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Interview with Edmund S. Muskie by Frank B. Poyas

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996

Interviewer

Poyas, Frank B.

Date

January 24, 1989

Place

Washington, D.C.

ID Number

MOH 017

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Scope and Content Note

This is the third of a series of interviews with Edmund S. Muskie conducted by Frank Poyas. At the time of the interview, Poyas was historian of the Roosevelt Campobello International Park and Muskie was serving his eighth term as Park Chairman. The interview is dedicated to discussions of many aspects of the Park's history and operation. This interview focuses specifically on the Park's facilities and special events. The interview covers the acquisition of several properties, including the Tucker Brown cottage, the Dead River land, the Prince cottage, and the Patterson property. Competing with the Campobello Company for the acquisition of property, anxiety over expansion, the gift of a boat called Lucinda presented by the Rotary Club, a possibility of a conference center, property values, and United States-Canadian relations are also discussed. Several special events are also discussed, including Lyndon B. Johnson's visit and his presentation of a Presidential flag, the laying of the visitor's center cornerstone, and the Park's official opening, which was attended by the Queen Mother.

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Transcript

Frank Poyas: This is Frank Poyas, park historian at the Roosevelt Campobello International Park. This is the third in a series of interviews with Edmund S. Muskie, held in Washington D.C. on the afternoon of 24 January, 1989. I think a good place to start, I want to hold off on the planning, because I think when we come to an over all evaluation we'll be talking more about specific planning for the park. So rather than go over prior planning, I'm going to hold off on that until we come to more of a summary in the interviews. So I'd like to start discussing the development and the expansion of the park.

You had mentioned the other day that it was largely just something that happened, rather than something that was specifically planned. But I'm sure from the very beginning there was thoughts that we needed to protect the cottage itself. I mean, it sitting out alone with a strip of fast food around it wouldn't be the ideal thing. So while you say it just sort of happened, I think there was some planning and background then, and I'm sure that the commission, you know, had all of this in mind. We talked briefly about the Hammer gift, I don't think we need to talk about that now. What I'd like to do is, I'll go through the various acquisitions, and if there's anything that comes to mind as to stories about how it was acquired, or difficulties in acquiring it, or anything in general that's interesting about it. Or specifically, like the first one is the Tucker Brown, which was the old Friar's Bay Inn, (*unintelligible word*) cottage. I'd like to hear a bit about the condition that it was in at the time, and what were the commission's thoughts about suddenly acquiring a building and then having to take care of it. So we could start off by talking about what used to called the Friar's Bay Inn.

EM: Well, that's a long time ago. I, my recollection is that Alex MacNichol initiated that. And I don't know that we conceived of it, it's acquisition, in any particular context. I doubt very much that we had in mind the, a blue print for the acquisition of a building. In fact, I'm sure we did not. We didn't really look at the (*unintelligible word*) cottage in any thorough way as a commission. I think what was done there was basically done as a result of, I think, Dick with his own ideas as to what ought to be done to restore it basically in the shape that it was. But it was not in as bad shape as the Hubbard cottage was, for example, but it did require a lot of pretty fundamental stuff: foundation, the sills, the roof. My recollection is that he pretty much stripped it down, and then started over again with our in-house crew, so it wasn't very expensive to do it. And I think the idea was that, you know, it seemed to him that we needed someplace to put up guests or the commission. I'm sure we weren't thinking about a conference center at that time, and I certainly don't remember how much it cost us. It was pretty minimal.

And then we had to furnish it, and that wasn't handled very well, because we furnished it, and I think it's basically the way it was when we finished furnishing it. I think we did make a bathroom out of, it's on the second floor, maybe the third. But we did have to add some bathrooms, which probably meant, and I could have put it in this fashion, taking over some small bedroom, or taking a corner of a bedroom to put in bathrooms, including the third floor of course. We shouldn't be using third floors in a building like that. But it's always, people have stayed there and enjoyed it, I think, as much as they've enjoyed any cottage. I rather enjoy it myself. It's certainly different, the exterior and the interior. And I think the grounds are very attractive at the (*unintelligible word*) cottage. We have a little of, well they all have privacy, but compared with the Prince cottage it has a lot of privacy. It was one of my favorite cottages, and it was certainly the first one. And it probably, undoubtedly cost us less than any of the others to acquire and to rehabilitate it.

FP: And then the following year, in 1966, we were fortunate enough to receive the gift/purchase of the Dead River land. We talked about that briefly before when we were talking about Curtis, Hutchins, who was, of course, involved. Are there any other comments or thoughts you can remember about the almost three thousand acres we acquired from them?

EM: Well, we had to acquire land from the business end, and I don't know whether that was part of the total package, or whether it was separate, I don't know. I think we may have bought the land for the visiting center and that parking lot, but I don't remember the numbers. And considered the acquisition of the rest of the park area afterwards. I may be wrong, it may have been one package. My recollection is it was a separate deal. Clearly we really hadn't thought, I mean, I think it was offered to us, so we hadn't thought of acquiring a natural area, as I remember it. Your research may indicate otherwise, but when it was offered, and I think the sum was about sixty five thousand dollars, there was no way of saying no to it. And we really didn't know, you know, the treasures that it includes. We had to walk the perimeter, and it was quite a challenge to walk the perimeter. The drives are, they're wood drives from the olden days, but they weren't as extensive as they are now, and there were no trails. So it was pretty difficult walking to, you know, make your way around. So we really have learned what is in the natural area over the years, simply as we've opened it up and thus had an opportunity to see more of it. It's a real treasure.

FP: Do you recall any discussions at the time about Dead River possibly retaining timber rights to that area? And did anything come of that?

EM: Did they want them? I don't recall it. They pretty much cut it over. I don't know if there's timber in there now that would be worth Dead River Company paying attention to.

FP: And also, in that grant there were a couple of exceptions to the deed, land that had been sold a long time ago that were owned by other people. And I believe there still are sections of that land that have private ownership. Is this a situation that presents any problem, or is it something that's an active consideration?

EM: It's mostly on the road from the bridge.

FP: Well, there's that, but I mean within the almost twenty six hundred acres that Dead River gave down on Eaton Cove. I believe there's one acre that's privately owned, and I think there are a couple of very small parts.

EM: Really?

FP: These were areas that were sold before Dead River acquired the land.

EM: No, I understand, I understand. But I didn't realize there were any in the area itself. There were some on the perimeter, along the road. Well, I guess I'll have to get educated on that.

