

David Obey

May 17, 1974

From 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. I worked from the questionnaire and tried to take notes as I went along.

1. He said that he decided that he wanted "as much personal contact as possible. There was not much I could do on the issues." He said he had been elected on a matter of taxes and soon after he got to Congress he put in the Reuss bill on tax reform. He also said his first speech was on the ABM. He said he had to follow up on the things he had talked about politically during the campaign so that people wouldn't think he was just talking about issues to get votes and then wasn't going to do anything about it when he got to Washington. He said "I got home as often as I could, shook all the hands I could because I wasn't well known. I went home 3 out of every 4 weekends and I hit every city and village in the district--every single one. I grasped at every speaking engagement, I worked like a dog at the County fairs, I got to all the TV stations, I dropped in to say hello to the people on the weekly papers. I geared what I talked about to what I had heard people saying during the campaign--especially tax reform and environmental stuff." The general gist of this answer at least as he began to answer the question was that he saw it in two parts. One having to do with personal contact and one having to do with the issues. The point is that Obey does have a strong issue-orientation and it comes through right from the very beginning. *Since he is so*

*issue oriented, it became all more necessary to emphasize style--since he is not particularly a man who does not agree with part of this constitution on social issues.*

1A. Did not ask.

1B. He said "I feel I know more about the issues, about the environment for example. I was a neophyte then but I've spent a lot of time on it, on resource problems. I feel comfortable talking about it." He then went on to the second point, the amount of time spent in his district - "I spent so doggone much time there in the last three years--30 out of every 4 weekends-- people got sick of me. So I go 1 in every 3 weekends now." He then went on to say that he needed the time to learn his job here and that that had become more important to him. He said that when he does go home on weekends he's tired out on Monday and then he goes home on Friday so that he said he was efficient for only three days here in Washington and there's a clear sense that he wants to do more work in Washington. He said he has a map in his office at home showing where he and his staff people have gone and he keeps looking at it to make sure there "are no holes". He said Gerry Madison and Louie Hanson had made up a "weighted scale" in which they had thrown a lot of factors with the idea of telling him where he should spend his time. He said these factors had to do with such things as how easy the place was to get to, how hard it was to carry, who had the best local organization for him to make use of. He said that this weighted scale determined what percentage of time he should spend in each county. And here was an interesting example of his tendency to think in terms of counties. He said that this worked in all but two Republican counties. I asked him what they were and he mentioned one of them as being Bennet. He said that trouble with Bennet was that they had no leadership, no institutions for him to plug into, no rotary clubs and that it was almost impossible for him to make any contact in that county except with the

1B. (cont.) possible exception of talking at high schools. I don't know what the other bad county was.

2. "It is a middle America district. It is poorer than most, older than most, more rural than most. It is basically progressive, it's not a conservative district--it's a moderate district. It is a heavily Democratic district--the third most, or the second most, Democratic district in the state. It is very concerned with bread and butter issues. It is environmentally conscious as far as rural districts go. The northern part is economically hurt." He then went on to talk about the northern area as having lost a lot of railroad business and said he had a lot of retired railroad workers up in the northern part of the district. He also mentioned that the mines had played out in that district.

2A. He seemed to have a little difficulty with this question and asked me what I meant and I had to back and fill a little. But he did go on to say that he thought he had the best understanding of "Marathon, Wood, Portage--the core counties of my old district." "And Lincoln County--I lived in the beer bars of Lincoln County when I was a kid." (And he laughed.) He then went on to say that he really didn't feel as strange in the northwestern part of the district, the new part of his district because he had dealt with those people in the Wisconsin legislature, that he worked closely with the assemblymen from Superior or I guess the Assemblymen from Ashland County and hence he was not

2A. (cont.) uncomfortable with them. He went on to say that he had been in Douglas County 14 times since the election, and that he had done so deliberately. He talked at some length about a speech he had made in (to) the Chamber of Commerce in Superior. He said "I just raised hell with them. I told them that one of the things I dreaded most about going to Douglas County was to hear them cry about how no one cared about them and how nobody paid any attention to them. I told them I didn't want to hear a bunch of cry babies. I told them they were sitting back just waiting for someone to give them a living and that they should get up and organize and get some professional help. I said that they were complaining that they had gotten no grants from the Federal Government and I asked them whether anybody had ever asked for any grants. I said they needed professionalism." He seemed to say that they had a kind of a hang dog attitude and that he wanted to try to get them moving. "They took it very well and they have had a new attitude since then. I talked with some of the people there before my speech and they wanted me to say just what I said I had said. So I think I've gotten to know that County pretty doggone well." The general point was that he had been working hard to digest Douglas County and to get to know it. He then went on to talk about Hayward and how difficult it was to know because it had 6500 people in the winter and 30,000 in the summer. He said a lot of people there had second homes and it was just very difficult to get to know them.



