didn't think I knew too much, but I was a fresh voice. I didn't go to him in the way everybody else did.

HP: Like you had known him for years?

FK: Well, no. I just -- Midwest, I think. I think he considered me a classic example of the flatfooted Midwesterner.

HP: Flat foot Midwesterner, but you had good eyes; you had keen observation and you had certain intellectual and emotional commitments which he could understand.

FK: Yes, he did, and I told you what I told him about putting the women on the tree planting project, and that just tickled him! They also had this business of entertaining a lot of people, so every summer I would go to Hyde Park for a weekend, getting up there, say, five o'clock Saturday afternoon and leaving either Sunday night or Monday morning, and that was pleasant. FDR was really wonderful if you got started on something he wanted to kind of expatiate on. One evening there were five or six of us there. One was Crown Princess Martha -- wasn't she Norway?

HP: Yes.

FK: And he was flirting with her, oh boy, was he flirting! Well, she had hay fever. It is awful hard to carry on a flirtation when you have hay fever. Have you ever seen it?

HP: It is a great obstacle.

FK: It really is.

HP: It is really love in bloom.

FK: Too much bloom. Well, at any rate, we were in this little tiny library thing to the right hand as you go into the Hyde Park house. He got started talking about Myron Taylor, you see, his envoy to the Vatican. This was late, you see. By that time I was with the Federal Works Agency, and he talked about, you know, Taylor and Spellman were going from Rome to Madrid -- to Rome from Madrid. What was going on everybody wanted to know. Then talked about Pacelli and about Pacelli's visit to the U.S. and his personal relations with him. He came down here as Papal Nuncio, and so he said if your time permits, come and spend a few days with me before you go back, and he made time. Pacelli kept saying, "The great danger in America is that it will go communist." FDR said, "The great danger in America is that it will go Facist. "No," says Pacelli. "Yes," said FDR. So we chewed on that for three days. He went back to Rome saying that the great danger in America is that it will go communist. I told him it wouldn't. I said the only thing that would make America go communist would be that too many men didn't have any food for their children and they would get wild. I think that is the thing that really stirs up people here, when economic distress is so acute that they can't see their way out. Then they would pick up the bludgeons and go to it. They would be perfectly capable of overthrowing the government whatever it was. I said, "I think they are just as apt to go Facist as they are to go communist." "No!" says Pacelli, "they would go communist. Mr. President, you simply do not understand the terrible importance of the communist movement." "You just don't understand the American people." He told this all over, what a wonderful time he had had with Pacelli. How he had enjoyed that mental sparing and that he felt that we were lucky in this country to have so able a man to be Pope. He spoke very warmly of him. Then he talked about some of the reports. I wish I had known how they were routed in there. About the way the Germans were cleaning up after the bombing raids. They had ambulance service. They had demolition squads. They had -- what is it when you put out the fires? It was just amazing what they were able to do in ten years after one of these bombing raids that we sent over Hamburg and Frankfurt. Oh, I tell you -- I was just ga-ga. I mean, he was so interesting and so informing, and he felt like talking and the rest of us just sat around and listened.

HP: I guess what he felt like, you know, when a line of interest developed he could be as effervescent, as outgoing and as outgoing as any --

FK: Oh, yes, he could be. He could be just apparently enjoying himself greatly.

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: Because he liked to talk about it. He liked to talk -- how efficient the Germans were. He said, "We haven't got them down yet. They clean up after air raids. They're the best technicians in Europe.

HP: You told me once of an interesting conversation you had out on the West Coast. I think during the war with Henry J. Kaiser and his attitude towards work relief, in part. Do you remember that? 1944?

FK: Yes, yes.

HP: I don't remember except that you said you had had this talk with him. I don't remember if it was at the request of the White House or what.

FK: Yes, I did. It was rather informal and there was nothing put in writing, but I was told -- I think Pa Watson told me -- that one of the people that FDR was considering as the economic tsar for the country was Henry Kaiser. I'm sure many people looked him over, but I was one. I don't know why. If I tried to produce one adjective that would throw any light on Henry Kaiser, it might help.

HP: Part of the mosaic.

FK: Part of the mosaic and I understood that and because of that I got a preferred rating, I got White House classification for travel. The only time I ever had it. So I talked to Henry Kaiser and spent a day and a half with him. Gee, that was strenuous! Oh, he is a force of nature, and nothing short of it!

HP: Cyclone?

FK: Ohhh, he is so vigorous. Gee whiz! We did all kinds of things. The only time I've ever been up in a helicopter he took me up. It was noisy and wiggly and wobbly, and I was awful glad to get down. He took me up to --- ? -- where they had this cement works and they were making this magnesium which we used so effectively over in

Japan, you know, and had them drop a magnesium-filled bomb so I could see what it would do, and it fairly melted the box. I never saw anything like it. That is when I met Bedford, and of course Edgar Kaiser was there and that red-headed man -- the doctor. I saw a lot of him later on in the hospital program.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I told Kaiser why I was there, and I said, "I don't know what he is doing to do, but I'm sure that he is thinking about you very seriously."

HP: Yes.

FK: "Well," Henry said, "he certainly could do worse." He was just dying -- He said that when it would be first announced the business community would be simply outraged, simply outraged. "Henry Kaiser, you know, the Johnny-come-lately. No solidity back of his business career. Nobody knows whether he is going to be a millionaire, or bankrupt tomorrow." "But," he said, "In six weeks I'd have them all lined up." I think he could have done it.

HP: Yes.

FK: But FDR decided against it, and you know who he did appoint, don't you?

HP: Knudsen?

FK: No, Jimmy Byrnes.

HP: Oh, that's right. The economic kid.

FK: The lousiest appointment. He must have been sick that day. How would he pick Jimmy Byrnes to be the economic tsar?

HP: Byrnes was on the Court as a Supreme Court Justice.

FK: Well, I thought he was appointed to that by Truman.

HP: Well, when I think he came off the court to help aid the economic program of the war as economic co-ordinator, or something.

FK: When he was Secretary of State under Truman.

HP: That's right, he became Secretary of State under Truman.

FK: Well, -- why did you think -- did you just want me to elaborate a little more on that?

HP: No, this was in the nature of the relationship that springs up as a consequence of these early years of Hopkins and the relationship with Mrs. Roosevelt and the fact that you did know a lot of people around the country.

FK: I did know a lot of people and --

HP: And you were a good sounding board for --

FK: I was just a pair of eyes and ears, oh, to a very limited extent.

HP: When you sit on top of the heap and you cannot go yourself, you have to rely on 101 different legs. I'm aware of that, but none the less this was one part of the total picture that someone else who had the discretion and judgment could use.

FK: Could use?

HP: Yes.

FK: Or not use or use either in a positive or negative way.

HP: Yes, sure.

FK: I know one thing that might have effected that decision and that was that FDR did not like Kaiser's wife because she thought that the Roosevelts were too fond of the Negroes, you know. Socially she wanted to look down. "Oh," the President said to me, "You know, Mrs. Kaiser likes society with a capital S, and of course Eleanor

and I couldn't qualify for that." He said that, twinkling all over. Any time they couldn't qualify! "She wants society with a capital S."

HP: Eager and hungry.

FK: And he knew that she was a snob, terrible snob. Just an unbelievable snob because she just didn't have anything to compare with what they had.

HP: Yes, he couldn't abide this.

FK: He just didn't like her.

HP: He got the job done.

FK: I tell you that opened up business to Henry Kaiser. I tell you he lived --

HP: Breathlessly.

FK: Ohhh --

HP: But he was quite a whirling dervish, wasn't he?

FK: Oh, he was. He really was. I had subsequent dealings with him. We used the Lanhen Act foods, you know, helping around the nursery schools, recreation centers, and hospitals and stuff like that in the war, because he was up to his elbows in that.

HP: Well, I mean, it is good to have someone come along and stir up the business community, and he certainly did that!

FK: He certainly could have, whether or not he would have cut the mustard, I don't know, but he would have done a better job than Byrnes did. As far as I know, Byrnes didn't do anything. Can't remember a single thing that he did! I remember when it was announced, I thought that.

HP: I know he was in for awhile in what was called the office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, something like that.

FK: The amount of money he got out of this Federal government was something. I tell you, he sewed a pair of pants on his button over and over again, but he would always have something to contribute that the government needed, and what an eater he was. Jimminy! And there were all kinds of food shortages. I remember when we had --

HP: Rationing?

FK: Yes, and we were supposed to do this and that. We had lunch at his place in Oakland. It must have been that thick with sliced bananas and a big gob of vanilla ice cream on top. He put that down on top of a meat luncheon.

HP: A strange man.

FK: I always felt that he was kindly, but --

HP: You know, I don't know the context. I don't share the South Carolina atmosphere, the black belt, I mean, it is alien to me.

FK: And it does to this day.

HP: Yes, so I don't know what his powers were, or how persuasive he could have been, or might --

FK: Oh, you mean Byrnes -- ?

HP: Yes.

FK: He was supposed to be such a good operator in the cloak rooms up on the Hill. Some legend that came up later about Lyndon Johnson -- able to get his fellow Senators to do what he wanted them to. I always felt that was done with power. Well, it was true of Byrnes, too, but Byrnes' later performances were pretty bad.

HP: Niggardly.

FK: He dwindled down to a squirrel hole.

HP: That's right -- Governor of South Carolina. Well, you've really had a lot of fun, haven't you? in all this process.

FK: Yes, yes, I've had a lot of disappointments, too, and frustrations and a terrible sense of, "I could have done better," and I should have done more."

HP: But it hasn't been an acid eating away at your beliefs.

FK: No, I haven't -- my acid comes in the feeling that the workers were never appreciated, and the community responsibility was never accepted. If you had a bad work program it was because you didn't have any work for them to do. If you had the work laid out you could get plenty of work out of them. I've always loved that story about Moses, you know, calling up the WPA offices telling them to get their workers to work, and it was a gang of telephone workers who were waiting for some wire to be delivered, but if you saw any men not working, that was WAP. That's what Moses assumed about the Telephone Company. He called the WPA office to blast them for it.

