

Charles Thone

September 13-16, 1974

Friday, September 13

Rode with Charley from Chicago to  
Lincoln (arrived 3:30)

6:00 University of Nebraska pep rally

7:00 Cocktail party in Lincoln (driven home by Wohlers')

Saturday, September 14

8:00 Breakfast with correspondents of First National  
Bank of Lincoln

11:00 Campaign meeting and luncheon

1:30 Nebraska-Oregon game

5:00 Drinks with Melba and John Scott, State Sen. and Mrs.  
Leon (?) Schmidt at Nebraska Club.

Sunday, September 15

5:00 Flag Dedication Douglas

7:00 Otoe County Republican Party Barbeque

Monday, September 16

(109 miles, 1 3/4 travel time, 8778 population of  
communities, 11:00-6:30)

Clatonia (224)

Dewitt (651)

Plymouth (424)

Fairburg (5265)

Chester (459)

Davenport (427)

Bruning (315)

John Hanlon, Melba and John Scott, Imogene Bruce,  
Peggy Schmidt, Marily, Linda. Dave Stevens.

First real political comment he made came after we got on the plane in Chicago and while we were being delayed on the ground. It got a little frustrating and maybe that triggered it off--but he launched into a kind of soliloquy. "I don't know what I'm doing in this business or why I ever got into it. The family situation is terrible. I just spent ten days in the district. Ruthie and the kids were here for the first three days and then they drove back to Virginia to start school. I came home Wednesday, went to the office and then had to go to a dinner for the life underwriters group. A Nebraska congressman has to go. If you don't, they won't speak to you again. (Insurance is the third biggest business in Lincoln.) Then I got home late that night. The next day I had to go to a breakfast and another cocktail party to see some people from Lincoln who were in town. So I got home late again. That was yesterday and here I am going back to Lincoln again for 5 days. I'm a yo-yo. You work so hard to get it and when you get it you wonder what you did it for. It's like joining a fraternity--I worried so much about it, but when I got to be President of the House, it didn't matter anymore. It's so competitive. I like that. And I like the excitement. But you spend so much time and effort--for what? I'll tell you--to get reelected. I'll be more frank with you than I would be with most people. We spend all our time running for reelection. No sooner does one election end then you start gearing up for the next one--especially in a district so evenly divided, Republican and Democrat, as mine is. Of course that was the idea, to keep member of the House close to the people. They sure succeeded. And I can see the wisdom of that. When these pressure



others and picks "people to watch" i.e., DuPont, Heinz, Kemp for promising careers, and asks me about others. <sup>Burke Condit</sup> Almost as if he were still a state chairman recruiting people to run. In conversation,--at the cocktail party and with the students in his office before we walked to the rally--he asked people for their opinions on the Ford pardon and what people were thinking, but gave no opinion of his own.

Re debates with Dyas, he said "My people say I would be crazy to do it--that he would just get publicity. He hasn't asked yet; and if he does, we will just be busy that day. I think I could make him look ~~bad~~ on the issues. When you've been in Washington, you know something about all the issues--maybe not much, but something. And on Agriculture, I've learned a lot about that subject from being on the Agriculture Committee. I could make a monkey out of him on those issues. But maybe he could study up on others and make me look bad. I thought if we did debate I'd send him a copy of my 3 1/2 year voting record beforehand and ask him to tell me how he would have voted on each of them." Point is, he's not overly sure of himself on the issues.

Also, what impresses him about Dyas (his opponent) is his technical sophistication as a politician. "Berg couldn't have worked harder. My God he was dedicated. But he didn't have any of the right techniques. Dyas has a background in politics and he knows what makes people vote the way they do. He knows how to do it and he knows what will work. He's taken a lot of polls and he's used the information. Berg only spent \$25,000. Dyas has already spent \$40,000 and expects to spend \$100,000. A lot of it is Labor money. I



am a COPE target. They think I may run for the Senate and they want to knock me off while it is less expensive. They will help Dyas get out his vote. Any politician would have to worry when someone was spending \$120,000 against him--especially if that person knew what he was doing. And now he's walking in the district. He's smart. Our whole strategy is to get our supporters to the polls. Dyas will sure get his out." The difference between Dyas and Berg is not liberalism. It's political proficiency. Dyas will get Democrats that Berg couldn't. But it's not issue matter.