FP: Well, apparently it's not a significant problem.

EM: Well, we did, with respect to the land along the road, we did ask the province, and they acquiesced, to give us some zoning protection. An issue which is now up with respect to the Canadian government. Trying to plug a hole that was unwittingly opened when the Adams' property was acquired by the Campobello Company. So we had no trouble, we had zoning protection. And of course, as our view of the potential of Friar's Head has expanded, I think we could always say we had all of the land on the road, especially on the water side. I mean, you're aware of the two lots that we still haven't acquired that we would like to. And then there's that, is it a trailer, trailer house, that's a bit of an eyesore that we wish we owned. So if we had our druthers, I guess, and could have anticipated at that time what might unfold, we might have tried to get some of that stuff. And we might have gotten it, you know, I'm not sure what price it'll be. It could now, now we can't seem to get some of it at all.

FP: Well, I knew when Dead River sold out to this new Campobello company, I believe it was very early in 1984, there was talk about us receiving that entire seventy three acre plot. We call it the Bridge Stretch where, as a matter of fact, where that trailer is. Ultimately we received, I think, twenty three acres of that, and they retained the rest, which apparently went to the Campobello Company. What happened? That was basically planned to be given to us, but then at the last minute was not.

EM: I don't really recall. Of course the Campobello Company wanted to build a hotel there. I assume that's the way it (*unintelligible word*).

FP: Well, that's more on the (*unintelligible word*) Cove side. But in that, almost like a triangular area, we own half of it, and Campobello owns the other half.

EM: Well, I don't remember why they wanted it.

FP: There were three lots that we acquired in 1967 through legislation, or in council through New Brunswick. Basically, they had been abandoned lots and that was the Newland, Murdoch, and the Wheelan lots. One is the ball field that we got. At the time, we acquired these legitimately through order of council. There was a bit of a question in April '67, the letter from this fellow Hoyt, who was legislative council for the government, questioning the commission's right to own land at all. There was further referral back to the Canadian government which ironed all this out. But I'm just wondering, was that a very significant fear at the time, that the government might suddenly decide we can't own anything?

EM: No, I don't recall that issue at all. Matter of fact, we've made that ball field available to the community to use, youngsters playing ball. That's fine with us, we have no problem with that. Our only concern there was that, you know, that we should control the use to which it was put, so we don't find a ball field, a ball park, inconsistent (*unintelligible word*). That may have been part of the site of FDR's golf course. I don't think we've ever really located the site of that golf course, that he either built or was instrumental in getting built. I assume it was a very primitive one, but he apparently enjoyed golf and was pretty good at it.

FP: In 1970, after something like five years in negotiations, we finally acquired the Johnston property, which included the Hubbard and the Johnston cottages, as well as a fair bit of land in that immediate area. I was wondering if you could recount some of the trials and tribulations that led up to us acquiring that, any stories that might go along with it.

EM: Well, I think we acquired the other lot further, near the administration building.

FP: Well, that was the, those were the lots that we got, finally were given to us when Dead River gave us the area.

EM: No, no, no, this lot I'm talking about was over by, I think a lawyer in Chicago.

FP: Oh, the Tilton.

EM: Yes.

FP: The Tilton lot. That was the following year.

EM: We had to buy that.

FP: That was pretty much a straightforward purchase.

EM: Yeah, except that we borrowed, the only time we ever borrowed money to pay for it. I think we must have had a cash flow problem (*unintelligible phrase*), so we borrowed it. As far as the Johnston property is concerned, again we hadn't really planned for, we didn't have a blueprint for a conference center. And by and large we acquired land when it was available, because we wanted to have it to nail it down before it, you know, was put to other uses. I think that's probably the basic idea we had in mind in acquiring those. The Johnston, or what is now the Hubbard cottage, that isn't what it was called at the time, I forget what it was called at the time.

FP: The Gables.

EM: I think it was called the Johnston, the whole thing was called the Johnston farm as I remember. I mean, it was almost a total wreck. The porch was gone, the chimneys were in dreadful shape. Interestingly, a lot of the present contents were still in the cottage. I mean, anybody could walk in and out of the place, I don't think there was any security. Whatever its original color was, the paint had all gone. But we felt, you know, Alex, I think Alex was still the superintendent, figured that with his crew he could restore it. And they loved the challenge, of course, because they could see the potential. I couldn't, but I was all for acquiring it. And the little Johnston cottage that we now have, that was sort of a little camp. I think it rested askew on the ground, it had no foundation. And I remember Don Nicoll used to stay there with his family when he came up for meetings. Kind of liked it, it was like camping out.

So it was a long time before we decided to spend any money on rehabilitating that. But when it was done, well you know how comfortable and charming it is. I think we were more interested in the land. I forget how much land was involved in those, two, three acres maybe? Something like that. So we felt we had to acquire it because it was right in the middle of our, I think that was the principle reason. The fact that we were able to convert the Hubbard cottage into something that really is a prime attraction to the conference center, I don't think we really knew at the time. But the furniture, you know, as I said, at the cottage today, was there then. Not in its then form. For instance, the headboards were parts of full beds at the time. We wanted to preserve the headboards in order to match the armoires and some of the other furniture that was there. So we didn't have to buy an awful lot of furniture for, of that sort, for the cottage. Fortunately, the original wall paper in the halls, there was enough of it so we could get it copied and of course you can see that all over the place. A little gaudy, but nice. So we became very excited once we began to see the potential of the Johnston cottage, the Hubbard cottage, in making it a real important part of the conference center. I guess that and the Prince cottage. Well, the idea of a conference center just grew as we acquired additional properties.

FP: One more question comes to mind about the naming of the cottages. They've changed names several times, and at one point the commission finally said, "Well, it would be best to go with the original names of the cottages," which they did. Although the original owners of the Johnston cottage were a family named Lord. And for a while it was called Lord cottage, and then it changed back to being the Johnston cottage. I was just wondering if there's a story that goes with that.

EM: I don't remember it's being called the Lord cottage, but I wouldn't challenge that. Well, the Johnston cottage, of course, is not out of the Roosevelt era. And I think it was just a very useful add on, and a way for us to keep the park open in a sense all year round, without the expense of the Prince cottage, which we kept open for a few years. And I think that was one of the reasons we finally decided we were going to take Johnston's, so we wouldn't have to carry the expense of caring (?) the Prince cottage. I don't remember the Lord cottage.

