

Philip Sharp - November 28, 1995

- At Institute of Politics (Harvard)--extremely good natured--laughed a lot. *very diff. in Dm!*
- "Would your district be a good one to study?" He didn't rise to the bait on this one in the sense that he didn't show any enthusiasm for the idea. "I don't know how typical it is. It has almost no blacks--2%, maybe now it's 3%. There are a few hispanics in the district, but they don't register politically. There is no ethnic mix. Oh, people will speak of themselves as Irish, but there are no Irish clubs. Ethnicity just doesn't register politically in this district."
- "What there is, is a lot of religious diversity." He ticked off the groups "Church of God" was one he dwelled on, Amish, Memonites. (Said later that President of UAW in Muncie was a member. "He was a strong supporter of mine. He was with me on economic matters, but on social matters he was not. So he straddled--pulled toward me on economics, but pulled the other way on social issues.")
- It's a conservative district in the sense that people are slow..." When he mentioned religious groups, I asked him if he "distinguished" among them. He said no, but he went on. "The most stupid mistake any politician could make in this district would be not to take religion very seriously. To take it lightly or be flip about it would be the height of stupidity in this district. You might get away with it in some urban districts; but not in this one."
- One change in the district has been the coming of the Japanese. They have come and opened up a hundred or so small shops making auto parts. They are all over the district and they just popped up. They are changing the face of the auto industry here."
- Re change--^uThe face of the auto industry has changed. There has been a total change--a revolution--in labor management relations. And it has been all to the good. The Japanese have had a big effect."
- I could spell this out and probe if I go out with McIntosh.
- He started in, early in the interview, talking about the auto industry, especially the auto parts industry. Spoke of its effect on communities generally--like farming the farmers. "You couldn't be in the district very long without noticing the importance of the auto parts industry. It's the most important economic interest in the district--even though fewer people work in the industry than before."

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- "There's a lot of agriculture. By some measures, it's the biggest segment of the economy, but there are fewer people in it now than there were."
- "Contrary to what I'm going to say tonight (in speech) when I'm going to push politics, I always tried to be non-political, to emphasize my small town background. I did not come on as a politician with loud or strong positions. Wherever I went--in town meetings--I always listened to contending points of view. I always look for common ground. That's why people liked to come to hear me, I think. They knew I might not agree with them, but that I would listen and think about what they said. That was my strength in Congress, too. Maybe I was too passive; but I don't think so. I didn't come in and say, "We've got to have a deal, now." I let things work themselves out. And the '92 Energy Act was a good example of how successful it could be. Still, I worried--as politics got more intense--that I didn't have enough of a definition. I wondered whether or not I should not have more bite, more definition, get a little more harsh. But that's not me; and I never went through with it. I didn't mean I never shouted. At a party rally I could deliver a tub thumping stump speech. And I enjoyed it. But I was very different at Kiwanis and Rotary."
- At some point I said and he agreed that this style was the same in Congress and at home and that it was easy, therefore, for him to be himself, the same self in both places. He put a lot of faith in his authenticity I think. "I always knew who I was, which is not always the case in politics. Some members didn't know who they were or forgot who they were, they get pulled in so many different directions. I think that is how I survived for so long--I know who I am--or I think I know!"
- "Abortion was the single most difficult issue for me. Early on I supported some of the Hyde exceptions, not Hyde-raw, but Hyde-with-exceptions. Later, I was on various sides, since the issue kept changing. I was never pro-life; but I was never completely pro-choice either. I spent a lot of time thinking about the subject--how I felt about it philosophically and how I would present it philosophically." Said he was asked about it a lot.
- "I always voted against capital punishment. We worried about that politically, because my constituents were 80% in favor of it. My opponents would allude to it, but they never made a major campaign issue out of it. I think they realized that if they did, they would paint me as taking a principled stand--which it was. I told people that if I wanted to be political, I certainly would not be taking the position I did."

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- "Very much a marginal district."
- Republican papers (Indianapolis and Muncie). "They never campaigned against me--either politically or personally. On the day before election, they would endorse my opponent. But they never came after me on any issue or at any time. I attribute that to my dullness. I wanted to stay dull. I didn't want "thumb up-knock it down" like the Japanese (?) (Here he stuck thumb up and pounded it down--laughter.)
- He disagreed with Almanac description of district as different with nothing in common. "I don't see it that way. They are the same kind of people. They are very slow to come to a decision. They want to listen for a while. They are slow to give trust. And if you lose their trust, you'll never get it back."
- I think trust is a big thing for him. When I asked him whether he thought McIntosh could hold the district for 20 years, he said, "I don't know. He could I suppose. But his staff prepared a document that purported to be the balance sheet of some interest group--but it was all made up. That's not exactly the way to hold trust, is it? I don't know how much it was played up in the papers back home."
- I had asked him before that what he could do that would lose trust the quickest. He mentioned any financial scandal, adultery, things like that--then he added, "I had some checks--but I survived!" My guess here is that he had built up a cushion of trust. And--that he believed McIntosh had no such cushion.
- It doesn't sound like a particularly interesting district. The major change has been up and down of auto industry. Was down in 80's and had "revival" in 90's.
- Columbus--"I always told myself that 'I loved them the best.' But I couldn't say that. It's a remarkable town for its social atmosphere. It hires world class architects. When legal services shuts down, the Miller Foundation puts in money to keep it going. The Miller family has been socially oriented--very different from the Ball Company in Muncie. They're interest is bricks and mortar. They say they have a social conscience because they are building schools. But it's a world of difference between the two."
- He distinguished the businessmen from "the hard right." "There's a hard, hard right in the district. They are (Pat) Buchanan supporters. They never supported me."

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- "The pragmatic businessman--country club people--thought of me as "possible." They did not view me as Johnny Dingell, Mr. United Auto Worker. I wasn't always with the UAW; but I usually was. I always got some support from business. In the auto industry, I was usually supported by both management and labor."
- "When people talk about economic development in this district, they mean diversification--usually within the auto industry."
- I asked him about his hard core support. "A good question," he said. But he admitted he couldn't answer it. And he didn't.
- Re his district. "I never thought about the 1991 district as my district. I only ran once in it. And I had to keep reminding myself, 'Oh yes, Anderson is in my district.' It hadn't been in it for 20 years. I never got used to it."
- He said Indy media covered most all the district. They used a lot of media. Says he "had good relations with the reporters" in district--he went to talk with editorial boards but "not as often as we should have."
- Not good on policy/personal basis for representation.
- "Richmond has the Quaker influences--but there are war and peace Quakers."
- Religious opponent--"We worried about him when we found our polls showed that 40% of the voters were concerned about the decline in religious values. But he was too far out. He had no TV in his home. He had no idea who was saying what to whom in the outside world. It was our easiest race."
- "In Presidential years, we'd get 52-53% of the vote. In off years, we'd go up to 56-58, even 60%. Off years were best for us. Then more Republicans would come out and we'd go down."
- Two thoughts--town meetings have come into their own since early 1970's. Politicians struggle to be himself/herself in face of pressure to do otherwise is a major problem for them. What are ramifications of that struggle?
- "I was not a 'trustee' out there somewhere making decisions on my own. I was concerned about what my constituents thought and what they wanted. People would ask me, 'what are you, a delegate or a trustee?' It's a mixed bag."

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- Frazier, his perennial opponent, had strength among workers because he was an average guy. But he wore out his welcome after a while. He liked Frazier as an opponent because "we learned how to deal with him."

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