He talked a lot about how hard it was to raise money. He had put a \$100 limit on per person contributions to his campaign and turned down all special interest contributions (such as 7,000 from doctors, Medpac or whatever). Had \$45,000 and shooting for \$80,000. Will have Ronald Reagan in Norfolk for couples-type dinner or reception. And if all goes perfectly, he'll raise \$5,000. (\$20.00 per couple). It's hard work and he's now for Udall Anderson match bill. Says his constituents are against it--but he's for it. Poll he took showed constituents overwhelmingly against any public financing. *It's more a technical political base for Charley than moral matter - money help by him.*

Dyas criticizing Charley for not being aggressive leader on behalf of Agriculture, for being too public relations oriented and not effective--stuff Charley says Dyas picked up in his polls. Charley says first issue Dyas used vs. him was his opposition to land use bill.

Everywhere he went--starting with stewardesses and then to John Hanlon in the car and then going in to students and then at cocktail party he kept asking re. reaction to pardon. "I keep taking little polls all the time."

At football game--walking in. "In my 4 years with Hruska I got all over the state. And with my other activities such as the Legion and the Jay Cees, I guess I know as many people in this state as anyone around here. You fight so hard to get recognition when you are working your way to the top. And when you get it, you'd like to give it up. We have no privacy around here." Appropos of everyone calling to him. And I said, how do you remember the names. "I work at it."

Said (during Monday trip) that he'd defended Ford on Rockefeller at a meeting in Newnan Grov(??). That he had explained that Rockefeller had no part in amending process on abortion--says he's sticking with Ford. Said people didn't change minds, but understood his position on the matter. Charley right now is very pro-Ford--feels he knows him, likes him.

After we left the Nebraska Bankers Association Breakfast, we walked down the street with a guy from Thayer County--who said everything looked fine. "He's from Thayer County and I have to discount what he says a little. He's such an enthusiastic Republican. That's a problem. You get surrounded by cheerleaders. It's a fatal dose if you swallow it. I have a few old pros who give me the bad news. But when they do it, it hurts you right in the stomach; and you have to stand there and smile. We have sessions where a few trusted friends criticize my speeches and tell me where I'm falling down. They are the most valuable meetings I have."

At football rally, coach Tom Osbourne said, "I like Charlie Thone. But I'm not going to write any letters for him." A reference to flap when Athletic Director Bob Devancy wrote a couple of letters supporting Paul Douglas, Republican candidate for Attorney General--on Department of Athletics stationery! Charley spoke briefly and said team would win with

student enthusiasm. Then he introduced Osbourn. "I worry a little about going to a pep rally like this. Sometime the other side will send its troops over to heckle. They didn't. But I kept it very brief. Our two Senators cannot stop talking, I'm sorry to say. Besides people aren't interested in politicians when football is the subject. They used to introduce public officials at the football games and they get bored. Curtis did. So they stopped it. People take their football very seriously here."

Again and again, he and Melba and others talked about football as "the one thing that brings all Nebraskans together. Do you know that one out of 20 Nebraskans will be in this stadium this afternoon. They take their football very seriously." Nebraska beat Oregon 61-7 and no one left till end. "They want blood" said Melba. "You can't describe it. You have to see that sea of red to appreciate it. People come from all over the state to the game. The crowd is an extension of the team. It's hard to tell where one leaves off and the other begins."

Charley's campaign button is a red "Thone #1"--a direct takeoff on the "We're No. 1." You see it all around.

Charley's association with the University and the football team is total. He dressed up in red--up to his hat--and listened to game with ear phones. (We sat on 50 yard line, guests of a Mr. Chapin of KFOR, the radio station that broadcasts the games and John Hanlon's former radio station. "I loved the college. It's the best time of your lives. And what I like about Lincoln is the University and the football. It's just the right size now--a university-dominated town, a great place to

raise a family. But it's growing--Kawasaki is moving in with 200 jobs. It's going to get too big."

Charley talked as we walked over to the football game about how he arrived at the college. He hitchhiked, had \$60. "I was dropped off at the corner of 16th and O and I didn't know which way to walk. I had never been to Lincoln before. So I walked around, found a boarding house, plunked down part of my \$60 and started in. Luckily, I was given a wonderful advisor who guided me through the first two years. He recognized me as a country bumpkin and had a great influence on me.

Even political issues are related to football. Rob Roman reported great opposition to 55 mph speed limit as soon as football season started. People want to get to game and back in one day.