FP: At the time we purchased that, Mrs. Johnston owned that property, and then also, as she still does, owns that final lot down at Friar's Head. When we follow the water line down to Friar's Head there's a little lot down there that she still owns. I'm wondering why we did not acquire that at the same time we -

EM: I guess we didn't know that she owned it. At least I don't remember that we did. And I don't know that we'd have, you know, if we'd had some of the focus that the Harvard Group had on that, I think we'd have earlier decided to acquire that. But Friar's Head didn't, it didn't seem feasible to connect Friar's Head to the park probably. I mean, the Roosevelts never owned the land in between. It was just a location that they liked and they acquired it, and we, it was, yeah, the Roosevelts owned it, didn't they, Friar's Head? Was that part of Dead River?

FP: Well, part of it was Dead River, and part of it was -

EM: The Roosevelts had that -

FP: Echo Point on the other side of the island.

EM: On Friar's Head they had, as you, that structure, what do we call it?

FP: For the teahouse, or the gazebo?

EM: The gazebo. They built that, so I assumed they owned it. We considered trying to restore the gazebo, but there was nothing left of it. And it just seemed like too expensive a project for that location, and the viewing platform seemed like a much better idea. But that's the place where it was, so I'm quite sure that the Roosevelts owned Friar's Head, and also the point up at the other end of Herring Cove. I'll have to refresh my recollection; I'm quite sure Friar's Head was owned by the Roosevelts.

FP: The next major acquisition was in 1977, and that was the Prince cottage, the Matten land, (*unintelligible phrase*).

EM: Was it that late?

FP: November.

EM: Nineteen seventy-seven? I thought we owned it at the time the Queen Mother came to dedicate the visitor's center.

FP: All these figures are going to have to be checked. You may be right, I'm wrong on that one.

EM: Well, I think you should, because I don't recall it was that long.

FP: I don't have all the records yet, I have some notes that I took, and I make mistakes when I jot things down sometimes.

EM: So we met with Matten on the porch of Prince cottage before the deal was, you know, at what time now? I think it was probably in, at the time of the dedication, of the laying of the cornerstone for the visitor's center.

FP: The question I have about the Prince cottage, or the Matten land, at the time it was acquired, several members of the commission were of the impression it was a larger piece of land than it turned out to be. The problem seemed to be the former Archer Shee property, which was owned by Matten at that time. And many members of the commission felt they were obtaining the Archer Shea land as well as the Matten land. It turned out we didn't. I was just wondering if there's some interesting insight into what happened there.

EM: No, as I remember it Matten walked us down to that boundary and showed us where the boundary was going to be. I don't recall that it was different than what we acquired. I mean, when you're offered a gift, you take what (*unintelligible phrase*). If we'd been in the position of buying it, then we might have looked at it differently. But he just told us what he was going to give us, and we thought we were getting such a good deal in that that we didn't argue about it. But I don't think we had any doubt about where the boundary was. And at that time there wasn't a parking area there, so we had tree growth all along there that didn't, you know, that sort of protected you against any intrusion from that side. And when we put the parking lot in there, then it became more visible; knowing exactly where the boundary was, we became more concerned. And then as the other pieces of property, you know, we acquired the Porter property. If we'd pursued some of these more aggressively, maybe we'd have had better luck at that time. But, you see, we, when the park was created we were given that grant. And I don't know if you've checked this or not, but I think we took our operating money out of that, and we wanted to buy, you know, the big areas, the big pieces. And we weren't sure that, you know, just how receptive Congress might be to funding any significant land acquisition program.

So we, our instinct was to do what we could with the money that we had, and we thought we were doing pretty damn well. So we didn't really get nit picky about some of the odds and ends that we weren't able to get. Maybe we were too conservative about it. But the park grew very rapidly. After all, we started with ten acres. First couple of years we suddenly had over twenty-five-hundred. And there was some concern on the island, that I think I mentioned earlier, that we might try to gobble up the whole island. I don't think there's any of that concern there now, especially after Campobello Company came in. And then there were some of the owners of that, those little, those lots. Well, they couldn't have been very prime lots in the past because- nobody had ever done anything with them. There were cottages, the Porter cottage was there and, but you never saw that, and that was pretty much a wreck. When we saw it, there was an old lady still living there, and she wanted us to buy it. But that was too much of a challenge to try to do

anything with it, and we didn't. And then that other property that had a cottage on it, that we now own -

FP: I was going to ask you about that, that's Patterson property. We just this year, I think, received -

EM: Now old man Patterson has died, so under the terms of the agreement that we had with him, we now own it, and we've got to decide whether we want to use it, tear it down, or whatever. The only time I ever saw it I thought it was a cottage worth keeping. I don't know if it's good enough to be part of the conference program, but it might, you know, we might be able to use it in the way that we use the Johnston cottage. But anyway, it's ours, so in the present budget austerity we're not trying to spend very much money on it right now. So there's that cottage, the Porter cottage. Is there another one on any of those lots that we had? I don't think there is on that Matten lot. So we've never, but I think as the park opened up, expanded and became an attraction, I think the people who owned it began to think, well, they've got something that was an investment would have value. So it became tougher to, you know, to sell them the idea.

FP: And now there are, we've touched on it briefly, there are basically three lots along the front, and there's the one that Harry Matten's granddaughter owns, the old Archer Shea land. There's the Johnston property at the far end, and then next to Matten's area is, there's this little strip that's owned by Joe Gough. And are these, these are areas now that the commission is aware of and is contacting -?

EM: Oh sure, yeah, for some time we've been interested in, but our acquisitive instincts have been cooled in the present budget situation. You know, we don't have any money, not to acquire. And before we start going to the Congress and ask for, you know, to put together a capital improvement program, I think, number one, we ought to wait a little bit to see how this budget situation settles down. And then, of course, we want to have a coherent plan, and that's what is of interest in the Harvard design school plan.

FP: But one question I've run across, and having a little bit of difficulty tracing down, and I'll get it eventually, but maybe you can help me with: In the early 1970s there was discussion of the intertidal lands. Under Canadian law, ownership goes to high tide mark. Because of the great expanse of tidal lands, and because of local people gathering gravel and things from it, we attempted to gain ownership for that. It was recalled by several commissioners later that we had in fact obtained an order in council which was unique in Canadian history, giving the park commission ownership of land to low water mark. I've not yet found that order in council. I'm still looking for it, but I wonder if you could add something to that, or point me in the right direction.