3. I did not ask because I had the feeling that by talking so much about Douglas County he really did talk about at least one important part of the difference.

4A. Did not ask because it is very....

4B. Did not ask. Especially since he talked so much about the counties.

4C. Did not ask.

4D. "It all depends how you define your terms." And he didn't seem to warm to the question very well at all. He said it was a heavy retirement district in the northeast and he mentioned that in Violas City the Chicago Tribune was the largest selling paper. He said people came over to retire in Bennet County from the Twin Cities. He said Wausau was more white-collar than the rest. He said it was a basic-- "a basic working class district with pockets of professional leadership-- in Marshfield, for example, there are 120 doctors." I think it was in connection with the doctors in Marshfield that he noted that some communities had no leadership. This was a theme he came back to quite frequently.

4E. Did not ask.

4F. He said flatly "I don't know." Then he went on to say "there are pockets" and he described several of them. He said Portage and Marathon Counties had quite a few Polish Catholics. He said Wausau was German and Lutheran and was run by the Methodist and Presbyterian churches but particularly by the Lutheran church. He said that there were Scandinavians in the

4F. (cont.) northeastern section. He said there were some Finnish groups also in the northern section and he noted that he had both conservative and "Red Finns" especially. He said that some of the National Farmer's Union people in that area thought that he was a reactionary. There are even a little French in Douglas County. He said that was the only place where it made any political difference for him to note that Obey was a French name. Later on in the interview, toward the end, he elaborated some on the fact that he didn't know the nationality breakdown in the district. He said "you have to understand the kind of person you are talking to. I don't know any of the percentages of nationality groups. I don't even know which one is the largest. One of the reasons I don't know is because I don't have to. Gerry Madison knows all of that. He knows more about Wisconsin politics than anybody north of Madison. He knows all the breakdowns and if there's anything politically I should know, he tells me." He then went on to extoll Gerry as "my best friend" and still "my campaign manager and my campaign treasurer". "I talk to him at least twice a week." I asked him if he would ask Gerry for political advice and he said yes, absolutely. "On abortion for example-- that's a tough one. Gerry told me how it would work out in the various areas and why he didn't think it was going to be very damaging to me. He had it all worked out by groups and by counties. I didn't remember the argument for more than 10 minutes but I did remember the advice." On the demographic sorts of things he would be in bad shape without Gerry, and he knows it. He said that in the last election Gerry predicted the

4F. (cont.) vote. He would get within 2% in every county in the district except one and that he predicted the voting turnout very accurately. He has enormous respect for Gerry's knowledge of the district and relies on Gerry to tell him what will and will not hurt him politically.

4G. Did not ask.

4H. Did not ask.

4I. Did not ask.

4J. Did not ask.

4K. Did not ask.

4L. Did not ask.

4M. Did not ask.

4N. Did not ask -- since most of them were mentioned at one point or another. I think the answers to most of them could be found in the interview but I skipped over those since things were going so slowly and he was not responding terribly well to demographic material. It is clear however that he sees the district as very strongly Democratic and a very safe Democratic district. The population has not been changing much except for redistricting. And it's clear that he thinks labor, business, farm organizations are important and those are mentioned in my trip with him.

5. This one he seemed to have difficulty with because he did not know what dimension I wanted to talk about in terms of homogeneous or heterogeneous. So he struggled with it. He started by saying with respect to attitudes, they are very different in different places. He said some