On the airplane, we talked about the impeachment situation. "Either way I voted, I figure I was bound to lose votes--about as much one way as the other. We took some polls in various parts of the district. About 14% said they would vote against me if I voted for impeachment. And, I guess, about the same number said they would vote against me if I voted against impeachment. But what surprised us was that 14% who would otherwise vote for me, said they would vote against me if I voted for impeachment--for that reason and that reason only. My hunch is, and we will never know that I would have voted against impeachment. One thing did send up a signal to me--when Mr. Caldwell Butler voted for impeachment. Larry Hogan and his grand stand play, he didn't affect anyone. But Butler, a quiet, respected, honest conservative Virginian--if he voted for impeachment, he must have known something I didn't know. I had a brief conversation and we had agreed that he would give me an hour before the vote. He said 'If you're worried,

I'll give you an hour and I'll explain why I voted the way I did." I said 'I'm worried.' But there was an important precedent--as far as Nebraska was concerned. At the time of the McCarthy censure vote the two Nebraska Senators split. Roman Hruska voted against the censure; he survived and went on to bigger and better things. Helen (?) Abel voted for the censure and she became persona non grata to the Republicans in Nebraska forever after. If I had voted for impeachment, many many Republicans would have said to me, I will never support you again Charley Thone. I have gotten some of that reaction even now. After Nixon admitted he was in on the cover up, I announced I would vote for impeachment. I got some pretty poisonous letters--from conservative Republicans. But the number was no where near as large as it would have been." It was intensity of hard core that "surprised" him. And he was going to stay with his hard core.

At his campaign luncheon, one of the county representatives said he'd heard some criticism on Charley's impeachment announcement. Charley stressed that when that came up--or any other single objection to his voting record--that the person emphasize the overall record. As CT put it "Ask them if they approve overall (arms sweeping outward and inward) of the kind of record I have and the kind of job I've been doing. Overall--not just individual votes." Charley's balancing act is so delicate that he can't let people pick on just one vote.

"When I campaign outstate I stop in every bank--for obvious reasons. Every bank, every law office, every barbershop. And I'd sooner pass up a bank than a barber shop. Do you know how many people a barber talks to in a week--one every 15 minutes. I send all of them congressional calendars, and I'd say half of them put them up in the shop."

He and Dave Stevens were talking organization--volunteer organization. "We have amateur politics out here. We have to organize our own campaign, because the party is hopeless. We don't say that out loud. We just smile and organize. The Thone for Congress organization is as good an organization as has ever been seen in Nebraska. Years back we had a good party organization going, but not now." Idea was that when he was state chairman, they had a good organization.

One of his inside group--Rob Roman, who was the state and national chairman of the Young Republicans--talked about this phenomenon and was very upset about it. Said you used to have one coordinated Republican party campaign; now you have ten. Every man for himself, and it weakens the party. He hopes some strong man will come along, unify the party and get it into shape and knock heads of people who are running off by themselves--like Thone and McCallister (for whom Rob worked).

Incidentally, Rob compared McCallister's district to CT's by saying that Mc had more labor in his district, but that Charley had greater liberal element. And that Mc had more conservative voting record than Charley. I guess labor not as "liberal" as the University types; or, Charley worries about the liberals and McCallister does not. Jim Dodson, the bearded student with whom I talked who is working for Charley ("As Democratic as I am, there's no way you can't help liking Charley Thone.") Said Charley was most liberal congressman or senator Nebraska has or has had in some time. He also said Charley would get two-thirds of the University student vote.

Charley's organization is set up so that Stu Erickson coordinates northern counties, Dave Stevens coordinates southern counties and Lancaster

County has its own organization. It has a man and a woman co-chairmen (they were at meeting). Says CT "That divides it up almost 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 in votes. The southern counties are more liberal than the northern counties and Lancaster<sup>is the</sup> most liberal. The North is very conservative. That's why Ronald Reagan is coming into Norfolk for the fund raisers. They love him in that area. Some of the counties in the far south--they are pretty conservative too." But this one-third, one-third, one-third is interesting. Charley almost never talks about demographic or social differences. It's much more in terms of liberal, conservative. He balances them and is "independent."

On the plane, he talked about the Right to Life group. Said they were small and not very important. But he said he had signed the discharge petition for the Hogan Amendment. "I read the Supreme Court decision and I didn't like it. They wrote law, no doubt about it. So I thought why not let the states act on it. Maybe it was a political cop out. But I'm a strict constructionist and I didn't like the Court decision. Ruthie is all pro-abortion." Here, again, he worries about whether what he does was politically motivated.

Most of his positions are politically motivated I think. Charley is either the most frank person I'm with or the most overtly political. I think the latter. That he is my most perfect weather vane, finger-in-the-air, ear-to-the-ground politician. At the campaign luncheon he said he needed about \$25,000 more for the campaign and that priority was (1) a poll "which is already committed" (2) stamps for mailing (3) TV and radio and newspapers. That the poll should be first is not surprising--though no great revelation either, I should add. His background, as party organizer and technician--

may help explain his preoccupation with technique and winning and survival.

When I showed him the 1972 county-by-county results and asked him to tell me where he would do better or worse, he looked it over and laughed and said, "Of course, it all depends on turnout. But I can't run this well again anywhere. It will be closer in every county. The Registration figures show that Democrats and Independents outnumber Republicans now in the 1st District." Berg worked hard, etc. but Dyas knows what to do. Then he did designate certain counties where he would do proportionately worse--"because they are Democratic counties, and because of some other things I know." The counties were Butler, Colfax, Saline, Thurston and Dakota.