HP: A very disagreeable public servant.

FK: Yes, yes, very much so, and I think Robert Moses probably reflected the opinion of a very substantial percentage of the American public.

HP: Yes.

FK: That used to -- I think I still resent that. I still resent it when I read speeches, as I did, "We never want another WPA." All right, we don't. That seems to be the final decision that has been rendered on us.

HP: Yes.

FK: And that hurts. I think it is an unjust decision, but I can understand a little why it is, because they can certainly point to plenty of local instances of poor work, bad work, unplanned work, but any of our successes, or our contributions like the nursery school program and the school lunch and the housekeeping aid here in the District, which I read about, we started it. But it is never put back and say thanks to the work impetus given this by the work relief program we now have -- Never, Never!

HP: No, nothing.

FK: George Fields said one day, he said, "I think in the years to come the only thing that will be left of the WPA will be the guides." The library will have the WPA guides series on the back of the book. You can't destroy the book. Berry's airports and Evan's dam, Wyandotte Dam, are gone. Farmer to market roads -- nobody knows where they are anymore. And all that -- certainly clothing is gone. I don't think we were in operation long enough to really put the school lunch over for sure. A lot of it survived. A lot of it, but that was a joint venture with agriculture, of course.

HP: Yes.

FK: And you could always go and talk to Wallace about what you wanted. Say, isn't Claire Booth Luce wonderful! Coming to the support of Madame Nue! I'm thinking about her attacks on Wallace and milk for the Hottentots.

HP: Yes.

FK: She has a genius for being wrong.

HP: I couldn't put it any better way than that. She does have a genius for being wrong.

FK: Well, have I helped you?

HP: Oh, you sure have. You've illuminated a lot of almost unreachable dark corners in this whole area and I'm awfully grateful to you.

FK: Well, I've just -- you know, good for me -- I think, I suppose it is -- to drag it out.

HP: Maybe we can put, or gather and collect enough material about its net effect throughout the country to at least put into the library something more which will off-set, soften, maybe even in retrospect the general criticism, "We don't want another WPA." I don't know what I'll find, but with your help, that is in the assessment of the variety available, I can't but feel sure that the positive aspects of the WPA will be presented. At least I'm

hopeful.

FK: Do you want to talk to Aubrey Williams?

HP: Yes, I'd love to.

FK: Well, he is out here at McLean Gardens. He is living in Washington now.

HP: Aubrey Williams?

FK: I think it might be worth your while to talk to him.

HP: Yes. Any other people that you can think of that are here?

FK: Gordon Gill died. He was head of statistics and the maps. I wonder if Dallis Dort is still living. Tugwell might give you some slants on this. He was in the agriculture when -- during the formative years, and he was very much interested in these co-operative ventures over the country. Florence Westbrook worked for him.

HP: Who was the legal counsel for the WPA?

FK: I don't know. For heaven's sake! Allan Johnson was the legal counsel of the FWA. Who was it? We didn't have a lawyer.

HP: I wondered.

FK: We didn't. We should have had, shouldn't we? There were lawyers on the staff, but --

HP: Well, I was told once that a problem came up that Jake Baker took to the White House as to how to actuate a certain plan, and he had checked it with an attorney. I do not know whether the attorney was a member of the WPA staff, but the attorney told him that he couldn't do it in terms of legislation and that FDR was reported to have said, "Get yourself another lawyer."

FK: Yes.

HP: Well, now I don't know. I wondered about that. Whether there was legal counsel.

FK: I'm sure there wasn't. I can just think of all these people up there on the top floor. I think Harry made a mistake there. He should have had a smart lawyer at his elbow all the time.

HP: Well, there were a lot of young ones around. This was the land of opportunity.

FK: We not only had a lot of them, but they were busy doing other things.

HP: Well, he may have done it with Tommy Corcoran or Ben Cohen.

FK: Yes, yes, because they were on the phone with him all the time. They kept very close herd on Hopkins, both Corcoran and Cohen did.

HP: Yes.

FK: Who was the head of OPA. Leroy.

HP: Henderson?

FK: Henderson, well, I don't know if he was a lawyer or not, but he did serve as counsel. No, I don't believe we had any. You know, I've often wondered what would have happened if the war hadn't rolled over at last. You see, it was a very blurred ending.

HP: Very.

FK: And in many ways. Sometimes I just could hardly believe the difference in going from labor surplus to labor shortage. And it happened so fast!

HP: Sure, and then there were other problems with the Lanhen Act.

FK: Oh, yes, yes.

HP: Sudden burgeoning of population.

FK: And the local tax, utterly inadequate.

HP: Sanitation, health --

FK: And all of it had to be done by Federal funds and Federal direction. And then the states were up in arms and the state departments were up in arms. That is what I was just discussing with Earl Warren that day. "We're not bypassing your state departments, but I think it is up to them to put on their bonnets and come on down here and help."

HP: In reference to the hospitals, did you run into Dr. Joe Mountain?

FK: Yes.

HP: What did you think of him?

FK: I liked him. He didn't like the way I was operating.

HP: He did not?

FK: No, he did not. He wanted it put through the old channels of public health, and so forth. He certainly had no confidence in my ability at all. I didn't have either, but I had the money. He would have rubbed me out any day he could have, except that I had the money. That was a very annoying detail.

HP: He couldn't get his hands on it.

FK: He couldn't get the money, and I had it. I mean, I had it through the federal works.

HP: Yes. But he set to work a Dr. Vane Hoog to study the --

FK: He used a lot of our money. Every one of them. We financed a lot of his stuff.

HP: Well, all of this is a development toward the Hill-Burton Act later on, and it had the crisis of the moving of population, sudden population. What are you going to do about them? He had the protection of some twenty-odd million Americans in uniform, one way or another. So, roughly --

FK: And the VD program -- gosh, that just broke on us like a thunder clap. You see there was no penicillin then.

HP: Oh, no.

FK: And Bunderson out there in Chicago was a character. He was on the phone trying to get money for the programs -- the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, and of course there was a tremendous influx of soldiers every weekend all over the city and you know the resulting problems. He was a go-getter. He was a little like Kaiser, almost a whirling dervish. He called to ask what had happened to the project and had it passed the board? Where was it? And when could they get their money, and so forth. One day he got a big chunk of money from us -- no more than he should have had because he was an operator, and he said, "Mrs. Kerr, whenever you get venereal disease, just let me know and I'll see that you have the finest service in the country!"

HP: This also illustrates how quickly, in a way, the atmosphere changed.

FK: Yes, it did.

HP: All these other problems came directly --

FK: But I was conscious in the FWA -- you don't want me in FWA, this is WPA.

HP: Administration is great.

FK: In FWA I was very conscious of state governments, and I kept thinking of Paul Appleby, "I'd leave everything to the states but their lines." You see, crossing state lines I got a very low opinion of the average state government and state capitals. They were not staffed with top notch people for the most part. They weren't.

HP: Yes.

FK: The state departments of education were lamentable. Really!! Pearl Wannamaker out in the State of Washington was a bright spot. She was state director, and she really knew what it was all about and she just stood out.

HP: Yes.

FK: And the state departments of education, and the state departments of social welfare, I would say that they were maybe better. The state had had a lot of experience with social security and Aid to Dependent Children and so by the time the welfare departments were more used to federal programs than the education departments. Of course, the political tops, the governors -- why it was the same old story as the state administrators all over again. Some good, some bad. But the state governments are --

HP: Yes.

FK: And the dear darling Eisenhower talked about a partnership between the stated and the federal government. You just don't know what you're talking about. You have no idea of what broken reed the state government business is! It doesn't call out the best people in the state!

HP: No.

FK: You know it doesn't.

HP: No.

FK: Your attorney general and your -- phew!

HP: Yes. Well, the emergence of the WPA, I think, is a lasting indication as to how state governments on the local levels had failed.

FK: I think so too.

HP: No question.

FK: There is no question about it. I wonder sometimes if I'm not just -- would you like a cup of coffee?

HP: I'd love one.

FK: All right, sir.

HP: Let me turn this off.

FK: All right. END OF TAPE [BREAK IN RECORDING]

HP: Last time we got through to the state of Montana.

FK: Parker -- I remember my state director out there and I just have a very vague and hard to catch memory of Parker, that he gave Washington and all the foolishness in the Washington office the go-by as far as he possibly could.

HP: Montana strikes me as being something apart from and different from some of the other states you've talked about, presenting different problems even in transportation.

FK: Yes, yes. I --

HP: Accessibility.

FK: Yes, and I don't believe the unemployment problem pressed down as heavily in Montana as it did in some of the Eastern Seaboard states. So they were glad enough to have Federal subsidy, but they didn't accept it as a lifeline the way Montana was different, and there was this attitude toward Washington, too.

HP: Yes, sort of a --

FK: Sort of a "let us alone, we'll take care of Montana." A lot of foolish rules and regulations do not apply, therefore into the waste basket they go. That went on in other spots too.

HP: Oh, sure. Well, it's --

FK: But Parker himself, I couldn't characterize him for you because he isn't real to me.

HP: Well, how about whatshisname, Mr. Felton in Nebraska?

FK: Well, I think on the tape we did discuss that one. He was a victim of what I would call nervous dyspepsia. He was scared of his shadow. He was sick, he was having a little marital difficulty, which I think was mostly his fault, but he was unhappy and uncertain and he was bent, a kind of a worn-out, cast-off Democrat, operating in a

Republican state. There was the press against him, and so on. He didn't have much courage, and he didn't have any vision, not any at all. He had been, as I remember, a city engineer, so I think he did a little about the sewer program, the farm to market roads, and so on. He was very decent to me, very -- treated me very well indeed, but not in any constructive way. It was just a matter of being polite across the desk, you see, so our program there was just so-so. He never did understand the Federal Projects. He just thought that was a mental aberration of Hopkins. He really did; in fact, I think he said so, but he didn't try to stop it. He wasn't going to have a fight about it, but neither was he going to do a lot to help out. There was some support for the Writers Project from Marie Sandos. Remember, she wrote about her pioneer grandfather, and what is it? Was it Grace Noel Crowell who wrote that sentimental verse? She was friendly to it, too. That is, *A Lantern in Her Hand, A Light in the Snow* -- best sellers.