5. (cont.) counties feel "downtrodden" but Wausau, being the biggest city in the district "feels almost snobbish". He said that in Price and Clark counties they think government spending is terrible and regard him as a rabid New Dealer. He said that in Douglas, Bayfield and Ashland "they are New Deal communities." He said Chippewa Falls is like Superior in both its economic problems and its mental attitude. "Superior is poor and it feels like a stepsister to Duluth. Chippewa Falls is poor and feels like a stepsister to Eau Claire." After he had gone through this difference in attitude, he then said "In dollars, not a hell of a lot separates them." Then he went back to talk about the changes taking place in farming. He said that they were very few farms in the north but now there were a good many farms in the south. And he noted that the top five counties had lost one-half their farm population in the last five years. He said that the non-farm areas could not digest the non-farm population. He said that if you wanted to do a farm spot on TV in Duluth, there was no point in it because there simply wasn't anyone to reach. He said he didn't know that until he campaigned there. He talked about the opportunity for development of recreation areas in the northern part of the district and said he thought they had a future if they built slowly and wisely, especially in the Apostle Islands area and Bayfield into Ashland adjoining areas. He said he thought they should build the kind of area that would attract "high class tourists and not the guy who just wants to go from bar to bar. It could be very

5. (cont.) junky like a little Las Vegas if they don't do it right--if they just try to make a quick buck." He used Wisconsin Dells as a bad example of a beautiful area that had been turned into a little Las Vegas.

5A. Did not ask.

5B. Did not ask, since he seemed to have difficulty with the whole notion of heterogeneity and homogeneity and...

6. Did not ask because he put so much stress on the Democratic nature of his district but, #6 is one question I could ask him when I go to visit.

7. Did not ask.

8. When I asked him his first question was which election?w. I said 1972. He said "It was the people who knew me against the people who knew Olski." He said that he carried Alvin's part of the district by 2,000 votes but he carried his own part of the district by a margin of 2 to 1 and that seemed to him to tell the story. He noted (in an answer to a later question) "I got 50 per cent of the vote in Douglas County; next time I'll get 70 per cent in Douglas County." He said he didn't do as well in the rural area in Ashland as he had expected because there was a feud between the NFU and the NFO and he is identified with the NFO. He mentioned Swanny H. Hill, the local NFU leader who was involved with the NFO in a battle over the control of the local cooperatives. Dave is identified with the NFO because Larry Dahl is his home secretary and has been affiliated with the NFO for years. He said he didn't do as

8. (cont.) well in Lincoln County as he had wanted to, that they knew him but they also knew Alvin from an earlier time when it was in Alvin's district. "In terms of ethnic votes, I don't know." Then he said the Scandinavians are Republicans. "A lot of conservative business people who were offended by O'Konski supported me even though they disagree with me philosophically. They thought Alvin was not a Republican, a cross-breed, and a little bit of a charlatan to boot. They didn't trust him."

8A. "I've always felt that the groups who vote for the Democrats are less homogeneous than the Republicans--campus intellectuals, the younger and more militant farmers, and labor union blue-collar. The Republicans get the white-collar--main street, business types. But the Democrats are not divergent philosophically."

8B. Did not ask because 8C. seems to be the same thing.

8C. He said that in 1970 he got a rock bottom Republican vote. He got 68 per cent in that year. He said there's just no way he can get anymore than that, and he went on to talk more generally about his support and opposition. "If you take it by community, I'll get the majority of the farmers, and city votes. I won't do well in the small villages--Stratford, Spencer, towns of 400, 600, 800, a 1,000. That's the rock-ribbed Republican constituency. Some of them are Protestants, Scandinavian or German--German loyalty goes back to World War I when they followed La Follette in being against the war. The opposition tends to be the main street hardware dealer. I look at that kind of a guy in a stable town where the newspaper runs the community--the typical

8C. (cont.) School Board member in northern Wisconsin--that's the kind of guy I'll never get. At the opposite end is the Country Club set. I'll sure as hell never get them. I'll get a fair percentage of the votes of the business interests at the top--but not the junior executives who are scrambling their way up and are afraid to vote Democratic for fear they may not get to the top. I may get the vote of the president of the company but never the ~~two~~, second, third, or fourth man." He then went on to talk about a specific case in the town of Park Falls. "It's a company town. The paper mill thinks they own that God damn town. They had a lockout there. They said if Obey won they'd probably have to shut down. But that if O'Konski won, he would keep the EPA away from them. Obey, they said, worked with the OEPA. Anyway, labor worked for me there, but the community was very scared. I was disappointed in that county; I thought I could break even but I lost by 800 votes." He used this as a particular example of Republican last-ditchism. But he noted later on in the interview that after he had won, the paper mill people asked him back to make up and he went there and had a meal with them or something.