His organizers are, many of them, young people and he's conscious of the young people. When he bought a carnation from one on game day, he said "You've got to help the young people. Pay attention to them and bring them in. Out two Senators do not do that, I'm sorry to say."

He often compares himself to the Senators. That's either a small state phenomena, the result of Charley's Washington service or the result of "progressive ambition."

One indicator of how out state counties view Lincoln came when I asked Senator Schmidt of Butler county whether Lincoln papers were good to him said. "A Lancaster County Senator gets more publicity when he goes to the bathroom than I do when I vote to override the governor five times."

The opinion seems to be that Charley has a lot to carry around on his back, with Watergate and the pardon, but that he'll <sup>probably</sup> ~~publicly~~ win OK. Charley is particularly sensitive and asks everyone what they hear about



the reaction to the pardon. He has not expressed himself at all. At the cocktail party, I overheard a private conversation between Charley and some old croney. Croney: "Charley, what do you think about this pardon business?" CT: "What do you think about it?" Croney: "What do you think?" CT: (Silence) Croney: "I think the same as you do about it. That a lot of shit will fly for a little while and then it will all die down." I did not see CT's reaction to that, but he did not <sup>dr. 38</sup> ~~dr. 38~~ the old croney.

In reflecting on where Charley seems most at home, I'm not really sure I've ever seen him unbend. He tends to be a little stiff or perhaps "studied" is a better word. He certainly loves the University--especially its football--for what it has done for him and means to him. But he certainly didn't lose himself in the game (maybe it wasn't that kind of game). He was fairly sober in the campaign meeting--though he knew everyone ("I work at it."). Maybe in the small towns, he'll be more "at home." He is certainly pleasant--smiles, is quick--but not "deep" in any direction or sense that would enable you to say of him that "here is his emotional base and his home."

Sunday I got down to the office earlier than the staff, and got in a few words with Charley--which was a help, because Melba talks all the time in the car--I found out.

Charley began by saying he'd been thinking about the list of counties I'd given him yesterday, to list where he would win or lose. "On further reflection I don't see how I can gain anywhere. In 1972 there was a big turnout, and Republicans benefit from a big turnout. The other thing that's happening--and we heard it yesterday--is the increasing polarization between

the parties. I pulled a lot of Democratic votes last time that I'll lose this time--everywhere, and more in the few counties I indicated. But Dyas has strong identification with the Democratic party, having been state chairman all those years. Berg never had that identification--he was a minister. Other than the peace movement thing you had last time, the issues they are using are about the same. Berg talked like McGovern, but Dyas was more of a true McGovernite. Dyas is much more liberal than Berg--if he were honest about it. But he's being very cagey. He's diffusing all the issues --talking about a balanced budget and criticizing the size of the federal bureaucracy. Those aren't his real views. I've talked with him before; and unless he's moderated his views, that's not Dyas. His wife is a militant socializer<sup>(sic)</sup>--or whatever you want to call it--she believes in equality of economic position for everyone. I understand that's getting around in Lincoln now." Point is that candidate changes reelection constituency.

He then asked me if anyone else had let me into their campaign meetings and I said 90%. He was surprised (My figure is a little high, I think). I asked if my presence was inhibiting to anyone. He said only a couple. "The cops and robbers types"--Jack Sche~~ltz~~tz would be one." He talked about Jack (who had seemed to be in charge of fund raising) as man who was his executive assistant when Charley was state chairman. He said Jack worked hard and travelled all around and all he asked for was expenses.

"When you asked him to do something it would get done, as and when you asked."

Jack is a doer and not a talker. There aren't too many people like that in politics--there are too many talkers."

Again the organizational-technical emphasis rather than the verbal-issue articulating emphasis. Charlie is the first type and he is the first type. Irony, for Charlie, are what you manipulate. BC thinks of CTOs "quietless".

That led to discussion of who you trust and where you get a reading on your constituency.

"District-wide, there isn't anyone whose political judgment I trust. I think of it in terms of regions. I know Bob Thomas knows Norfolk backwards and forwards, that Wayne Wolfert(?) knows Fremont inside and out. But district-wide, I rely on my own judgment. And I have to keep stepping back, even more so when people get vocal and there are emotional issues. But how do you ever know for sure what people are thinking. You don't. Any congressman who tells you he knows is fooling himself--or you. I can do pretty well using my experience. Most important, you learn to listen, and then to evaluate and digest what you hear. You have to be especially careful on emotional issues. Like abortion--wherever you go, there's a vociferous group opposed to abortion. You would think that was the only position. But the polls don't show that, they don't show it at all. On the pardon, I knew what the reaction was on the streets of David City and Schuyler the next day. I was walking them. But they are Nixon haters in that area and you have to be careful. I must say that what I have heard on the pardon, I don't like. There is more opposition here than I thought there would be. When it happened, I thought Ford would get through all right here. But still, we'll have to wait and see on that:" So, he discounts on basis of (1) source (he said yesterday) (2) nature of issue (abortion) (3) reaction time (pardon--short/long term reaction).