HP: Sure.

FK: So we did get a book out of Nebraska.

HP: Yes. There's a Jay Harris Gable listed here.

FK: Yes, he was later. There was an earlier woman who came on the project and she was a protege of this fellow who was the editor of the Lincoln Star, and he did a good deal for us, but the quid pro quo for that was to keep that woman in that job. Why? She was a friend of his mother's. I ask you, I ask you, how did we ever get this program going?! How did we ever have any end product at all?!

HP: I don't know.

FK: Because there were so few people who grasped its potential, or who really knew what the philosophy was back of it. In the first place, they regarded it as an emergency, and it will soon be over. Therefore what you did didn't matter too much one way or the other, and this is where we've taken care of some rather thorny personal problems. We ran into a lot of that -- just a lot of that! That's why I valued Mary Moon so highly in Chicago. She saw it and she fought for quality in personnel and she wouldn't mind telling Bob Dunham that she couldn't take someone because he was no blankety-blank good. She would tell him and he respected her. He really did, but that was because she was what she was.

HP: People make the difference.

FK: Well, maybe not all the difference, but more than half.

HP: Sure.

FK: Terrific! You don't do much better with your program than with your personnel.

HP: Right.

FK: You really don't.

HP: And the nature of leadership radiates down.

FK: Yes, yes, it does.

HP: Well, what about a thin place like Nevada with Gilbert Ross?

FK: I don't remember Gilbert Ross at all. He was later replaced. I don't remember Gilbert Ross -- I can't tell you about him.

HP: There must have been a -- what is it -- a Mrs. Harriet G. Span?

FK: Yes, she was pretty good. She was very energetic and very much of a driver. Fought for her quota and she got her projects going and if the engineers were lagging, that was no reason why she should be. She was a great comfort to me because she just grabbed the bit and off she went. Yes, Harriet Span was good, not in the way of refinements of the program, but she got the jump, you see. She got the space, she got the machines, she got the surplus commodities. She just got going and that was pretty important to me in '34 and '35.

HP: Getting off the ground.

FK: Getting off the ground, getting the payroll setup for the various projects, and that's what she did.

HP: That's good.

FK: Now let's see, Senator Hayden -- where does Hayden come from? Is he Nevada or Arizona?

HP: I think Arizona.

FK: Oh. Where was Cutting? Senator Bronson Cutting?

HP: Cutting? I always thought he was Arizona.

FK: I kind of think he was.

HP: I think Senator Thomas was Utah.

FK: Yes, Senator Albert Thomas, yes.

HP: Nevada?

FK: Goodness. Well, maybe it will come back.

HP: New Mexico, James J. Connally.

FK: Santa Fe, Albuquerque. They had a very hostile press to the WPA in New Mexico. Every time somebody would come in from Washington there would be a nasty little piece. I got it full in the face there one day. I came in, you know, en route to California. So I supposed there would be a luncheon and orchids and what did that have to do with the relief of unemployment. The assumption being that the WPA personnel just squandered money, you know, stuff like that, trivial, and worse than that. Any one having to do with relief certainly shouldn't be wearing an orchid. If they knew how I feel about orchids, they wouldn't have done it. I had just bushels of them and, of course, I never did want them. In the first place I can't wear flowers, and in the second place, I didn't want them. It was just part of the game for a while.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I felt that my personnel in New Mexico was intimidated by that press. It wasn't much of a program.

HP: Well, I guess, you know, a welcome or reasonable climate is also part to the picture -- I mean, it comes as an enormous obstacle when it is hostile.

FK: Yes, it is. You know, the press picture was not too good anywhere. For instance, in New York it was not much of a factor. In Illinois with the Chicago Tribune it was because they kept up a continual barrage of criticism, but it wasn't WPA any more than it was any of the other elements of the New Deal. I was down in Sarbondale, that's a county seat town, and they were having their first meetings under the Triple A where the farmers signed an agreement on acreage. I had to go to the county court house and the farmers were coming in there because that was the day for the sign-up and the final decision on what they would do; and it was very orderly and the overwhelming majority of the farmers signed up for participation, and so forth. The next day the Chicago Tribune had an account of the meeting and the headline was "Farmers lash back at Wallace."

HP: What were they reporting?

FK: What were they reporting? They were reporting. McCormick might give them a raise in salary for a headline like that. The headline didn't square with the story, of course. That was a typical Tribune tactic. It had nothing to do with the WPA, but I cite it as an example of the sort of press that the New Deal had in normal life.

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: Great stuff!

HP: Let's see, in the Women and Professional Projects there is a Isabel Echo.

FK: Yes.

HP: I don't know how large the program was at --

FK: We're now in New Mexico?

HP: New Mexico, yes.

FK: I remember her. She was one of the intimidated ones. I think she did the best she could, but it wasn't too much. It was a very ordinary program as far as size and quality was concerned.

HP: It had its problems in race.

FK: It had its race problems, you see, with the Mexicans and the Indians, and so forth, but that was just indigenous to the state, you see. We did have a good many Indians and Mexicans on the program.

HP: Yes, but it complicated matters somewhat.

FK: Yes, it did. It complicated them, but they were used to looking after those people, too. So it wouldn't offend the local attitude to have those people on work relief. No, they would be very glad to have the darn fool federal government come in and pay part of the bill. That would probably be what the local politicians would think.

HP: They were going to be there anyway.

FK: Yes, and they had been taken care of in one way or another. Here was an easier way than they had been accustomed to.

HP: That's terrible.

FK: Sure it was, but, you know how sudden this program was, really sudden, and as far as educating people as to why we had a work relief program that wasn't -- well, I don't say that it wasn't done at all. It certainly never was done adequately. Maybe there should have been a long -- I don't know how it should have been done. Maybe if it had been in existence longer, that might have helped. That was not to be either.

HP: No, I have the general feeling that the whole problem had to be worked out in the space of a small and limited period of time and in somewhat of a chaotic way. Where as if it had been considered and given considered judgment. That judgment would have been started earlier in the twenties.

FK: Yes.

HP: You don't get this over night, a legislative bill.

FK: And you don't get good work projects going over night, either. Maybe I told you this earlier in our discussions, but one day when he was director of the Engineering and Operations, Harrington said to me -- who later became the administrator and I was his lieutenant -- "you know, we can't have a really good sound work program for four million people. Beyond that I don't think we've got the work to be done." Now that was a limited vision, you see, because there was plenty of work to be done, but he could see jobs for four million people. Beyond that it was over-crowding the projects. It was made work of the most leaf-raking kind, and he had no respect for it. Frankly, he didn't want to be connected with it, not really. You see, he was -- well, the Corps of Engineers was assigned the job of salvaging the work program. That's in the record, too. All of a sudden, just between days, we had army engineers all over the lot. That's when I was in the region. I remember one fellow whose name was Pete some one or other. Anyway, somebody told him to go in and evaluate the sewing project. You would think they had to find work for them all to do, and there were a lot of sewing projects and a lot of engineers. So he went in -- this was out of a Chicago office -- and the head engineer was a wonderful chap, Wheeler, Spec Wheeler, who later did this work on the Suez Canal, remember?

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: Wheeler was really a fine fellow. He should have been where Harrington was because he could have done a better job. You know, that was just his assignment, but he was Colonel William something Wheeler, and he was the top dog. Then this Peter somebody or other came in and said, "What in God's name do I do when I evaluate a sewing project?" I said, "You count the machines. Then you go into the store room and count the bolts of gingham. Then you go and ask the supervisor how many women he has on the payroll. Write that all down and that is your summary." That's what he did.

HP: You said that this was introduced after the program had been --

FK: Yes. I think that Harry began to get very, very much alarmed about the quality of the work, particularly the engineering end of it. He wasn't worrying so much about us, not because we couldn't cause him trouble, but because numerically it was a little end of the program. So that was concocted right here, that they would send these army engineers out to look at the dams and the roads and all the engineering projects, and just evaluate it, make some recommendations about personnel and all that sort of thing. They did it all over the country.

HP: Yes, I understand now, and I think as you've pointed this out, that this was an emergency get-them-on-the-payroll business, and only after they were on the payroll will we worry about what they have been doing.

FK: That's right. Now, you're voicing Hopkins' attitude. This is an unemployment relief program. The main thing that these fellows need is a paycheck. Then the refinement of the projects can come later, but he also

appreciated the fact -- well, it was just a ridiculous business. You know that famous story that was supposed to have originated with Wayne Coy? He sent a telegram from Indiana, sent a telegram to Hopkins one day. What did he say? Something about an appeal for help, and it was completely apocryphal, and Harry's reply was supposed to read, "Fresh out of shovels, tell the men to lean on each other."

HP: Really!

FK: Haven't you heard that one?

HP: No. That's terrible!

FK: It is terrible, and they were so against a public reaction like that that he was trying to build the program, and it was a necessary step, very necessary. There again, he couldn't wait. He had called it a crash program.

HP: He couldn't.

FK: And this advent of the army engineers was sudden. They were not prepared; we were not prepared; nobody was prepared. We were just like Peter who tried to figure out a way to evaluate the sewing project. "Just get something down on paper. That'll do!" What else could he do? Now eventually we got power units in the projects. We sent denim to St. Louis because they could make overalls. The main overall company was there, and so Missouri made work clothes, and so on, for that state and by swap with surrounding states. I told you the struggle we had to get permission to make windbreakers that the WPA workers themselves might use, you see, because they were on the federal payroll and they weren't eligible for clothes and groceries and medicine.