8D. Did not ask.

8E. Did not ask.

8F. He said traditional party loyalty was first. "I always say traditional party loyalty is most important even in the worst year." Second was individual record and personal qualities and here he talked (this was the 1972 election) about age <sup>vs</sup> ~~for~~ youth, about Alvin's TV involvement,

8F. (cont.) that seemed kind of shady and made him out to be a wild guy. He said the national issues were third most important and that they actually hurt him, since Nixon was doing well and McGovern not so well. He said the exception was Douglas County which went for McGovern because it is a basically Democratic County. He said Proxmire and Nelson carried it by huge amounts and he told a story about how Alvin O'Konski walked into a dinner for Gaylord Nelson, got up to speak and said what a great guy Nelson was and pulled out a great big ballot showing people in Douglas County how they could vote Democratic all the way down and then vote for O'Konski--which they regularly did. And Dave more or less marveled at the brass shown in this event. Then he talked about the Chilsen race. His first race and he ranked the four items differently. He ranked party loyalty first, but he ranked state issues second because he went after Chilsen on the tax bill passed by the Assembly. He explained that when I was in Wisconsin. He said national issues might have been third since the day before the election the Secretary of Agriculture said there would be no increase in milk support prices and Obey was able to get out a message on Election Day, I think, telling people to send a message to Washington by voting for Obey. Clearly his own individual record and personal qualities did not bulk very large in his view. In the Chilsen election, his first election,

8G. He answered.

8H. He had answered some.

8I. He never answered.



9. (This was the biggest disappointment of the interview.) I simply could not get him to speak very clearly about this question. He did not distinguish between the people who voted for him and his strongest supporters. He simply viewed all of them as his strongest supporters. He said the normal Democratic vote is 58 per cent and he couldn't imagine getting less than 50 per cent of the vote across the board from all the groups who supported him. So I then asked him the question about a primary. He couldn't conceive of a primary. He said the only primary he could think of would be a right-wing Bircher type just to give "just to give me fits." "I'm hard put to figure how a Democrat would come at me in the district. I'm strong on the campus and with labor. More likely, they would get opposition from campus groups, but I would be flabbergasted if I couldn't get the nomination." He just couldn't conceive of opposition within the Democratic party. Later on, he did talk about the Birch groups and how they were frightening the county land use officials because they were against any kind of land use planning in the area from Neillsville up to Ladysmith. He said the financing of the Birchers was coming from Marshfield and he mentioned the O'Conner family, cousins of Lairds. ("The Laird family has two factions, the sane and the insane.") He went on at some length about these Birchers and how they combined a certain amount of populism in their attacks on the bureaucracy with a certain anti-communism. He said he could always tell when they had a meeting because he would get some round robin letters as a result of it. And he seemed to give more attention than I would have thought necessary.

9. (cont.) He even got a map and drew a picture of that area of strength, but I don't think they're very important. Anyway he could conceive of a Birchite running against <sup>him</sup> I guess in a primary.

He did say one interesting thing that seems to run through his description of himself at a number of points. "On issues, the Liberals are happy with my vote--happier with my vote than with me personally. I vote in a way that would make university-types happy. But in terms of my personal relations I feel more comfortable with farmer and labor types. The one-issue people are driving me up the wall. The typical common cause member gives me fits. So many people are becoming one-issue types--the municipal employee, common cause. It's a great problem in politics today. The farmers are not--for example, rural people were more concerned about campus violence than anybody else and they were not immediately concerned.

10. He answered earlier.

11. He answered "maybe 5 percent".

12. "Not very much. Most of what they know is what I tell them. They know more what kind of a guy Obey is. It comes through in my letters, 'you care about the little guy'. And I'm associated with 'some reform stuff'. The labor guys know generally that I support working people's legislation. The doctors know I favor national health insurance, but they have confidence in my competence in the area. A lot of it has to do with your own personal demeanor. If you're not shouting and screaming, if you are casual, even boring--I've watched myself on television and I'm boring--people think you're not going off half-cocked. But in terms of

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12. (cont.)specific vote... (he just shook his head)a (He did say there was one league of women voters lady who knew his votes better than he did. He said he met with her once and it was 'delightful'." (He laughed as if to say, here was someone taking him seriously.)