On the way home from Syracuse, he used the regional distinction again. In his talk, Charley had said that we should begin to look ahead with Ford

and not rake over the past. I asked him whether that was what they wanted to hear. "I'm not sure that was what all of them wanted to hear--they are pretty conservative. They think Nixon was railroaded. But I think there's a chance for me to lead. We can't keep going over the past. (Melba broke in and said: "But you can't tell them that north of Norfolk" and Charley said) These people are 'north of Norfolk' (Norfolk) in their thinking."

Charley didn't push policy in any of his talks. In Douglas, he said it was a good county and a good town. In Syracuse he said, let's think about future and ~~lick~~ inflation (esp. re. government spending) and back the Republican ticket.

When I asked if he could help other candidates, he said he thought he would help Mar~~vel~~ (running for Governor) and that he was trying by talking him up. But he didn't think anyone could help him. And organizationally, I don't see Thone halping anyone. The Thone organization is the Thone organization, period. He acknowledged that they all did run separately.

Douglas was a Democratic town. "There was no way I could lose a vote at Syracuse. They are rock-ribbed Republicans. Douglas is Democratic, and there were a lot more potential voters--we call them "doubt file"--there." He mixed and mingled in Douglas a lot more and ate there. At Syracuse, there were as many candidates as voters. Douglas was all voters and he had it scheduled beautifully to get in at end of Syracuse dinner and really spend time in Douglas. Lest we get this out of perspective, I should note that the population of Douglas is 175 and Syracuse 1500. But Syracuse was a Otoe County affair--except that Charlie says Nebraska City and Syracuse fight and hence people from Nebraska City wouldn't come.

Afterwards, John Hanlon said "Did you see how all the other candidates crowded around Charley afterwards. He's the king pin, the old pro." And that's the way I'm beginning to see him more and more. From the Thone scrapbook--these notes re. Dyas. He continually talks of "the clique" that is the Nebraska Congressional Delegation--all 5 Republicans. They are "two-dimensional officials--they run errands for constituents and they react to other people's ideas." Journal 8/9/73: Re Thone "a total disregard for working people" and doesn't scrutinize Pentagon budget enough. Thone part of "clique". Journal: Star 12/9/73.

Dyas was executive director of Democratic party--a paid official--for 4 years, the State Party Chairman in 1970 which became paid. Before that he was 3 years a school teacher. He's 36 years old.

Dyas says CT's record "one riddled with image saving vote swifching. He has, over and over again, managed to vote both for and against important issues of the day. He has groomed his image so that he hopes not to offend anyone. As a result, he has done very little for Nebraska, for America" Star 7/3/74. Also Dyas tries to make CT a Nixon loyalist and CT claims his independence.

Dyas strategy; "Increase the normal Lincoln vote by 5%, win 55% of the Lincoln turnout, grab Dodge and Ga Counties and about 10 more" according to his manager Dick Kurtenbach (Star 7/29/74)

Dyas is getting money \$5,000 from a committee of fifteen (Senators and Representatives) led by Clark and McGovern. OWH 8/7/74

Dyas also calls Republican delegation--"It is a closed shop for themselves." "Closed establishment." Says it's "acknowledged" that "Thone

is in the wings waiting for Curtis not to run again. The same clique will funnel in again. I think it is important to break up that clique." "Thone is basically a Nixon Congressman." "Real lack of a third dimension of representation--creative concern, real concerned leadership. The five we have really operate on 2 dimensions--an errand boy dimension and a second one of just reacting to legislation day in and day out--how do I vote on this and how do I vote on that." Example: no one interested in health care. All this is in 7/8/73 Journal-Star.

I also note from the scrap book that Dyas' most early picture shows him with hair hanging over the ears, thick sideburns and a moustache. The later pictures show him without the moustache, hair over the ears and thin sideburns. First picture appears in Journal 6/6/73; second in Journal Star 7/8/73. When he started thinking of running he changed picture.

There was a good deal of humorous interest in Hess Dyas' phlebitis, since he has leg trouble and is trying to walk the district.