EM: I don't remember the issue. Incidentally, we did, we were interested in, at one time, in acquiring (*name*), where that obviously is a Roosevelt, important Roosevelt memory. But, and I think Franklin talked with the Adams several times in the early years. I don't recall the details, but we thought we might eventually have a meeting of the minds on it. At the same time, the people on the island began to get uneasy about how far the park was going to go. And then the

province decided to come in and take it over, and that suited us fine. We thought that the Provincial Park would (*unintelligible phrase*) would be protected, and it would be as useful to us as part of the Provincial Park as it would be if we acquired it.

So that problem was solved, and it helped create a buffer between us and the rest of the island, so we thought it was a good deal all around. And I think the government was planning to build a nursing home on the site of the Adam's property, but they never did go forward with that. And now, of course, there's the Adam's property on the other side of the road that Harry thinks we ought to acquire. So that's another piece that we've got to find some money for.

FP: I know there are several parcels of land on the island that were at one time offered to the commission and rejected. We may have indicated, part of the reason, as you said, were the islanders getting a little nervous about our expansion. One in particular that's kind of interesting was Head Harbor Island. Now that was offered to us, and there was serious consideration for it, I believe, in conjunction with the conference program at one time. Do you have any thoughts about that?

EM: Well, we went out to visit that. I think it was, I can't remember if we made a special trip up there to visit the island in the spring, but I remember it was a chilly day. Chilly morning, foggy, and we were tremendously attracted by the island. But the buildings were old, they were in reasonably good shape. There was a boat house, as I recall it, and a dock. But what concerned us was, you know, how were we going to ever maintain that property, given the then level of our budget. I forget what year that was, I think it was while Alex MacNichol was still superintendent. But it just seemed to us to be divorced from any Roosevelt connection, and that we would find it hard to ask the government for the money to maintain it, because it could very quickly grow up into a jungle, as we've seen. But I guess it was our just natural conservatism. We turned it down with regret. I think the then owners still own it, or their heirs. Quite a long way to go from New York for a summer, a retreat.

FP: There was one other thing that was offered to us that caught my eye, it may be so insignificant that you may not recall, but there was the Lucinda. The Lucinda was a boat, that fifty foot boat that was offered to us by the Rotary Club of St., I think it was St. Andrews. And they felt that we should have our own cruise ship at one time, and some thought was given very briefly, and of course it was rejected. I just wondered if you recall that.

EM: No, (*unintelligible phrase*).

FP: I don't think it was one of the more significant issues. It just caught my eye as being something rather interesting, us running a cruise ship.

EM: We had to be concerned, throughout, concerned with the purposes of the park. Land acquisition, property acquisition, that sort of thing was farthest from our minds. After all, at that time our annual budgets were under a hundred-thousand dollars. And we couldn't have too ext-, and that grant was shrinking pretty rapidly. So it was, we were conservative.

FP: I want to move on from the expansion and talk a little bit about a few of the projects that

are underway. And we've talked around it quite a bit, the convention center idea, which has been a subject on and off since. Long before the commission was even established it was talked about Campobello being a conference site. And then it dies down, and it comes up. It seems to quite often be a discussion of, well, what exactly do we mean by, is this something we can make money on, break even on, or is it something we need to sponsor. Should they be of a high level, or university level. I think it would be a good idea to get on the record some of your thoughts on how this has developed, perhaps where it is now, and maybe some thoughts as to the future.

EM: Well, I suppose in part, well, I think every facility of this kind probably from time to time, thinks of ways in which its existence can become currently relevant. I mean, after all, this shouldn't be a cemetery. It's a place where people live, and people visit, and so on. So how could we get it, you know, invested with more life, more activity consistent with, you know, Roosevelt's interests and so on. So once we began acquiring the cottages, it was natural, I think, for us to think about using it for conferences. I don't think any of us except David Walker thought of it as a potential for conferences at the presidential level, or as even an important international conference center. It just wasn't big enough. It wasn't safe to use the third floors of these cottages, and even if you did, you couldn't pick up more than three or four additional bedrooms. So you, and there's a question of feeding people. David had the idea, you know, that we could elevate it to a high-level conference. I don't think that viewed was shared by the other members of the commission.

So the questions arises, you know, "What kind of things could we do?" And I think it's evolved in a rather active program. It isn't a policy making program. I mean, well, I don't know about that; maybe some of these smaller organizations who go there meet for the purpose of their own organizations making policy. But it's sort of a regional, an interesting regional facility that people find an attractive place to have a conference. It's not expensive; we just cover our costs. We don't have any idea of making a profit out of it. If we were more accessible, if it was easy for people to get to us, I suppose we might begin to have visions of a profit to help support the park. But it's not easy for people to get there, you know that yourself. Of course, it's one of its attractions. So in any case, it's settled now, and there's one person on the staff who sort of has charge of the logistics of conferences. And the commission from time to time sets the fees for board and room and so on. So it's a little, it's an interesting side activity, and I think for what it is, it's fine. You'd have to build more facilities if you wanted anything more. It's not just a question of beds, either; how do you feed more people than that.

FP: Are you suggesting that given the present facilities, the conference center is perhaps at the level that it probably will remain at?

EM: Yeah, I can't envision growing beyond that. It seems to me you'd have to build facilities somewhere, and I can't think of any place on the land that we own where I'd want to intrude on that environment as it is. I wouldn't want to cut into the natural area. Might be able to acquire that Adam's property, but that wouldn't add a hell of a lot. I don't know how many rooms, how many people they can put up there. Do you have any idea?

FP: No, I don't, not very many.

EM: So I don't see, you know, to get a facility to hold as many as a hundred people seems beyond the resources that we've got. Oh, I suppose one logical location for a bigger facility would be the location where the Campobello Company wanted to build a hotel. That has some potential for creating a facility to house more people and feed them. But that's an expensive proposition, very expensive. The Canadian government turned it down. There were grant funds available, but the Canadian government thought that the season was too short, it wasn't viable. It's no longer for us than it was for anybody else.

FP: The conferences that are being held there, reviews we've had from the participants have been very favorable. And for small conferences of the size that will fit in there, they seem to be good, I mean good conferences.