13.& 13A. The first thing he said he was interested in was Congressional reform and he said he was writing a newsletter on the prospective breakup of the Ways and Means Committee now, trying to indicate to his constituents why so much legislation was held up. "My main interest is in the House institutionally, and they don't care about that unless you can link it to what happens to them." He went on to say again that he was interested in occupational chemical use. He thought it was "a damn good labor issue". And that it would be developed in time with national publicity and so forth. But he said if he went and talked about the national institutes of occupational safety to labor groups now, they wouldn't be the least bit interested. He also noted that his people were interested in inflation and he certainly had no answer to that. He said that "Agriculture is not my personal interest. I'm very much interested in things like personal privacy. But that's not guaranteed to win zealot supporters."

Though his major point was that his interests were not the same as the interests of his constituents, he did make one important general point. "I have an instinctive distrust of the kind of people who have run the kind of town I live in for ten years--two or three people.

It's pretty obvious to anyone who looks that <sup>?</sup>in that respect my interest *does not* coincides with their interest."

14A. He said that no vote could cost him his election but he thought gun control would be the most difficult vote. "I could get away with voting for hand gun control. They wouldn't like it but it wouldn't hurt me very much. Long guns, voting control over long guns, would cost me 5 per cent." The tenor of his answer ~~was~~ this question as well as to the next question was that since he had such a large margin, he really didn't have to worry much.

15. He began by talking about campus violence and how his position was different from those of his constituents. He then went on to the question of amnesty. "I never shouted about my feelings, but when they asked me I told them." He went on to say that this year Mel Laird had talked about some compromise position on amnesty and was attacked by the VFW for it. "It was a perfect time for me to go public, hard and loud, and I did--in a speech in Laird's home town, Marshfield, before the Rotary Club." He said they were opposed to him and there he was defending their own hometown boy Mel Laird. He then discussed the trade bill and he said he had a lot of trouble on the Jackson-Vanik amendment. Essentially he took the Conable position on the bill, that Jackson was demagoguing the issue and that the amendment would actually make it harder for the Russians to loosen up Jewish immigration. He said he had a very few Jews in his constituency and they were not terribly important but he then added "In terms of a future constituency--were I ever to run for the Senate--my position

15. (cont.) would cost me heavily. In order to run for the Senate I would need money from the Milwaukee Jews, and they are very adamant about the issue." I came back to the notion of the possibility of a Senate race later. I then asked him about the school prayer. He said he was a little worried about that, though he didn't get much mail. He then went on to the question of abortion. "That's a tough one. The Catholics are madder than hell. But I don't think it will cause me too much trouble. We did a questionnaire asking people what issue was the most important and only 5 per cent listed abortion. Those 5 per cent will probably vote completely on the matter of abortion. If the election were very close, it would hurt. As it is, it won't beat you but it will make the campaign a shitty campaign--talk about butchering babies. And the irony of it is that personally I am against abortion." The unifying thing about all of these issues, it seems to me, is that they are social types of issues and not bread and butter issues. He has no trouble with bread and butter issues.

16. Did not ask.

17. Did not ask.

17A. Did not ask.

18. Did not ask.

(There is a note of mine after 16B. that I cannot read and might go back to it at some point. It doesn't relate to 16B. but I can't read it.)

19. His answer to this question was very similar to the one he gave me when I was with him in Wisconsin, that you ought to let people see you and be very frank even blunt, with them. "Most of the time people will allow you. If they have confidence in you and if you haven't gone off half-cocked, they will give you the benefit of the doubt. It's a matter of people getting to know you and hearing you. That's why I do a lot of Q & A stuff, just let it all hang out. I've gone out of my way to be blunt on some issues, even to disagree with people. It's a shock when you do that but ~~(you listen, but)~~ they listen. For example, I tell people now that they are to blame for Watergate--not the politician. It was the people who ignored such things as wiretapping, the invasion of privacy and the abuse of power, that politicians had been warning them about for a long time." He returned to the theme, again, that this is a very difficult time to be a politician and that it's very easy for people to think in terms of one issue or to think very simply about one issue, and he used the energy crisis as another example. "The energy crisis was a sticky one. After I finished kicking the oil companies, then I said that we had to tackle some long-run problems in the energy field. I sounded like a shill for the oil companies. But hard work and a lot of study is very important and needed at this time. It's so easy to take a cheap shot--people bore so easily. It's a terrible time to be a politician, to ask people to study and think."

20 through 22. Did not ask.