As I left I took my sheet of activities into Charlie's office and asked him which were most important politically. "You mean in terms of reelection politics. Well, in terms of hard, cold politics (and among) the most important thing was the campaign organization meeting. Next, would be yesterday's campaigning. You've got to do that sort of thing. You can't get along without it. Words gets around. It isn't what we actually did yesterday that's important. It's what happens afterward. There will be talk in the cafes today--'Charley Thone was here yesterday.' Third, was the breakfast with the bankers. That was not planned--it was a Lucky Strike Extra. But Jim Smith (controller of the currency) gave me such a nice plug with all those bankers. I'll put the Otoe County Republican Barbeque and the

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Flag Presentation at Douglas tied for fourth. The first is a necessary evil for me. You have to go see the party faithful; but there are no more votes for me. They are rock-ribbed Republicans. At Douglas there were some potential new voters. Those people know it when you come to their little towns. Last, I guess the pep rally helped some. There again, the word will get around that the Congressman supports the team and that sort of thing. As for the football game and the cocktail party, there aren't any political pluses there at all."

These latter events just found him with friends. But he did pass up one cocktail party to go to another. The one he passed up, he and the Wohlers' agreed was "the incestuous group, the country club set" who "would have been much more difficult and less fun to talk to." I can't remember who made each of these comments but there seemed to be agreement among them. The cocktail party we went to was a very mixed group. I met the mayor of Lincoln, the basketball coach at UN, the Dean of the UN Journalism school, an agricultural economist at UN, several lawyers and political workers, etc. --a real town-gown party. Bob DeVaney was there and the hostess was an opera singer.

As I was waiting in the office for my last shot at Charlie, Ralph Beerman, the former congressman from the 1st District came in and we chatted. It gave me a chance to say to Charley that my assessment of his political problem was the balancing of Lincoln and the outstate areas. He nodded his head in agreement. And I said "Ralph Beerman said he couldn't hold Lincoln." CT replied "He was a political dumbbell" in some respects. He is a very

✓ affable fellow, as you saw. He was a good campaigner. He was a little disorganized, perhaps. If he came up to you on the corner and he liked you, he'd stop and talk to you for a while. That's no way to campaign. Man to man, he was fine; but you don't have time for that." "When I was state chairman I used to be at him all the time--'keep movin, keep movin.' Then he was very conservative. He was against the Kennedy half-dollar, one of about four, and things like that. And the ACA; whenever you asked him about an issue, he'd look up and find out what the ACA said on the subject. He wanted a 100% ACA record. He carried the constitution around in his pocket. He could never carry Lincoln."

✓ Then Charley went on to talk about himself in ways he has done to me before--with one nuance. "I was lucky because I was born up north. And I work in Lincoln. People in both areas identify with me. And I have moderated my voting record from Beerman's. This district is changing--as you can see from the change in registration figures from 1972 to 1974, more Democratic. Some of that is just fall out from Watergate. But the district is becoming more liberal. (Will that make it harder to hold?) Maybe. Some of my old friends, when they spot a vote or two of mine, will say, 'what's this, Charley?' They are very candid. But the sharp ones will say 'we understand what you have to do. And we'd rather have you than any Democrat.'" "I'm lucky there, because these people all identify with me from my work in the party. I've been in the vineyards with all of them--for 15 years. But they wouldn't go along with some of my votes the way they do if they didn't identify so closely with me as a result of my party work. I think we've got it pretty well under control. I hope so."



In my conversation with Ralph Beerman I got a similar picture. Almost the first thing he said was "It's good that Charley lives in Lincoln and can carry Lincoln. I could never carry Lincoln." He also said "I walked the district, long before television caught up with it. I didn't walk from town to town, but in each town. My campaign manager would keep pushing me along when I stopped. Once in Fremont, I went into a shoe repair shop and said I'm going to get some new sales. That got a lot of good publicity. I had no other shoes so I sat there and we had a good conversation. I liked to campaign--campaigning was fun to me. I like to meet people."

He also said that if there hadn't been any redistricting, he would still be in Congress. It was putting Lincoln in his district that killed him. "I carried it the first time, in 1962, but the fellow that ran against me kept popping away at me and he won in 1964." Then he launched into a denunciation of LBJ legislation as ruining the country and how we've never recovered from the results of 1964.

He said district had "diversity" and discussed light industry, heavy industry, labor union influence, "green farmers" (as opposed, I guess, to cattle raisers--which he now is) and many newspapers, TV, etc.

As advice, he said "Concentrate on Lincoln! It takes a lot of organization there. Of cours you have to organize the other counties too."

Beerman's assessment of Charlie was: "He's doing a good job of communicating with his people and informing them." Then, he continued on the theme that people don't pay attention to a congressman's voting record, that

some do but most don't. Maybe the idea was that CT's voting record isn't scrutinized very well. But maybe I read that into it. He concluded by saying "I don't know what motivates voters...I'd be rich if I knew what motivates voters."