HP: Well, you know, the program apparently had a lot of flaws, but at the same time I now see better than I did before the introduction of the engineers. I couldn't understand what engineers, military men, were suddenly doing.

FK: Where else could he turn?

HP: I don't think he could have turned any other place.

FK: And that decision was made right here at the top without much reference -- well, I think the state administrators and all the rest of them were just as much surprised as anybody. They would probably get a wire explaining it, but I mean as far as any preparation, getting anything ready for it, no, there wasn't time.

HP: Yes, or even replying on the ultimate validity of their evaluations. I mean, what would they reveal? You just indicated in the sewing example -- check the number of machines, check the store room, check the people working. Well, all right. This gives you a minimum statistic, but it tells you absolutely nothing.

FK: Nothing about the efficiency of the operation or whether things were in balance, or whether the end products justified the payrolls. Nothing!

HP: But I can see, in the light of previous experience, what with the CWA, for example, you know, political reaction to it particularly among the Southern senators that you can only go so far in an evaluation and you may evaluate for political purposes of softening, as far as I know. We haven't mentioned anywhere among the states the necessary kingpins in the political line who were here in Washington -- senators, representatives, and so on.

FK: Like Pat Harrison?

HP: Yes. I mean, these are real.

FK: Pat Harrison. I was waiting outside his office one day after work and Pat Harrison was in talking to Hopkins. The two men came out together and there was obvious liking between the two. They may not be in agreement, but I think Harrison liked the cut of Hopkins' jib and certainly Hopkins just had feeling that he would work with Pat Harrison, that he might not agree with him, but that Pat Harrison was a getter of things done. I was sitting there, you know, hidden behind the secretary, and Harry said to Pat Harrison, "Pat, when in the world are we going to do something about the schools in Mississippi." Then he rattled off some statistics about teachers pay and length of school year. "All in good time," says Harrison, "All in good time!" But I think Hopkins never lost an opportunity to say to somebody, "Listen, Pat, those schools in your state are a disgrace! When are you going to get busy on the public school system down there and do something about it?" Harry had some political battles with Ohio, too. He didn't like Martin David. I should say he didn't. Martin David didn't like him, either.

HP: It was mutual.

FK: Mutual, and Martin took the newspapers, and Harry had a press conference, and the fight was on.

HP: That was the way. But it couldn't have eased the problem of --

FK: What we needed was time, time, time, time, time, for the states to get used to the wonderful opportunity they had. Because the WPA was an opportunity.

HP: Yes.

FK: I always had Augusta, Maine, as the example that was anti-New Deal, anti-spending and anti-unbalanced budget, and anti-deficit financing, and anti, but they used the WPA up to the hilt. Now, you cited another example.

HP: The Manistuck School.

FK: Yes. Now, there were spots like that and this man Gloss down in Perdue who had the blue prints, who dreamed dreams about an adequate system of roads for Indiana and a lot of public buildings of one kind or another. He really was an unusual fellow. So he was the salvation of his engineering program in Indiana, but how much of the would you find?

HP: And from the point of view of establishing it, I mean, with the Congress --

FK: The congress had a -- I think the word is ambivalent. Doesn't that mean --

HP: First she's hot and then she is cold.

FK: Yes, and I agree in principle, and that they didn't want so much money spent, but they certainly wanted the boys in their own district taken care of.

HP: Yes.

FK: And that sort of thing, so I don't believe that Congress ever made up its mind about the WPA. They would take a public stance, you know: we must relieve human misery and suffering, but just as soon as we can we are going to get out of this. That was the safe and proper public stance, and privately they worked their heads off to get some big dam project going, which they did in Kansas, which was going to take years and millions to complete. Now, you see, when you're a Congressman, or a Senator in that kind of a situation. you're talking out of both sides of your mouth at once all the time.

HP: Can't help that.

FK: And there was an awful lot of that. So I think we had a queer back-of-the-hand support for the WPA because we always got our appropriations.

HP: It is like having a romance and a break-up all at the same time.

FK: Yes, yes, and you're in and out of love, but mostly out, I'd say. But you see, I'd lived a very protected life on a college campus. I didn't know that kind of business. So this being punished in the public press for things I had not done was awfully -- I was just in a rage most of the time.

HP: In a way, you were compelled to ride the same horse in opposite directions.

FK: Yes.

HP: Which is an interesting trick even on a clear day.

FK: I suppose I was, but I really came into the program at a time when all the policies had been set, you see.

HP: Yes.

FK: And I felt that my job was the improvement of the projects. It really was to improve the project, to improve the project, to improve the personnel. So I wasn't in the tumultuous period that Ellen Woodward had, but we had our difficulties.

HP: How about Tom Moody?

FK: Oh, he's -- oh! Now there is a fellow that I knew very, very well, and I knew him over the whole period that I was with the federal government, which was about ten years, that's WPA and FWA. Tom Moody's story was that he was elected governor of North Dakota, and then after he was elected, somebody snooped around and found that he had lived over the border in Morgan, Minnesota for a period of time, which disqualified him as a resident of North Dakota. Therefore, he couldn't be governor. The legislature unseated him and Tom Moody was a

newspaper man. He looked a little like a bigger Bob LaFollette, hair like that, a presence and a gift of eloquence, and he liked to write newspaper editorials. He was quite a fellow, and very well known over the state. Of course, he had just been elected governor and, of course, there was a great division of opinion. Those who were glad that Moody had been unseated because he had -- you know -- I don't think that Moody was dishonest. I don't think he considered that across the river business. He was running a newspaper in North Dakota. At any rate, the state was divided about Tom Moody. He was out of a job, and he was a good democrat, and he was appointed administrator of the WPA in North Dakota. Well, now, he really had a little of a social worker's slant, that here were people out of work through no fault of their own, and that the bread winner of the family was entitled to a job, if one could be provided. Of course, both of the Dakotas were going through the drought and the agriculture program, the farm security --

HP: Yes.

FK: Oh, we stopped the car one day. This was in North Dakota, and walked over to the fence rail and Moody called my attention to the fact that the noses of the horses were bloody. You know, a horse has a soft nose and they would be grubbing, grubbing, grubbing in that ground.

HP: Yes.

FK: So they were flat. Flat agriculturally; flat as far as employment was concerned, and he moved from the governor's office. Have you ever seen the capital at Fargo?

HP: No.

FK: No, it isn't it's Bismark. It is really a beautiful building. It really is, and it has the low wings and the very tall column in the center, very tall. From the top you could see for miles around because the air is very clear up there. The legislative chamber was done in blue and gold, the colors of the wheat and the sky in North Dakota, and oh, it was a beautiful building, really. The governor's office was handsome. He moved from that to -- there was a couple of stories at the very top of this column which had never been finished off. They just left the rough cement you see -- no flooring, no partitions. I guess it had been glassed in, or was, after it had been assigned to the WPA. Tom Moody moved up there. That was his office as the administrator of the WPA. Well, he started in on the what little -- well, they all started on what the FERA had done.

HP: Yes.

FK: It wasn't too much up there, and I remember the director of his women's projects was Hazel Folly, and she was a hold-over from FERA. A mixed blessing. She in many ways was fine, but did not use good judgment, and I don't think she and Tom Moody ever worked congenially together. They tried too many things. They tried a very elaborate recreation program and they didn't have the personnel, you see, to staff it through the necessary non-relief and leadership personnel. So they tried, you know, they tried -- they were very much attracted by the new projects. They wanted to try something new. Moody was very friendly to the arts projects. He really was. When there was a national meeting of the state administrators, he would lift his voice and say, "I've never heard of such foolishness in all my life. Probably when the WPA is gone and forgotten about, all that will be left will be a few pictures and a few books." Moody said that. He was right, wasn't he?

HP: He sure was.

FK: So he had insight. He had what I would call a really nice spirit about people who were down on their luck. He didn't despise the WPA workers. In some states I felt they did.

HP: Yes.

FK: But not in North Dakota.

HP: Well, the Writers Project there was also under a woman, Isabel Dieruf.

FK: She was replaced, What was the name of that fellow? he was a poet -- oh, dear, I can't remember.

HP: Then Moody tended to support the art projects?

FK: Yes, he did. He really was. Of course, we didn't have artists and we didn't have theaters, but we had a Historical Records and Writers. We didn't have music either. It's too bad because if Moody had been in a more populous state he might have made quite a contribution.

HP: Yes. But he did have this positive outlook.

FK: Yes, he did, and certainly -- he was also a great favorite of Hopkins. Oh, yes, Hopkins liked him. That is, he

was a picture. He would look over a room full of state administrators and Moody would stand out you see, he had an interesting face, an interesting looking guy.

HP: Yes.

FK: And there were some questions being bounced around, like Hopkins was almost always asked to get Moody to speak to the point, and he would get what he wanted from Moody.

HP: He was relevant.

FK: He was relevant, and when FDR made his campaign swings through the West, he was very, very complimentary to Moody and the other wing of the Democratic party. Don't you hope I'm telling you the truth?

HP: I hope that you're telling me what it is you remember.

FK: Well, that is what I'm doing.

HP: Just tell it -- and it's real, it's real. People can see it differently. One hundred and one people can meet the same man and see him differently, and walk away with a different impression. I'm interested in yours.

FK: Yes, that's what you're getting. It is all I can give you, of course.

HP: What about Ron Stephens in Oklahoma?

FK: He wasn't a good guy.

HP: He had no interest in the program at all?

FK: Well, no I don't think it was lack of interest in the program. I don't think he was a good guy, and that was before -- while I was still in the region I heard echoes of Malcolm Miller, who was the regional director down there, who had trouble with Ron Stephens, and Josh Lee was the Senator from Oklahoma.

HP: Oh, yes!