EM: Well, we don't advertise. Just word of mouth, and we seem to, all we've got available, really, is weekends. Maybe occasionally we bite into the week, too, to hold a conference. So for that purpose, I think we do pretty well. I think our gross income from that is, what, about forty-thousand dollars, or something like that, which barely covers the cost. But we don't do any advertising of the park at all, as you well know.

FP: This brings up somewhat related issues to visitors to the park. There's been discussion in the past about, "Do we want to attract more visitors, or are we basically at the limit? We don't want more visitors; should we advertise, should we not advertise?" What are your personal feelings as to where the park is, as far as the number of visitors coming through during the peak season?

EM: Well, my own instinct is to let the thing evolve naturally, in part because of the budgetary problems and the funding problems. I mean, why rush, you know, to advance a problem that you can perhaps avoid or at least delay? And who knows what the visiting will be there? I don't think the park is in a position to shape the future of the island. I think the future of the park is more likely to be shaped by what happens on the rest of the island. And we have no control over that. And when the Campobello Company came in and bought that land, we were concerned, because all of us were skeptical that -

End of Side A

Side B

EM: I think some of those lots were worth five thousand dollars and less. Now, that's fine. I have no objection if, notwithstanding the price of the lot, you know, you get reasonable quality (*break in taping*) . . . probably relatively few of them really intended to build very soon, but just buying the lot, and I think the terms were very low. They didn't have to pay cash, you know. So, if they didn't meet the payments, they wouldn't lose very much if they lost it, and they wouldn't be pursued by the seller for the price. I mean, how far do you pursue somebody for, you know, for payment of a five-thousand dollar lot. So, I, maybe I was overly suspicious about that. And I'm sure that the intention of the developer was positive, I didn't question that, but they eventually left.

So, I was just afraid that what you get, you know, some of these shacks that people put up. And you can see a lot of those in Maine on the shores of some very fine lakes. They weren't regarded as shacks when they were put up. But they were just summer houses, you know, they weren't finished on the inside, most of them, they were painted. And it was an inexpensive form of summer vacation for people who lived in mill towns where the per-capita income is not high. And interestingly, the people in those towns, even though the ponds are very close in many cases, did not choose to build year-round homes then. They preferred to build a year-round home in town, and then. Well, I bought, when I came back from the war, for example, I was single. I was a bachelor, and I wanted a house on the pond. So I was able to buy one: fairly new, fireplace, glassed-in porch, two little bedrooms, a john. No bath, no shower, no hot and cold running water; cold running water, but no hot running water. And I paid four thousand dollars, four-thousand bucks for it, twenty-five dollars down and twenty five dollars a month. Very similar, very similar. And I thought I was, you know, king of all I surveyed. Wonderful, we had some wonderful summers there. We added onto it in due course. But I went down to see it not too many years ago, and the trees had grown up around it and crowded in, and it was much shabbier. And it was treated just like people, you know, traditionally treat cottages. This was China Lake, which is a nice lake, a beautiful lake. There are a lot of people, people, you know, lawyers and doctors, who had cottages there. But they just bought the cottages as I did, they didn't winterize it, they didn't put any money into them.

And I just didn't want to see that kind of thing start up at Campobello. Because it's too easy for people to neglect property in which they have so little invested, and the result is that the appearance begins to deteriorate. Maintenance deteriorates, and then they sell it on the cheap to get whatever they can for it. And then the next buyer's a, you know, even less able to do it. So, I'd seen enough of that on many of the lakes, Maine ponds that I've been associated with, ponds that we used to go swimming when I was a boy up in Rumford and Waterville. There are a lot of ponds around Waterville and Winslow and Oakland. And if you went there to look today, I haven't been to them in years, I think you'd find a lot of these cottages just as I've just described them. And that's what I was worried about on the island, you know. I'm even more worried about it now.

FP: This is what I was wondering: I know the construction has been, shall we say, limited; there's maybe a hand full of houses that have been built or started. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about the present status of the corporation owning that land. What our relationship is with them now, and what you see in the fairly near future.

EM: Well, it's very good, I've never thought bad of the current owners, if I know who the current owners are, if they're investors from Maine. In any case, they seem to be pitting their plans, you know, upon the governor's decision on the hotel money. Now that that's gone, I don't think they have any plans yet, at least I'm not aware of it. I don't know what they're planning to do with it. As far as the, I don't know how many people have built homes. They set up a very professional organization. They acquired the Adams property, for example, as a way of entertaining potential buyers. And so it was very attractive. They put up a model home that they used for an office. It was a small cape, a comfortable cape, and they had it set up, you know, with all the displays and plans and pictures and so on. And they fixed up the grounds of that model home. So, you know, anybody going in and buying it, saying, "Gee whiz, for five-

thousand dollars, you know, I can perhaps have something like this,” and we’d have been pleased with that kind of development. I don’t know what that would have sold for, what it would have cost, but (*unintelligible word*), but that was not a shack, that was a comfortable cape, very nice. But I don’t have very much hope that that’s, and I don’t know whether these few that have been built are of that quality or something else. But they built a good road system, they did a hell of a good job on the road.

What else did they do? They put in a couple of tennis courts, I think, at least two, it may have been four. And they were opening up the island. They were opening up, for example, to visitors onto the golf course. And their golf course is a nice little golf course. They didn’t do that, that was done by the provincial government. But, (*unintelligible phrase*). I mean, it had been the intent that they would have an eighteen hole course, and they acquired the land for eighteen holes, but built the first nine, and that hasn’t been sufficiently viable economically for them to go forward with the other nine. It’s still a lot of fun to play the nine, and they’ve got different tees, so you can have, you know, two different rounds if you want to. You could lose a lot of balls, because the fairways are pretty tight. But it’s nice, and the little clubhouse is nice, it’s been fairly well maintained. But it’s not a profit center, that’s for sure.

FP: Maybe a few words about the idea of a research center up there. Again, this is a subject that has been raised several times, especially since we received the Grace Tulley books. Is this something, are we, the thoughts of the commission, at this time, to expand this, to maintain it exactly as it is? At one point, we were going to acquire all books written about FDR. And then, at one point, we were going to purchase all new books about FDR. Where are they going with the library and the idea of a research -?