23. & 23A. He said that it would not hurt him to cut back his visits to the district. He said "This year it isn't that helpful to be home that much. When impeachment is on the House floor and even when it's in the Senate I won't go home. People would want to know why I was home when impeachment was going on in Washington." He said "I go in spurts" and when he goes he tries to cover everything in a given area.

He then commented on his campaign experience in terms of boring people. "If you get into a community 3 times in six weeks, they begin to get bored by it. I noticed this in my 1970 campaign. At the end, the crowds began to fall off like crazy. When you've seen Obey once, why go out to see him again."

I asked him whether he didn't see the same people again and again. He distinguished between <sup>his</sup> 1970 and his 1972 strategy. "In 1970, I geared into the people who were the arms and legs of the campaign--the people who were already strongly committed. I was trying to keep my coalition going, not trying to add to it. Now I try to go in for non-party groups more. I try to get people I haven't talked to before."

24. Did not ask - had answered earlier.

25. Did not ask.

26B. Regarding his possible race for the Senate. "I've thought about it a lot, but it would be impractical. In the first place, it's my nature. I don't have a very exciting political style. It's the inside things that turn me on. I can't generate the kind of press that someone

26B. (cont.) Les Aspin does--and on motherhood issues. In the second place, I come from the wrong part of the state. In order to be successful in a primary, you have to fall within the Milwaukee TV area. The way the media breaks, I wouldn't stand a chance of a snowball in hell against somebody in that area like Aspin. He's on Milwaukee TV all the time; I'm on maybe twice a week. I'd lose 3 to 1 against him. Also I think you've got a lot more political problems as a Senator. You can always find a high-class candidate to run against a Senator and you can always raise money for him."

As we were sitting around talking afterwards, he returned to the subject of ques. 23. He said that he was going home every other weekend now and he also said that "Larry Dahl and Bob Jauch have been holding office hours in every county seat once a month. So I have laid off going home this year to play up the office hours. I want to get people thinking that way. And it's been a big success. After one meeting, Larry sent in 22 cases--social security, veteran's problems, things like that. When they went to Ladysmith, he said they were standing in line down the hall." His point was that he wanted to play up the idea of office hours and that if people thought that he was going to be around, they might not think in terms of the office hours.

I asked him a little about the upcoming election, which has the filing date in July I believe. I asked him if he wanted an opponent or not, since no opponent has surfaced as yet. He said that "I'd rather not have an opponent. If you have a weak opponent, and you beat hell out of him



you're likely to lose your organization. Next time, it's very hard to rev up the organization. But if you have no opponent, then when you do have an opponent you can say 'This time we've got an opponent' and you can rev up the organization and get it to work." He also said he was quite sure he would get an opponent because he said, "You can always raise \$25,000 in this district for a Republican." And he noted that when Mel Laird was in Congress, it was very hard to raise money to run against him. "Sometimes we couldn't get \$5,000 together for an opponent to run against Laird."

He then talked about the campaign strategy he would follow. He said he thought he would spend about \$25,000 and that he would run mostly to help assembly candidates in his area. He said his main device would be to have receptions. The idea is to get 40 or 50 women in a community to run a reception for people to come and meet Dave and his wife. Each woman invites ten friends. He had found that to be very successful in the past. "Hell, in little Clintonville, in Wapauca County, we had 400 people. We get some tremendous crowds and a lot of new people. We have a reception line and I make a small speech. If the local candidate is there, he makes a speech too. It's a very social event, lots of joking and very easy. It's the most effective thing I can do as an incumbent. You are there in the local community, it is well covered in the newspaper, and people talk about it for days. These receptions--for invitations for the hall and for the refreshments will cost us about six to seven thousand dollars."

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I never did ask him about his most trusted advisors because I think I know who they are. He mentioned Gerry Madison. He also mentioned Louie Hanson as a man, or the other man, who knew the district well. He said Larry Dahl knew the farm areas very well. He mentioned Tony Earl who is running for District Attorney in the Democratic Primary and how he had helped him.

We ended with him giving me his itineraries and making comments about various meetings which I shall never remember. He also told a bunch of stories about the poor quality of local leadership in some of the small communities.

The real difficulty with this interview was simply that I could not get Dave to make the distinction between his voters and his strong supporters. For him, the primary constituency and the reelection constituency are coterminous.

End of Obey interview.