FK: He busied himself with WPA -- I've forgotten who the other fellow was -- but he sort of made the division that Senators often made -- the WPA became Josh Lee's baby, and Josh Lee and Malcolm Miller just fought the battle of Jericho, you know.

HP: Oh, yes.

FK: At sword's point, and finally I think rather weakly the Washington office carved out the state of Oklahoma and said it need not report to any regional office, but directly to Washington -- one of the worst administrative decisions I can think of, really! That if you're subordinate, you don't have to go through channels, you see, and that gave the guys all over the country ideas. Maybe they could do what Oklahoma had done and Ron Stephens, when I came to Washington, was of course, set in cement. He was Josh Lee's -- well, there was no question of Moody, but my first relationship with Oklahoma was mostly going down there to make talks, because Ron Stephens was very prominent in the American Legion and so he asked me to come down there and speak to the Legion convention once. That was quite a feather in my cap if a state administrator asked me to come down and talk to the legionaries, because he was a such and so. Our personal relations were all right. All of a sudden, what do you suppose blew up in my face? That Robert Kerr, who was then the state committee chairman who was expecting to and did run for the governorship, was looking around for unpaid help and he found some at the offices of the WPA and Ron Stephens asked our division, you know, to help in stuffing envelopes and addressing and sending out campaign literature, and so the critics and the opposition found out about it, and the Hatch Act was invoked and did Ron Stephens stand up for Miss Fullerton? No, he didn't! She had violated the Hatch Act. He hadn't! I was wild! I just despised him. I really despised him. That's why I say he was not a good guy. I remember the then -- where was he? -- when I was in Oklahoma Kerr looked me up and we had a lot of talks back and forth about a lot of things. I remember one day he drove me from Oklahoma City to Tulsa and we really had a good talk about a lot of things. He wanted me -- at that time it was kind of late and Churchill was coming over to the United States, and I suppose I was chattering and gossiping. I mentioned the fact that Churchill drank brandy in generous quantities. Kerr said, "You're mistaken, Mrs. Kerr. That simply is not and cannot be true that a man like Churchill would be an addict to the brandy bottle." But after this Hatch Act thing -- and it was nasty; it really was nasty and mean and unfair and cowardly, cowardly -- Kerr came around. He could have ignored me in the whole situation, but he wasn't that kind of a fellow, Kerr wasn't. He came and told me how sorry he was and was there anything that he could do? I said, "Well, you could fire Ron Stephens." (Of course it wouldn't do) "And you could see that Miss Fullerton has a good job at the state office because they fired her." He didn't fire Ron Stephens, but he did give her a job in his office administration like that, which of course he had to do against the criticism of the press. But I tell you, there are darn few instances that anybody could give of where they really took action

on the basis of the Hatch Act, but they did in Oklahoma. So you can have Stephens.

HP: What? But it is I think of interest in there that they had any number of contacts with the University of Oklahoma, Norman, like Homer Hex.

FK: Yes, yes. Well, that would be Josh Lee, you see. He would see that that was -- yes, they did. Josh Lee was, you know, not an average politician. We'll say shrewd and all that, and really interested in education, really interested in a lot of things that maybe some of his colleagues weren't.

HP: Yes.

FK: Because he was a professor of speech, and so he was interested in public speaking. I have some autographed copies of his books.

HP: He was an interesting man.

FK: Yes, he was an interesting man, he really was, and he was terribly surprised when he was defeated. He didn't pay enough attention to his fences, I guess.

HP: No. Either that, or somebody was behind him tearing them down for other purposes.

FK: Well, that's always true. That's a classic situation with all senators.

HP: It's like breathing.

FK: Sure.

HP: Well, West Coast -- what about Griffith in Oregon? E.J. Griffith?

FK: Well, he was one of the real characters in the program. Just different from anybody else, E.J. Griffith.

HP: Really?

FK: Oh, yes. He was tall and good looking and courtly in his manners and was quite a man-about-town, I'd say. Later on, to skip a little bit, he was called in here to -- when Harriman was Secretary of Commerce, E.J. Griffith was one of his assistants, and as far as our program was concerned, we were just in a tub of butter. He was very, very friendly and very helpful, and up to the limit of Oregon personnel we could do what we wanted to there. The only criticism -- it isn't a criticism, it is a comment. He siphoned off a great deal of the quota and the non-relief, supervisory ten percent. The money which was allowed to sort of grease the wheel, and put it into Timberline Lodge. He would take workers out of their homes and send them up to Timberline to work, and they had to have construction shacks and provide their room and board during the work week. Have you ever seen Timberline Lodge? Isn't it something? Phew! When it was new -- !

HP: Yes.

FK: Oh, phew, and our arts project, you see, we die the -- you remember the carved newel posts and the carved beams and the rugs and the draperies and the prints on the wall? They used maybe flower themes. Exquisite, whoooooo! But they escape criticism.

HP: But he was a --

FK: Yes, but he was very, very kind to work with.

HP: Was there --

FK: He liked -- I think he was one of the administrators who genuinely liked the Federal projects and was glad they were in existence. His art supervisor, her name was Smith. I've forgotten what her husband's first name was, but he was the local whatever you call it -- Merrill-Lynch -- he was a wealthy man and they had a lovely home there in Portland. He was very willing that his wife work on this project in the state of Oregon. That gave it status and prestige and goodness knows what. She came down to Washington once, took a look at my office, and she said, "I think, I can improve the looks of this place." I said, "Well, go ahead." She was the one who got the Index of American Design -- all I can think of is panels -- but it is beautiful pieces of their work, textiles, mostly from the Massachusetts project, and put them up on one wall. She got some primitive wood carvings, you know, Madonna and Child, something from the Southwest, and she lined them up. That didn't quite suit her. It was fine as far as it went, but then she went out to some florist here and sent me a dozen white cyclamens, you know. For awhile I just had the handsomest office in Washington just because of this art supervisor from the State of Oregon. Her husband had no objections to it and she liked to do things, and she loved Timberline Lodge,

and of course she had a weeding project, a cleaning project all folded in under the crafts. Anything she said she wanted to do, any trial and error that she wanted to do, or try this worker out on something else and transfer them around, she had leeway -- she had leeway from Griffith, and she had leeway from Cahill. Cahill loved the girl. He was just a --

HP: Hearts and flowers.

FK: Oh, yes.

HP: Was this -- she must have preceded Burt Brown Barker. Did she?

FK: Her name was Smith.

HP: Yes, but I mean, let's see, the one that is listed here was in '39.

FK: Well, I --

HP: It's Burt Brown Barker.

FK: I don't know a thing about Burt Brown Barker, not a thing!

HP: There was a Gladys Everett.

FK: She was the director of the Women and Professional Branch and she was very proud of the work that was done. Gladys Everett, yes, she had started a law degree, later got it and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court! But she got along well with Griffith.

HP: In short, Oregon presented a tailor-made, but good project from the --

FK: Well, from our point of view it did. I'm not qualified to speak about its engineering program, because I think -- I know that Griffith was criticized for the amount of money he spent on Timberline Lodge, but he tried, he was always trying to sell the President and Hopkins and Harrington on some stunning --

HP: Sky scaling ideas?

FK: Yes. Heaven scattered over the region may not -- in the Northwest it would be Timberline Lodge, a monument to what the WPA can do, and do something like that in the South and in the Southwest. He kept urging and urging, "Take a national park," he said, "and just make it from start to finish." That would have meant labor camps for the men, and so forth. Not many of the state administrators would dare launch on something like that. There is a park in New York, White Bear Mountain is it?

HP: Bear Mountain, yes.

FK: Now not -- Bear Mountain?

HP: It's a huge reservation there.

FK: Well, that was considered for something like this. It never did happen.

HP: Yes.

FK: But it could have. I'm not saying that that was a proper use of the WPA funds. Maybe we weren't in business to build gorgeous monuments, but at any rate, where are the farm to market roads and where are Berry's airports down in Tennessee? The Timberline Lodge is still there. I would like to see what the furnishings look like now. I'll bet they are all gone.

HP: Did you ever hear of an Ivan Oaks who was director of operations in Oregon? Was this the engineering -- ?

FK: Yes. I didn't know him. I just met him. I was much absorbed in my own end of the program. Some of the engineers I knew fairly well, especially that one down in Kentucky, because unless he would let go of a little money why we didn't have any.

HP: What about Texas -- Drought?

FK: Drought -- San Antonio -- He was good.

HP: He was good?

FK: Yes, he was good. I think he worried a lot about -- well, Texas was a hard state -- awfully hard state.

HP: It's huge.

FK: Yes, its bigness. I think they had seventeen -- now I'm sure -- districts in WPA. It was a big program to supervise and watch. I always felt that he was an honest man and able, but whether he was on top of things down there, I just don't know. See Lyndon Johnson was head of the NYA in those days.

HP: John Nance Garner was Vice-President.

FK: Yes, sure, but the bright young thing from down there somewhere, Aubrey Williams appointed head of NYA and I remember they had a NYA meeting up in Chicago and Johnson came up and people told me, "Well, he is just as political as he can be. Better watch him." Now "watch him" from the point of view of interest. He wasn't going to do anything bad.

HP: Sure.

FK: But he made bouncy speeches about sugar belts and things, but Drought was a much quieter fellow, but he did last through. He was it.

HP: There was this fellow named Kellam in the Youth Administration.

FK: I don't know anything about Kellam, no.

HP: Wasn't Tom Connelly -- Senator Tom Connelly?

FK: Yes, but I don't remember that he ever helped much. I don't remember that he hindered, either. He was just around.

HP: How about Mary Kay Taylor? Mrs. Taylor.

FK: She was the director of the Women and Professional Project and I never really figured out Mary Kay Taylor. She was efficient and she had Drought's confidence. She got into one mess before I came to Washington. She took up a collection and with the money she bought for Mrs. Ellen Woodward a perfectly handsome set of Steuben glass, and when Drought heard about it, he made her return it. He made her return the contributions because Ellen Woodward had nothing to do with those contributions. I don't know what ever possessed her to do that. She did. She learned a lesson.