EM: Well, you got to have somebody pursuing it, somebody who’s not a full-time person. I don’t see, foresee it, and never did foresee it as a major Roosevelt research center. But I thought that, you know, to the extent that we could acquire books or literature that would be of interest to anybody up in that area who’d like to sort of read up on, I’m not talking about serious historians or readers, just as sort of a source of Rooseveltiana, to have a. You know, if local high school teachers, for example, wanted to read up on Roosevelt and expose their kids to it, then we’d have some books available. And the Tulley collection gives us, we got some good pieces there. But I do think we ought to be acquiring all the new stuff that comes along. There’s some good books. I buy them as fast as I know about them for myself, and almost every year there are two or three that, and I’ve found some of them very good. And so I’d like to see us acquiring those, and we’ve agreed to that, but there’s nobody to follow through. And that ought to be done. But a major research center, no.

FP: One other question, and somehow I got this under operations, but again it’s one of these things that comes up that fascinates me, and I’m having trouble getting the straight answer on it. It has to do with the bronze tablet from the Welsh Pool Library, which was put up in 1946 with great fanfare. And within a year or so after our park was opened, the government of Canada said that they did not want to repair the marker that that plaque was on, and asked if we would take it and put it in the park somewhere, whether in the cottage or wherever. They indicated that this had been what they had wanted to do originally, but since the house was in private hands they could not do it. We agreed to accept the plaque, but we put it off for a year, because we wanted

to wait until the visitor's center was finished, and then we were going to put it there. The correspondence I've run into leaves off there, with that agreement having been reached but left hanging. And I noticed from my visits to the Welsh Pool Library, the plaque is now in the library, back in their museum behind the door where the only way to find it is to ask for it. And even there you can't see it.

EM: No, it's in the visitor's center.

FP: No, it's in the Welsh Pool Library.

EM: The Beloved Island plaque?

FP: Yeah.

EM: It was embedded in the front entrance of the visitor's center, and the Queen Mother dedicated it to. There are two plaques, there's, unless I've just been dreaming all these years.

FP: I know there was one plaque -

EM: One that recites the vital statistics of the park, including the visit by the Queen Mother, and the other was the Beloved Island plaque. Unless there was a copy of one. I don't know, I was told it was the original.

FP: We're going to have to check on this, because I know that plaque is in the Welsh Pool Library because I've seen it. But now what it is that, there's a gap in there someplace that I (*unintelligible phrase*).

EM: Well, there may have been a second plaque. But I know the Beloved Island plaque that we've got there is the plaque that was somewhere on the island, and placed there after Roosevelt's death. And it was offered to us, and we took it and put it up. We didn't turn it back to the library. I wouldn't bet on that. Whether or not there's a copy of that in existence or something.

FP: It could have been a second plaque that was on the library.

EM: I have no way of knowing. And I don't have anything, I don't think I've got anything in my files that. And I doubt that very much it's in Steve's book, beyond there's a picture of it there. Well, you'll have to check it out.

FP: I certainly will.

EM: I'm mystified by that one.

FP: Yes, that's the point of research sometimes (*unintelligible phrase*). Sometimes we go in the wrong direction.

EM: If there's a second plaque, why, we ought to know about it.

FP: That's right. We will know about it very soon after we get back to the island. I want to go over -

EM: Of course, now there's going to be a third plaque.

FP: Right, I understand.

EM: There really should be a plaque for Prince cottage, too. I think, but there's not one for the Hammers, either. But I don't know if we should put all these plaques up and hang them on each of them. But you could have one on the Prince cottage, and you could have one on the Roosevelt cottage, I suppose. No, we thought that plaque that the island people gave us was perfect for identifying the Roosevelt connection.

FP: What was the first-

EM: The one at the library has a reference to his Beloved Island?

FP: Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't, I talked with them about it. She said, the librarian said that it was the one from the marker in front, that 1946 plaque.

EM: In front of what?

FP: In front of the Welsh Pool Library, on the cairn that they had built.

EM: I'm not sure the one that we have was in front of the library.

FP: Well, the one we got, at least according to the correspondence I have from Canada, indicates that that is it because they did not want to repair the cairn, so they gave it to us. It's going to take a bit of unraveling, but it can be unraveled.

EM: My impression is very vague that the plaque we've got had some connection with the church.

FP: That's a possibility.

EM: There may have been two.

FP: There may have been two.

EM: But in any case, the one you're talking about obviously wasn't given to us, because it's now in the library.

FP: Well, that was the point. I have the correspondence where it was given.

EM: I don't think we'd have rejected it.

FP: No, we accepted it. It's, but that's why I say, there's some question. Maybe they asked for it back or something, I don't know.

EM: No, no, no, because it's there. I mean, the one that we got is on the entrance.

FP: This deserves future pursuing. We will reach the bottom line on this. I want to go over for a few minutes today the, just touch on the, some of the main events, the commemorative type events that have happened at the park. Just to get your, not the exact details, but maybe your overall impression of them, maybe a few stories about some interesting things that happened, a little color to go with each of these. And then the next day I was going to be getting a little more on the heavy side again, where we start talking about some specific issues such as environmental issues and governmental relations issues, and then a summary. So I think what I'm going to do is try to cover these events, just talking in general about them for today, and then we'll hold off on the rest of it. The dedication was 1964, when Mrs. LBJ and Mrs. Pearson came. Any thoughts on that, or recollections, or interesting stories?

EM: I'm trying to place it in chronological order. I guess it was the next year that LBJ and Pearson came to the park, am I right?

FP: Right.

EM: Well, the legislation was completed, I think, in July of 1964, which, of course, was an election year. And we wanted the dedication, that was not the laying of the cornerstone, of course, that was the dedication. And that's the reason the first ladies came. LBJ was caught up in the election and didn't, couldn't fit Campobello into his schedule. It was very nice. We flew up with Mrs. Johnson and, see, there wasn't an Air Force One then. It was a presidential plane, but I'm not sure that it was called Air Force One. In any case, whatever it was called, we went up, the, I think the whole delegation. And we were met, we landed, of course, in Bangor, and met there by the appropriate officials, I can't remember if the governor was there. My guess is that he wasn't. But anyway, the small ceremony at the field in the Bangor airport, then we flew, I think, in small planes up to, well where did we land? We might have landed in Lubec, there's a little airstrip there that was used from time to time. No, we went to Eastport, we flew, there is a more substantial air strip in Eastport, that's right. And that's where we went from Bangor. I can't remember what we used for equipment. There wasn't a big entourage, but I'm sure Mrs. Johnson had Secret Service for protection. And we boarded a launch at Eastport, and went over to the island on that launch. I can't remember anything very startling. Both ladies were very gracious and enjoyed the, Mrs. Johnson particularly, she's a great lover of flowers, and all that sort of thing. And to this day she remembers some kinds of flowers that she saw up there in Campobello. And I remember that she or Liz Carpenter, her, I think, business title was Press Secretary, wrote to get the names of some of the flowers. But that's typical of Lady Byrd.