In terms of long hours, I think Charley is the hardest working man I've got. He's always in the office--in Lincoln and Washington. I recall in Washington how I was standing in back of Rayburn Building on Sunday waiting to be picked up by the Keenan's to go to Harry Nicholas' late Sunday afternoon and how one car was parked on South Capitol and one window was open on the 5th floor of Longworth--and it was Charley Thone. He came out while I was waiting and drove off. He's in Lincoln office by about 7:30 each morning. And he's there till late at night--unless there's football." John Hanlon said to me "He was relaxed at the football game, wasn't he." And said that on the Saturday of the Reagan fundraiser in Norfolk, "that will be the first football game he's missed in a long time." Driving around Monday, he was trying to schedule something in Lincoln on next Saturday. "Maybe I could fit it in at halftime of the Wisconsin game. Let's keep our priorities straight." He doesn't relax much and he does have ulcer troubles. John keeps milk on ice in the cooler in his trunk when they travel.

A good example of Charley running vs. Congress is the newsletter I have--and which I heard recorded on the radio--which says a majority of congress should be arrested for defacing the currency, i.e., causing inflation.

On Mondays trip to the Southwest part of the district. Charley was not feeling well and so it was not very productive in terms of conversation. But the type of campaigning was something I had never seen, in that we travelled so far to see so few people and spent so much time just driving. We drove 250 miles in 7 1/2 hours, visited 7 communities ranging in size from 224 to 5265, for a total of about 8500 people. It was in and out of the car, CT sleeping between stops, munching food John brought along, some chatting about this and that. But the effort to pay off ratio is interesting to guess at. Maybe one generalization--of all races--is that it is hard for congressmen to reach people--especially large groups of people. You have to work at it everywhere. Is it any more economical for Ben R. to work the benches in Forest Hills than for Charley Thone to work his district. Maybe the 2 hours Charley spends getting to Bruning is more appreciated by those people and has a higher vote payoff than Ben standing at the subway entrance handing out leaflets. Both see some few voters who know them and brush by some others so as to gain name recognition.

Charley said at one point. "I'm sure you can see the value of tromping around like this. There's no other way." *But, as Nolan case indicates, tromping around as the Congressman is a lot easier & more rewarding than tromping around as a non-Congressman.*

We would drive into one of the towns and park at one end of town. Charley and Melba would start on opposite sides of the street, Charley armed with a batch of Ruthie's recipe book and a box of Thone match books. Melba would have a batch of Ruthie's recipe books and some cards "You Can Trust Thone" with license number directory on back. John would go visit the

grain elevator if it was in sight, to ask about the crops, or the newspaper or some other important office. I would work both sides of the street with the Thone cards putting them under the wipers or on the front seat of the car or truck if the window was open (a half were). Charley would occasionally run into someone with a problem. Or he would make an effort to see someone he knew--a grain elevator operator who had been a client of his, a newspaper editor, a lawyer, a mayor. In Fairbury, the only town of any size (5,000) we hit, and the county seat of Jefferson, Charley made it a point of seeing the newspaper editor (which had supported him) the Chairman of the County Republican Party, a man who raises money for him. As we left he said, "That was the big one. It's all downhill from here." Otherwise, the towns consisted of about 3-6 stores on either side of the street--and that's all. A cafe or two, a grocery store, a bank, a law office, a filling station, a newspaper office with a farm implement store, a grain elevator and perhaps another farm related business nearby. In Dewitt, John took a picture of Charley and Russ from the vise-grip plant in the cafe and took it to the papers. They'll print it. Charley was pleased with the exposure. In Clatonia and Plymouth the local bankers said they had seen Charley at the Bankers' Breakfast Saturday.

*put Bankers' Breakfast*

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Everything was dusty. The plains area has been having a terrific drought. When I put the Thone cards under the windshield wipers, they were stuck to the windshield with caked dust and the windshield itself was dusty. They hadn't been used in months. We drove through parched cornfields all day. The non-irrigated fields suffered tremendously. And to top things

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there had been a hailstorm in Jefferson County and what corn there was had been horribly shredded--just shoots of brown spikes sticking up where tall green leaves of corn ought to be. One grain elevator man in Plymouth estimated 40% of the crop had been ruined. Said John "Last year the grain farmers really had it good. Some of them took vacations to Europe for the first time in their lives. This year they have been hit with everything imagineable--first the drought, then early frost, then hail--and green bugs too." We drove through endless, horizonless fields of corn, milo (a feed supplement) and soy beans ("super bean") on Sunday and Monday. The sky was blue, temperature in the 80's and everything was flat and dusty. Black-eyed Susans grow wild by the roadside in uncultivated area. Occasionally the land would begin to roll--Sunday more than Monday. The more west we got the flatter it got, with only the grain elevators and water towers of each town breaking the horizon. Charley said that most of what we saw was not the best farmland in his district. "The good land is in the Platte Valley and in the Elkhorn Valley further north--in Dodge, York, Madison, <sup>no</sup> Cum<sup>ing</sup> and Seward--and some in Nemaha and Otoe."