HP: Yes.

FK: This gift business! You really had to be awfully careful.

HP: Bend over backwards.

FK: Yes.

HP: Well, was there much in the way of employable in the, for example, in the Women and Professional Project in Texas?

FK: No, no it wasn't a big program. No, it wasn't. I remember the amount of money they had to spend on transportation. It was way out of line, you see, to get from project to project. They didn't have a distinguished program -- really they didn't.

HP: No? Don't you think that space, time and the generation of organization --

FK: Yes, yes, had a lot to do with it. Did you notice that chest in the living room?

HP: Yes.

FK: Well, that is what was made by the Texas WPA.

HP: Yes, carving.

FK: See that little box up there? I don't know if I can reach it.

HP: Yes.

FK: Inside of it is a handsome hand wrought key which is supposed to unlock the chest.

HP: Yes.

FK: In connection with the project visitation, every single district in Texas made a scrapbook about the size of that.

HP: Oh, boy!

FK: The Women's and Professional Projects -- pictures, statistics, and running account of all that was done in that district, and those were set up on edge and put in this chest and sent to me. Those seventeen scrapbooks are now in the Archives. They really were a picture of the Texas project, of the Texas program over there. But the letter of transmittal said that the chest was a gift to me.

HP: Well, you know this is the great variety. How did you do in Utah with D.J. Greenwell?

FK: Oh, I liked him. D.J. Greenwell was especially fond of the Music Project.

HP: Was he?

FK: Oh, yes, he just saved the project. He helped the state director find music. He just wanted a symphony there in Salt Lake City. His support of the Federal projects was one of the most intelligent in the country. D.J. Greenwell was, I think, one of the better state administrators. I rate all of the state projects and state administrators according to their attitude toward my program, and Greenwell was just tops, he really was. He came from a newspaper in Ogden and after the program was over he went back to his Ogden newspaper. I don't believe he is living now, but he was tops. He was a strong man because he lasted from the first to the last. He was kept from the beginning to the end.

HP: Yes.

FK: He and Bob Hinkley were good friends. Bob Hinkley was the regional director who later went to Speri-Rand, and he was one of Harry's friends. He was -- what is it you call one of the apostles of the Mormon Church? He and Harry had a bet once which was a bottle of the best scotch whiskey that Hinkley could get sponsors' contributions out of the Mormon Church, but he never did get it. He had to give Hopkins the scotch. You know, I just boil up when I hear all this easy talk about the Mormon Church and its fine charitable program, and they never accept help because they always take care of their own. They were about as greedy in their relationships with the WPA as any institution I ever saw.

HP: Really?

FK: Did less. You know, their contribution was the minimum, and what they took was the maximum. You can have the Mormon Church along with Ron Stephens! You know, it is a voting dry and drinking wet proposition. That's what the Mormons did. We had a program out there and all that, and I didn't get into that nearly as much as the engineers did because I wasn't fighting so hard for sponsors' contributions and extra stuff as they were. But I know that Hinkley was very much embarrassed because he couldn't get his fellow apostles to come through. They just didn't.

HP: It cost him a bottle of scotch.

FK: What do you suppose will happen to all this tape?

HP: What happened to Mrs. Ruby S. Garrett? She was the Women and Professional director.

FK: Yes, she was much -- her major interest was school lunches.

HP: Yes.

FK: And she worked very hard on the school lunches and she got it going over the state, and I think because Greenwell was so good at the professional stuff she didn't know too much about it. It was on paper maybe, but Greenwell ran the Federal projects and professional projects himself out of his office. Ruby Garrett did the unskilled women by mutual consent. It was a good arrangement. That's what Ruby Garrett mostly I remember her for. She had sewing all over the lot, but housekeeping aid and school lunch were the things she really worked on and trained for and did a commendable job on.

HP: Well, the climate here was good for support, that is, the WPA.

FK: Except for the Mormon Church.

HP: Yes, except for the great Mormons.

FK: Yes -- never accept charity. Well, if they don't! Just when they can get it, that's the only time they take it.

HP: And then with long and deep breaths.

FK: And preaching a sermon on private enterprise at the same time and how much better it is to depend on yourself rather than on anybody else.

HP: That is interesting -- self-reliance.

FK: Certainly, certainly. Well, what is it Goldwater is saying right now? Turn over to private interests. Sure, let's!

HP: What about Don Able in Washington?

FK: Don Able? Well, he wasn't as good from any point of view as either Griffith or Greenwell. Not at all interested in my program. Not hostile, but just not interested. He got along all right. He was never in any fusses, but he didn't do a distinguished job, just an average job.

HP: What about Mrs. Hazel W. Dwinell?

FK: Dwinell? Well, I remember her but not much about her.

HP: Well, was there a sizable program in the State of Washington?

FK: Average, average. I think Able was fair about it. I mean, that the referral agencies had twenty women and fifteen men, why that was the way they were assigned. In Kansas they would have reversed that, you see, there were barely over ten jobs with females and twenty-five jobs for the men.

HP: Irrespective of the cause?

FK: Irrespective, because, you see, he wanted that airport program to go. He was simply determined that he was going to get a good system of airports for Tennessee, little local airports.

HP: Come what may!

FK: Come what may.

HP: We will fly.

FK: Yes, from one Berry Airport to another Berry Airport. The one in Memphis was named for him. I bet it isn't now.

HP: I bet it probably isn't large enough now.

FK: Noooo. Well, that is it. What is a local little grass plot worth as an airport now? History has rendered that completely obsolescent.

HP: Sure.

FK: So he had a vision, but not a big enough one, but who could have seen what the air force would develop into? Who could have?

HP: How about the state of Wisconsin with Phillip D. Flanner?

FK: Yes, Flanner. Well, that was in my region and I believe I worried more about Wisconsin almost than I did about Illinois. I mean, they were my two -- I mean, I worried about both of them an awful lot. I spent a lot of time in both of them. Flanner was all right. He was very much wound up in state politics. He was a devotee of Phil LaFollette's, who was then governor and he operated out of Madison -- just, you know, when you have a little capital and a big city, you know how it goes.

HP: Besides the University of Wisconsin had been relevant to the progressive ideas of government, and so on.

FK: Yes, yes. The reason I worried about it was that I knew we didn't have the right choices there. I don't think Flanner was the right choice as state administrator. I think we could have done very much better, and the director that I inherited -- Well, one idea that was constant and contributed to the work program was I think pretty sound. They had their districts, and so on, but they set up a series of state-wide projects, no local projects. There was state-wide sewing, state-wide recreation, state-wide school lunch, state-wide everything, and it did make for smoother operation. We had -- McKarl was controller general and you know, all of our WPA projects had to be reviewed by the controller.

HP: Yes.

FK: Well, anytime he saw Wisconsin on a piece of paper, that was the time when he held it up, see, because of the amounts of money were much larger than the average for the local projects.

HP: Yes.

FK: And so he would ask for more information. So while I was in the region we were sending them in, writing letters, and so on. We had an awful time getting those state-wide projects through McKarl's office, but that was the only way Wisconsin wanted to do it, and soon in the regional office I thought it was worth trying. Very much worth trying, very much.

HP: Sure, experimentally.

FK: So we would keep after him and we got them eventually, but I think maybe we did it sometimes at the expense of the workers -- that we wouldn't get a unit started maybe as soon as we should have because of waiting for this McKarl approval. Of course, I told you what a fine Arts Project we had under the sponsorship of the state college, and we also had a very good recreation project there.

HP: That's Fred Rhea?

FK: Yes, yes, he was good.

HP: How about this Dr. Myra E. Burke?

FK: Well, Well, her!. You certainly bring back memories. The one before her was the one that I started out with, and she taught me the outlines of the Wisconsin project, because I did have to learn from these state people. I had to study real hard. When Hazel -- any rate, when she resigned, what do you suppose the reason was? She resigned because Phil LaFollette and his wife had decided that the New Deal was on the wrong foot. Do you remember that odd thing that happened when Phil LaFollette went to Europe and got taken in by the Nazis in Germany, the autobahn program, the Social Security? He came back and called a nation-wide meeting, and I think they were going to be Silver Shirts, or something like that.

HP: It was a big shock when it occurred.

FK: Oh! It was a big shock. And my gal was into that up to here. She called me on the phone and said she was going to resign and that a letter would follow. I took the resignation with considerable relief, because after all, I was still part of this administration, the Roosevelt administration, and wasn't wanting to be connected with personnel that was fighting this administration. Do you remember Dave Niles? Do you remember him?

HP: David K. Niles from Massachusetts?

FK: Well, he came up to that national meeting and he came through Chicago and we had dinner together. I said, "What are you doing down here? Why did you go to that meeting." "Well," he said, "I wanted to see what they had to say and see if I couldn't just put a few cautionary ideas into Phil's mind. I don't think he is going to be so bad. They've always had a kind of relaxed attitude and apparently don't get all stirred up about it because it isn't going to get anywhere." That's what he reported back to the president. That was hard on Bob LaFollette, you see, to have his brother go off the reservation like that.

HP: Well, the LaFollette Civil liberties Investigating Committee was turning out great stuff, great gobs of information about the relation between industry and goon squads and it was fantastic! It was on the other side of the fence.

FK: Yes, I know, and I just felt that they were the brains of the Liberal movement.

HP: Yes, and then suddenly --

FK: And then they went to Europe that summer and got taken. I can't see anything else that caused it, because it was when they got back that they began to talk this way and act this way.

HP: It was strange.

FK: Yes, it was.

HP: Terribly strange!

FK: And Myra Burke was a doctor, and a very able and opinionated -- well, very hard to work with. Hard for her

own immediate staff, and so forth, because she didn't want to do things. There was a lot of stuff she just didn't approve of, and what she didn't approve of she didn't want to do. She was much interested in health services and that sort of thing. It wasn't a very happy situation with Myra Burke. She didn't like that -- she was very jealous of the Milwaukee project.