The thing I remember about it was that the decision, or the ceremony, which is on the land side of the park, on that little bit of platform that we built, in the front steps as you'd call it. And we were gathered there, and you'll have to check the records for the names of the Canadian officials

who were there, and the dedication ceremony was under way when I got a phone call from inside the cottage. And it was from LBJ's, they didn't call them Chiefs of Staff in those days, it's important to remember his name. But in any case, the Democratic state convention was coming up in the not too distant future, and a lot of speculation about who Johnson would pick for his vice presidential candidate. He was floating all kinds of names, mine even surfaced at that point. Oh, what the hell was the name of that guy. Anyway, he was calling to tell me that the president wanted me to second his nomination. That, of course, was an indirect way of telling me that I was not going to get the vice-presidential nomination. Anyway, by the time my conversation was over and I returned to the platform, the dedication was over. At that time we had just the ten acres and the little portable john across the road, maybe, I think there were two. Pretty good crowd as I remember it, because of course the whole area was excited about the fact that, you know, this park was going to come into being. That's about all I remember, there was nothing startling. I remember the phone call.

FP: That's great, that's color. Well, in 1966, of course, President Johnson, Prime Minister Pierson came and laid the cornerstone of the park, of the visitor's center. The first thought would be that this is pretty significant visitors to put a rock in the ground for a visitor's center. How did this visit come about, was it some ways almost a continuation of the dedication of the park, or, what stories do we have to go with their visit?

EM: I'm trying to get something straight in my mind. It seems to me, part of my memory tells me that LBJ was up there during an election year.

FP: It was '66.

EM: Sixty six? Oh, so that was an election year. All right. That was an election year. Not presidential, but an election year. And it was important to us in Maine because although I'd been elected governor for two terms and then to the Senate, in 1960 that was the first election year that I was not on the ticket in six years. And that was the year that Kennedy, of course, was our candidate for president. Kennedy won the election nationally, but he did not carry Maine. In large part because of the religious issue at that time, a Catholic issue. And as a result, Frank Coffin, who was our second district congressman at that time, was running for governor, and was widely admired and respected for his ability, and Curtis (?) lost the governorship. And we had, I think we lost the only congressional seat that we had. We had not yet reached a point where we could carry the legislature in any case, so I was left all alone as the only Democrat. And so, in '66 we were trying to produce a ticket, a winning ticket, and it was in that year, I think, that Ken Curtis was elected governor. Did we elect any congressmen at that time? I think we may have. But in any case, we were making a major effort to win in that election campaign, and a presidential visit, of course, is always helpful. And so we tied it in to Campobello.

Landed in Portland, or it may have been the Brunswick Naval Air Station. And I think we took the president up to Lewiston from Brunswick to speak in Kennedy Park, it was, and the name Kennedy Park came from Kennedy's own midnight visit there in 1960. And on the way we were going through Brunswick and Topsham, and LBJ saw one of these places where you can buy this soft ice cream, what do you call it? In any case, he got out and bought one of those, bought, we each got one of those. To this day I think there's a sign there on that place to the effect that LBJ

stopped here or something like that. And went on up to Lewiston, and of course Lewiston was just kind of thing that Johnson loved, you know. Big crowd in a small city, city park, and the bandstand there is a very colorful thing, so LBJ liked that. Then we went back to, it was the cruiser *Northampton* that we boarded, was it in Portland? I guess it was in Portland, yeah. So we boarded it and, all of us, and stayed on board overnight as the *Northampton* went up to Campobello, anchored off Campobello. Then we were flown by helicopter off the cruiser to the ball park. Big day for Campobello, I'll tell you. And then went on to the visitor's center, or on to the, there was no visitor's center, on to the cottage which Johnson inspected. Incidentally, his advance people had no interest in putting the president up in the austere environment of the Roosevelt cottage. He never expressed his opinion of Roosevelt cottage, but I suspect he thought that was pretty small stuff.

But it was a nice affair, because a lot of people came along. Mike Mansfield was there, the whole Maine delegation, I think, a number of senators, I think. As I recall it, the Vermont senator, my memory for names is fading, George Aiken was there, his colleague was there. I don't know how they happened to be there. But there was a goodly number of senators, the governor. Well, of course, it was an election year, and that part of it Johnson (*unintelligible word*). The ceremony was on the same platform that the dedication had been two years before. And they didn't actually lay the cornerstone because there was no, we hadn't even started ground breaking for the visitor's center. We just had the stone on the platform, and they went through a symbolic ceremony of laying the cornerstone, and made appropriate remarks, or at least remarks that they thought were appropriate. And it was quite a nice day. We had lunch under the trees in that open space between the Roosevelt cottage and the Hubbard cottage. Of course the Hubbard cottage was nothing at that time, nothing at all. But a very beautiful day, and we'd set up a bar, as I recall, it on the lawn, on the bay side of the cottage. I think that was the same affair, I'm sure it was. So it was really an outing that everybody thoroughly enjoyed. Johnson presented us with a presidential flag for the presidential study. I don't think Mrs. Johnson was with us on that occasion. No, I think she was, yeah, I think she was. So she made two visits, actually. But after all, that was, what, twenty-two years ago, twenty-three years ago. I've got some great slides of that trip. I can't remember what they said, and I don't know if there's any record of what they said (*unintelligible word*). I don't think, you've exhausted my memory.

FP: You mentioned, did he give this presidential flag at that time, or did he send it later?

EM: The flag?

FP: Yeah.

EM: Well, he brought it, his staff brought it.

FP: Brought it with him. And is this the one that replaced the FDR flag that had the symbol pointed in the opposite direction? Remember, the original FDR flag had the symbol on the presidential seal pointing in the wrong direction.

EM: Well, I don't know whether the presidential seal, I, my impression is that Truman changed the presidential seal. So it's conceivable that the flag, that all the government flags have the old

presidential seal.

FP: But this old flag of FDR's apparently was at one time in the cottage.

EM: It's supposed to be stored. I don't know, so it is preserved.

FP: So, I was wondering where it is.