When Charley talks he always mentions "Ruthie" and John said that "with Ruthie you get two for the price of one." He says her recipe book is a big hit. She also has her own newsletter which she writes once a month to 4000 people. In one little town, a woman said she had just gotten the letter and how much she loved it. John and Melba say Ruthie is a real winner. I guess she liked it and I know she's ambitious for Charlie. Charley always mentions that Ruthie is in Washington with the kids and will be out in 2 weeks or whatever--as if people are interested in her doings as much as his!

In this phase of his campaigning, CT hits every town in the district over 400 population. That's an arbitrary cutoff and he goes to some others-- we did.

He's saving October for Lancaster County. "We're trying to clean up and wipe out all this campaigning and save October for Lancaster--except for special events in this other counties." Next week they had scheduled 2 days up north, overnight, 10 communities each day!

I asked CT if he ever thought of going door to door in these communities and he said "No, it's impractical. Jack Scheutz ran for Lancaster County commissioner and he tried it. He figured he hit only 250 homes in a day. ~~Another~~ was in the city."

The best comment he made about his philosophy of campaigning came when we picked up the Hastings newspaper in Davenport, and he told me it was Fred Seaton's paper. "He was Secretary of the Interior and he ran for governor. His idea of a political campaign was to come into town, register at the motel, take the executive suite and then call people to ask them if they would like to come see him! So help me, that's what he did. He had gotten so used to having people wait on him, he had lost touch. He thought Nebraskans should feel honored to have him as governor. And he would have made a damn good governor. He got beaten." CT has contempt for people who don't go out and hustle.

I asked him which he liked better, what he did in Washington or at home and got such a *lane* answer that I stopped asking him questions. His throat was pretty sore and his nose stuffed badly. But he said, "It's mixed. I like them both. It's easier for me back there--well, I don't know

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that it is. I guess the honest answer is that I like the variety. When the weather is nice like it is today it's kind of a lark bouncing around. But you get some pretty bad weather sometimes." But Monday seemed anything but a lark, he felt so lousy. He didn't seem to feel like answering the question seriously. Charley does crack jokes occasionally, but he does not seem to have a lot of joi de vivre or get a lot of zest out of campaigning. He's a fairly serious man--but he'll joke about "beautiful downtown Clatonia" and "I'll sleep better tonight knowing we visited Bruning today."

But he does not like the Studds--except that they come to see him individually. (In one county, with a flooding problem, "We turned it into an open meeting"). He and John go, they get between 30 and 50. They held 10 such meetings in Lancaster County over a 3-day period. People get place and times and turn out wherever they wish. "We held one in the district office. It was full and people overflowed out into the street." He sees this as important but more as a "constituency service and publicity" operation than the "issue-oriented meeting and publicity operation" which Studds sees. Studds likes to talk issues; Thone does not. And each tailors a similar technique to a different set of abilities.

Again, Charlie the non issue-oriented technician.

Another side of Charlie the technician comes out as he dictates letters in the car--to everyone he has met or had a named conversation with during previous days--the hostess of the cocktail party, the lady who introduced him at Douglas, the photographer at Douglas, the man who invited him to the Bankers' breakfast, a man who came over to him at the breakfast to

make a suggestion, another man who wanted legislation, the lady whose cocktail party we didn't go to, etc. He keeps in touch this way. Every contact begets a letter.

Melba says that she was on the committee to pick a successor to Denny. "I voted against Charley. I guess I thought he wasn't as liberal as he is. But I thought he had done such a good job that I volunteered in the last campaign and ended up working full time on it. Then I joined the staff in July." She's perky, talkative and smart.

After Douglas, he said most farmers didn't know he was on Agriculture Committee. A few of the sharp ones might--a couple did--but not most of them.

He had support of FBF, NFU and NFO last time and thinks he has them this time. He sees these three along conservative-liberal dimension, FBF to NFO. Says though NFO state leaders support him, many NFO-ers do not--they are liberal, Democratic and pro-Dyas. Do they lean on him? Yes. He mentioned a nice bill where he stuck with Administration and all farm organizations leaned hard on him to go vs. admin. He didn't. But FBP surprised him in its vehemence. "It was one of those tradesy things. I haven't heard from them since I don't know if they are peeved or not. But when they read the bill they will see that I was right."