HP: That's the Walker Art Center?

FK: Yes, all that stuff. She couldn't stop it, of course, but neither did she help it. She worked around it.

HP: Trying to think it was not there.

FK: Yes, and not wanting to spend a lot of time talking about it and worrying about its problems. Well, the regional office in Chicago -- I had an assistant by the name of Kiplinger, and one of the things I assigned him to do was to keep riding herd on Wisconsin on the employment they had from week to week, and if it got below, why of course Myra would get a steaming letter from us about what she was allowing to happen to the program. Because we just --

HP: Look.

FK: Look, what's the matter? Your employment in school lunch had dropped. The unemployment roles in Wisconsin haven't dropped. What's the matter?

HP: You know, one of the rough problems was trying to train administrators that the effective judgement was impersonal, after all, as distinct from being personal.

FK: Yes, yes.

HP: And, you know, climbing out of one's self to --

FK: Yes, yes it was. We had a few regional meetings and Kiplinger was great on charts and graphs. Very good, I thought, because they would have the thirteen -- that is, it never got dull. The state directors were always anxious to see where they were. You know, the percentage of the total program. How much of the non-relief they were using and all the various yardsticks by which you measure the quality of a program. Ned always drew a chart. Myra Burke would practically have a hemorrhage when she would see where Wisconsin ranged! Below Missouri. That was bad! Well, I said, "You've just got to get this program going, or we'll get somebody who will." That was the kind of goad we would use, and maybe there would be a lot of praise for this and blame for that, and we had real evaluation session in those regional meetings. They came down expecting me to tell them how wonderful they were. Kiplinger would get out the charts and graphs. Then we gave them hell. There were good spots and bad spots and the spots were right there.

HP: Visually discernable.

FK: Visually! When I was in Washington, why Kiplinger made me some of the same. I remember MacMiller got up and made a prosaic little speech about there hasn't been much change in the work program. Kiplinger's series of charts, you know -- done in color, colored maps -- showed of course that the men had gone by the thousands into the local war industries. No change? We had changed almost from black to white.

HP: The record showed.

FK: I remember Tom Moody so well up there at that meeting. He said, "You know, these administrators are just old man river, they just want to keep rolling along. Why don't you tell them that?"

HP: It is true, though.

FK: Yes, he was just as right as he could be.

HP: Well, how was this L.G. Flannery in Wyoming?

FK: I don't know. I can't think of it. I can't say anything about it in Wyoming.

HP: Margaret Sowers?

FK: I remember her. She came down to Washington and stayed a week or ten days and I had to go from, you know, I even sent the project over to McKarl's office so she would find out what it was like to get approval of the project. That was another thing that I did. I had every state director in my program. Harrington allowed me to do that. He ok'd the program. I had them come in, singly if I could, and every part of my division was supposed to give them a little indoctrination, and then they had to go over to the auditorium, which is now being demolished,

where we had our project division and go through the process of having a project. I remember this girl from Wyoming -- I sent her over to McKarl's office because they get very annoyed with the Washington office with the delay on the approval. I don't blame them -- sitting out there, you know, waiting for the authorization, and you've done all your work and then Washington doesn't do its work. We had our problems, too.

HP: Oh, sure, but this way you allowed them to see --

FK: Yes, I made them do it just on a typical project, and I felt maybe that did more good than a big meeting with a lot of set speeches. It worked the staff awfully hard. Oh, gee whiz -- every week we'd get a quota of state directors. We got awfully tired of it, the Washington staff did, but I don't care. They learned, too, and it was hard on me, too, because I had a constant -- you know.

HP: You had the daily management of the whole.

FK: And then I had to give special attention to these visiting state directors which I tried to do, but really, we did work long days and lots of them. What could we expect. Sometimes I wondered if we had too complex a program. If we had simplified it. Say, well, that's a good idea to have a library project, but let's not complicate things, but the philosophy was as far as you possibly could that the employment fit the person. Usually if there was a demand, say, for a library project, we would argue it a little bit. Then we would agree.

HP: What about the state of California? We never got there.

FK: Los Angeles and San Francisco.

HP: William R. Lawson.

FK: He was good. He was San Francisco, tall, rangy fellow, I can just see him. His physical appearance was very striking. He was puzzled by the arts projects. He wasn't hostile, but he had an art unit there which was a pain in the neck! The sculptor, who is now the state artist by the name of Bufano, I think. Lawson thought that Bufano had been created just to rob him of sleep nights. Gee whiz! He did everything under the sun to embarrass Lawson, and Lawson didn't understand him and Bufano didn't understand him. Lawson called up and said, "I'm going to fire him." I said, "No, you can't do that. You mustn't fire him." "Well, what the heck do I do then?" So you see, Bufano would not follow rules and regulations and Lawson didn't know what to do with him. He was a fine chap, Lawson was, and the program up there rolled. They had projects and they did some work. Down in Los Angeles, Phew!

HP: Nothing?

FK: Phewww! The Los Angeles administrator was so afraid of Hallie Flanagan that when she went into the region once he really imprisoned her in one of the Los Angeles hotels, made reservations for her and asked her as a courtesy to him not to leave it until he could come and go with her. It was really a most embarrassing episode!

HP: This was in the southern part of California?

FK: Los Angeles, and they felt that Hallie was a Commie and if she wasn't a card carrying Commie she was a Commie sympathizer and that she was in there to stir up trouble for them and for the politicians out there. They were scared to death of Hallie, and they disliked her very decidedly.

HP: I think we did mention that southern California was peculiar anyway.

FK: Yes. There was this background, of course, of all sorts of odd groups and then an extremely heavy relief load. You remember that statistic that Los Angeles county had 11 percent of the national relief?

HP: Yes, yes.

FK: Which is just out of this -- well, just ridiculous, of course. It was due to the influx of the Okies, and so forth, and the people, the vigilante group who wanted to stay on top, were willing to use vigilante tactics to stay on top. They didn't like reliefers, and the work relief program was -- well, some of it was trouble-making. There is no doubt about it some of it was justified. There were rabble rousers and people with other than the proper motivation.

HP: Oh, sure.

FK: And they were there, and they were stirring things up and of course the professional projects were much easier to work on. In the first place, they were all in the same room, and if you wanted to get a man out of a road project, that is not so easy. So they worked on our projects, clerical -- all of them. I tell you we were most unpopular to the state administrator, and the Los Angeles Times --

HP: That was murder!

FK: Well, I would put them right next to the Chicago Tribune in the way they took after the work program, and there were plenty of weak spots, and there were plenty of things that they could hold up to ridicule and real concern of what's going on here.

HP: Yes, but they had --

FK: But they didn't help any.

HP: They had Stanton Macdonald-Wright, you know -- Linton H. Smith as administrative office. Joseph Allen. They had some top notch people despite Bufano.

FK: Well, Bufano was a creative guy.

HP: Right, yes.

FK: Yes, they did. They had good people. Well, isn't California like that now?

HP: Very much so.

FK: In the work program, it is just like the California of today.

HP: It is indefinable.

FK: Yes, and it seethes.

HP: It is a cauldron of ideas.

FK: Yes, it is.

HP: And of extreme ideas.

FK: Some very good and some very bad.

HP: Yes. What about this Paul Shriver? Schriber?

FK: Schriber he pronounced his name. Well, he had bright, bright red hair.

HP: Well, that's interesting.

FK: And he was fine, really fine. He was one of the guys whom you felt enjoyed his job. Now Felton, you see, was afraid of his, and Dwight Mood was, you know, a bone tossed to a hungry dog. Schriber liked it and he was a go-getter.

HP: He was?

FK: Yes.

HP: He understood the underlying philosophy?

FK: I wouldn't know. I don't suppose he did.

HP: But it didn't block his appreciation for --

FK: No, no it didn't. His relationship with Washington was very good, very good, and he didn't object to taking orders and he was quite the fair-haired boy. Everybody liked Paul Schriber.

HP: That's something in his favor.

FK: Yes, it was, sure it was. He got things done. Mary Ishan was his director and she was a very matter of fact, solid sort of woman -- was respected and held in esteem. If Mary Ishan said this was a good thing to do, why he trusted her political savvy.

HP: That was good.

FK: Oh, that -- I wish every state could have been like California. We wouldn't have had a distinguished program, but we would have had a going program, and it would have really taken in practically all of the unemployed.

HP: Yes, in other words they --

FK: California crowded its quota, you see, and just got everybody, and poor old Steve Hill in Iowa pushed them away. "Put them back on the relief load. We haven't got anything for them to do." See the difference?

HP: Yes, there was a decided difference.

FK: Rather! I should say so.

HP: Well, there is one other place in Idaho which we didn't touch on. Or, I'd say that we did.

FK: Vardis Fisher?

HP: Vardis Fisher, yes.

FK: Well, Vardis Fisher was good and he had some status and I think he contributed a great deal to the project.

HP: Here is one that we didn't touch. W.J. Jamieson in Arizona. Jamieson and this Helen D. Thomas, Mrs. Agnes Hunt Parke.

FK: I recognize those names. You know, there was a Catholic priest in Arizona who was a real help. A novel should be written about him because from his position in the church and a community leader he exerted a tremendous influence on our program in Phoenix.

HP: Phillip C. Curtis. Father Haas, is it?

FK: Father Haas, and when our people were in trouble or were threatened with trouble, why he was there as shield and protector.

HP: A powerful figure.

FK: Very powerful and he worked in the wings and he worked very wisely, and he liked the federal projects, but he was especially interested in school lunch workers and saw that need there in his parish. I tell you, he was one of the people outside of any official payroll for the WPA that I felt was just heaven-sent, really!

HP: Yes, and he had continuing relations with a lot of programs that developed.

FK: Yes, when the WPA was incident his life. He worked that way before, and when WPA was no more, he was still up working.

HP: Yes.