EM: I don't, we ought to inquire about that.

FP: It's pretty significant.

EM: Yeah, I don't know.

FP: But the one that's in the museum now, then, is that one that Johnson brought up there?

EM: As far as I know. You can check by looking at the, if the eagle's pointed toward the, what is he, either, one of them is an arrow and the other, it's the opposite one, away from the arrow.

FP: Well, he's pointed the contemporary way today, so it's a more recent flag.

EM: Yeah, the peace way. In the peace direction, not the lawmaking. He had a lawmaking claw and a peace-making claw. I forget what the symbol, well let's look, what the hell.

FP: Olive branch and the arrows. Oh yeah.

EM: That's a modern one, that should be the one that's hanging there now.

FP: Well, we'll have to find out for sure where the other one is. I've heard reference to it once in a while.

EM: I don't think the presidential flag is a property of this one, this is a state property.

FP: One other question about that. What really surprised me was this lawn-laying of the cornerstone, because of course I've seen the pictures and such. I mean, it all looks very impressive, but I didn't realize it wasn't actually in the ground, because I guess the building wasn't ready at the time.

EM: No, matter of fact, I don't think, well, in what state was the building? Now, the Queen Mother came in '67.

FP: Right, that was the opening.

EM: So if this was in '66, I don't know how long, how long it took to, to build that. I would think that we'd have had, by that time, the plans, the blueprints. Now, this visit took place, when, in July?

FP: It was August, wasn't it?

EM: August? I find it hard to believe that we actually built that damn thing between July-August of '66 and the Queen Mother's visit in the summer of '67. It may have been, because I've got pictures of the construction of the visitor's center under construction, I think, that I took at the fall meeting of the commission at the park. There are a lot of pictures of the autumn foliage. So at that time it was under construction, I mean the roof was open, I mean it hadn't been closed in yet, and they were laying, I think, the walls. So somewhere, I guess, between then and the summer of, they certainly finished it.

FP: Now, in this cornerstone: apparently it was like, there were items that were placed in the cornerstone, like, I don't know if it was a time capsule idea, or. Is there a, do you recall what is in there? And is there in existence a list of the items that are in that cornerstone?

EM: Should be somewhere, you're supposed to uncover that.

FP: I've been looking.

EM: I don't know where it is. There should be, no question. It may be up in at the University of New Brunswick.

FP: I'll find it.

EM: Well, I'd like to know where it is. And I'd better go through my slides, too, and figure out how the hell all this is, well they could have gotten (*unintelligible phrase*), the, the fall meeting was probably late September or at least in October. They could have closed it in and worked on it all winter. Which is what they must have done.

FP: Do you recall any of the other items that were in the cornerstone?

EM: I don't think I knew what they were at the time.

FP: Oh, really? Was there -?

EM: I'm sure they're the obvious things, a copy of the treaty and the legislation. I don't know what else, (*unintelligible phrase*). But they did not go over to the building to install the cornerstone (*unintelligible phrase*), not as I remember it. I think everything that was done was done on that platform. And I've got pictures of everything that happened. So I think the cornerstone was later taken from the platform and put in place. Seems strange.

FP: That's great, though.

EM: Well, you've got to fill in my memory on that.

FP: It gives me a pointer for future research. On the next big event, as we've mentioned

briefly, was the Queen Mother's visit. Have some stories that go along with that?

EM: Well, she, we learned through our Canadian friends that the Queen Mother was coming to Canada on a royal tour, and she was going to be in St. Andrews. And, I don't know, I guess we worked through our Canadian friends to persuade her people to add Campobello to her tour. So we all went to St. Andrews to meet her. And that was a very festive. She was dedicating a small waterfront park at St. Andrews. There was a nice site over the Passamaquoddy Bay and Newburg Bay, and all the ladies, of course, were perfectly dressed in their summer gear. "Gear" is not a right word to use for ladies' dress. And the Queen Mother was, she's a wonderful lady anyway. So we were there for that dedication, and then we all went down to the waterfront to go out to the royal yacht which was anchored offshore, *Brittanian*. And we traveled with her to Campobello, which didn't take very long of course, and had lunch on board the *Brittanian*. The Queen Mother had three martinis before lunch. I don't know that you ought to put that in any official history. She was really nice, a real neighborly gal, she was nice.

So at lunch I as, of course, the ranking visitor, my wife was on the opposite side of the table, and the Queen Mother just matter of factly autographed her menu for me. And then Jane did what she shouldn't have done: she asked if she'd autograph her's as well. Which the Queen Mother then graciously did, but she was courteous afterwards (?), but that was a little, you know, a little off protocol. So after lunch we, by that time we were at Campobello and the weather was, it was a beautiful day. And we went ashore to the visitor's center, and that was a gay affair, too. And they had two plaques, Beloved Island plaque, and the other one. And she unveiled them. I introduced her, and I don't remember what I said, except in my opening lines I said that in 1900 they'd come to the United States, 1939, I think it was, the king and queen of England. I said in 1939, and I was a young law school student, and I fell in love with the Queen of England. She thought that was terrific. When they returned to Britain, her (*unintelligible word*) sent me a letter (*unintelligible phrase*) how much they appreciated the visit, and invited me to stop by Clarence House if I was ever in London. Which I never followed through on, to my regret. No, she was great. She enjoyed that. After the dedication, we strolled over to the cottage. Went out on that front porch to look over the bay, and the interior of the cottage, and then she got in her car and went back to the dock and off to the *Brittanian*. It was a glorious day for the park. And she presented us with that portrait of hers that hangs in the visitor's center.

FP: Which dock was it she used, she left on?

EM: The nearest, the nearest side one, what's it called, Welsh Pool?

FP: Welsh Pool, yeah.

EM: Nice day. I've got a beautiful picture of her that I took as we were crossing from St. Andrews to, she was sitting in the steerage sheets, is that they're called? Anyway, she had borrowed, it was just a little chilly, so she had borrowed, I think it was Bob Tweedie's London fog. Had it over her shoulders, and I took a picture of her which I treasure. Nothing nasty, just a few martinis.

FP: I've heard that story from a number of sources, so you're not revealing a state secret there.

EM: Well, Congress has been trying to eliminate the three-martini-lunch as a passable benefit, so. They weren't big martinis, I mean they were little glasses, but you could feel them, I mean feel like you -

Why don't you turn that off, I think that's -

End of Interview
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