FK: A leader.

HP: Yes, a leader -- you know, gave a sense of stability.

FK: Yes, he did, and respectability. There he was. I met him several times, but I was just incidental to him. He was very much Arizona, very much Phoenix. He was telling me how to work, and I didn't say a thing.

HP: Well, he was a source of great strength because he knew so much about it.

FK: He knew so much and cared, and he just had -- he had the quality in him. He was a real shepherd.

HP: Yes, that is putting it nicely. I think you're right. A source of great strength by was of orientation to anyone who came on the project.

FK: Yes, and his direct influence was good, and his indirect influence was very wise.

HP: Well, you were in a way another underground railroad system with idea between the regions which you knew and Washington. Washington had its own peculiar problems which had already developed, largely, I think, conditioned by what happened, or what did not happen in New York more particularly than any place else. That is its own strange story. It's like a rear-guard action, and always had to fight. No matter what you were doing as a regional person, or initially in Illinois, so you fell heir when you came East to problems which -- look, they're great. Let's go to New York.

FK: Must we?

HP: Well, I want the distinction to be made somewhere, which is why I spent so much time on these people, that

there were programs and a rich variety of programs throughout the country. They depended largely on chance appointments, and so on. But what was done was tailor-made largely in terms of interest and needs to the local community where you had personnel.

FK: That was the source of the projects.

HP: Right. Well, you know, people generalize about New York as though it were the window of the United States, and I wanted this to point out that this just isn't so.

FK: I felt that -- I went down to the Museum of Modern Art this summer. Mrs. Breeskin was in Europe so I didn't get to talk to her, but I want to talk to her about it some time, you know -- the WPA art project. Well, not a thing there except from the New York project and just a little snippet of that, and the really vital Negro Project in Chicago, I doubt if she even knows about it, and she didn't come to any WPA person before she did it. She is an Eastern woman and New York, is, as you say, "it." If you do New York, why you've done it all. Well, you haven't.

HP: It is intensely parochial and provincial, too. It isn't representative at all.

FK: But it does have leadership. I mean, the New York art projects were distinct.

HP: Sure, I'm not quarreling about that.

FK: But they were not the whole thing. It is awfully hard for New York to be national. They just won't be national. They're just New York..

HP: Subsequently what transpired and what happens to the project perhaps is traceable more to what transpired in New York than it is to what transpired in any other place, with the possible exception of Tennessee, or Massachusetts.

FK: But you see, we wouldn't have lost the Theater Project if it hadn't been for New York.

HP: It's the opening wedge. This is the Artists Union.

FK: Well, I don't know why you call it an opening wedge because it never happened again. It was the only time that Congress said no, "none of the funds herein appropriated shall be used for -- " That is the only time they every said it and it was about the federal Theater Project because they were so mad at the New York unit, and the rest of the country had to go down with them. And believe me, they said plenty about it, too.

HP: Well, do you remember the state personnel in New York? Lester Herzog.

FK: Yes, he was up in the --

HP: Albany.

FK: Albany, Yes. I had dinner at his home a couple of times. He was political as all get out.

HP: How can you live in Albany and not be political?

FK: Yes, he was.

HP: Albany was no great shakes as a political county, even though it was democratic.

FK: It certainly wasn't any great shakes. They had a very inactive program considering what they could have had. They could have had just everything, but they didn't.

HP: Well, take a fellow like Geoffrey Norman, who was out of Albany, the director of the Federal Arts projects.

FK: Yes, I don't know much about him.

HP: Then there was Colonel Somervell of New York City.

FK: Yes, there was, before that, Victor Ritter and "Iron Pants" Johnson -- Hugh Johnson -- boy, what a trio!!

HP: I'm surprised that it got off the ground. How about Mary C. Kenny?

FK: Well, she wasn't up to it. I always felt that she was a tippler. I think she drank a little on the job, and she was a protege of Victor Ritter's. She was a very poor appointment, really! Very poor, I don't think she had the respect of -- well, she may have had sympathy, but not the respect of --

HP: This was a center for the needlework trade in the garment industry.

FK: Now, over in Brooklyn they had just a dandy sewing project, but that was locally built up. I don't think Mary Kenny had anything to do with it, especially, but the district did it. They were more than willing to put the power sewing machines in line production, and the right kind of store rooms, and so forth. So they just went right ahead.

HP: Sure, that could be traceable to the district political leader like McMannus.

FK: Yes, yes, it was purely a district matter.

HP: "Like McMannus gave us coal," you know, that sort of thing.

FK: Yes, yes.

HP: How about Mrs. Audrey McMahan?

FK: Well, I had a very, very vivid impression of her. I used to discuss her with Cahill a good deal. Of course, she was his appointment, I don't know. I'm sure we could have had a better project supervisor. She loved the project and she worked hard for it, but I don't think she had the stature.

HP: You mean to confront the --

FK: Because it was an art center, too, and who was that man at the Museum of Modern Art, a friend of Cahill's?

HP: Alfred Barr?

FK: That's it. Now it seemed to me that Alfred Barr should have chosen the supervisor and if we had somebody that Alfred Barr could have put his hand on and said that this was somebody to work with, we would have been made, but that wasn't what happened and we inherited Audrey McMahan from the earlier project.

HP: FERA.

FK: Yes, we did. Now, as I look at it now, there are so many fights that I should have fought. That's one of the things I should have done. Changed Audrey McMahan, but I never did.

HP: I think you indicated last time that it was one thing to work out in the regional office, and you had a sense of more fluidity and application, this sort of thing, but that when you came East the --

FK: It wasn't so easy.

HP: The problem had really been structured and shaped.

FK: Oh, it was set in cement. I really was much more of a free wheel in the region. I had the courage of ignorance, you see, and beside the program was newer and it was certainly new in my states, you see. New York had had a work relief program before the rest of the country had.

HP: Sure.

FK: You know, those first few years are very important years in setting standards and getting people where -- she was the only one "who has had any experience in this work and why do we overlook her and take somebody who knows nothing about it?"

HP: That's almost compulsive, isn't it?

FK: Yes, it was made so. Well, I gather that you think that I was more effective in the region that I was in Washington.

HP: I thought that that was what you had -- well, I didn't reach the question of your effectiveness in Washington because I think the problems were a little bit different.

FK: Oh, they are.

HP: But I remember you saying that you had a better sense of being able to accomplish something even within the limitations in the region than you were when you got to Washington.

FK: I don't know that I ever exactly said that, but I was working directly with the program, you see. Going to Prendergast and getting some machines for the Kansas City sewing project. That I would call putting your hands

on the program directly. When I got to Washington I was told that I had a two-pronged duty. One was to keep a liaison with the White House just as strong and as detailed as I could possibly make it, seeing the President as often as I could and seeing Mrs. Roosevelt every week, which I did. The other one was to be at the beck and call of the Congressional Committee on appropriations, you see, and in between times the telephone calls and the letters, and so on, for all the Congressmen, particularly when they were on the important committees, and that my staff would have to run the program. They would report to me about the flow of projects and whatnot. But I wasn't working directly with projects. I was working with the White House and Congress. Also Harrington told me -- he suggested it to me as a good administrative procedure and I think it was -- that whenever I had a matter to take up with the states I would not call my state director, my gal out there, but I would call -- I called Harry Drought and not Mary Taylor and said, "Mr. Drought, this is what I would like to have Mary Taylor do." That was a wonderful administrative tip because I don't think that feeling ever existed that I went behind the administrator's back and told the gal on his staff to do something that the state administrator didn't know about. He might not always do what I wanted him to, or change, or modify, or do away with, or something, but you see, he was informed. Sometimes they thought that about Ellen Woodward. I don't think it was true. I think she would have told the state administrator if they weren't in such a terrible hurry. She wanted to talk to who knew about the things she was talking about.

HP: Yes.

FK: And very often the state administrator didn't know. She talked to the person who did know. So there was the shift in my job. I think it was that. I don't know in which place I was less effective, or if I was effective at all, but the nature of the job changed. Of course, I did a lot more speaking after I got to Washington. I found a man in the information division. Roscoe Wright was the head of information division of the WPA. He had a stable of writers. Frances Knight, who is now on the passport division, was in that section and one of them was Floyd Dell. Remember Floyd Dell?

HP: Oh, yes, the novelist.

FK: Yes, the novelist. And when I discovered him I really found a speech writer. So he wrote a lot of speeches for me because I liked him and I liked what he wrote, and I was a great ad-libber anyhow, so that was a very --

HP: Well, was there considerable travel in the job in terms of speeches?

FK: Yes.

HP: Throughout the rest of the country, or more on the Eastern Seaboard, or other spots?

FK: Well, there was a national meeting. I used to go to many of the national meetings here. Oh, I did a good deal of traveling, but do you mean that in proportion of time?

HP: No. What I meant was this the kind of thing where a spokesman representing the central office would convey to local offices or local people the substance of some new change in policy?

FK: Well, I did much of that by private report. I did mostly by bulletins, and so on. Then I used the telephone freely. No, I wouldn't say that I went out over the region to announce a change, or interpret policy. I'll say that much. The staff did that, and besides the major policies were set. There wasn't a great deal of that to do.

HP: That's right.

FK: There were refinements and changes, yes, but mostly stemming from Harrington's office, you see, but that wasn't the major part of my job at all. What I did, if I talked to a state conference of social workers, for instance, it would be usually on the theme of work vs. the dole, or that the work relief program with all its faults was more constructive for all concerned than a basket of groceries. Ringing all possible changes on that theme. Floyd Dell was very good at embroidering that. He believed it, and he could say it. Tom Moody just loved those speeches. He knew who wrote them, of course. He liked those lines. So did Greenwell, but most of the state administrators thought, "Oh, well, that's the woman talking. I don't have to listen to that."

HP: I'm going to come back next week. Can I see you next Wednesday?

FK: My goodness, haven't I told enough?
[END OF TAPE]