

Conversation with Rich Arenberg

March 1979

"After the President's state of the union message, Paul told a reporter it was "^{dull and}eminently forgettable." The next morning it was reported in the Washington Post. Paul hadn't seen the paper before he went down to the White House to meet with the President the next day. He thought the President was pretty cool toward him. Then he saw the paper, where he was quoted last among four Senators. He said "I've got to be careful. The only paper that used to care what I said was the Lowell Sun." So you feel the impact of the office in that way--through the publicity it generates."

He has little box in his office so that he can monitor what goes on in the House floor. Again he said he keeps one ear cocked to it so he can keep up with what Paul is doing or might want to do in light of what's going on. In House he only paid attention to floor when he knew Paul would be on top, in a prearranged way. Now, the flow of floor activity changes more suddenly. And, stressed Rich, again, "You can't make an ass of yourself on the House floor; but you can make an ass of yourself on the Senate floor." Lots of protective devices--mostly in the numbers and the groups--in the House, but none in the Senate. You stand out there on the floor bare faced.

He spoke of the frustration you feel on this job if you try to dig deep. But the exhilaration you get when you try to broaden your reach. There is a great research capability around Capitol Hill if you know how to lay your hands on it. "You can become an expert on marine fisheries in one hour if you work at it." There is a great breadth of impact a Senator can have. This came in context of lunch with Henry Myers(?) who is Udall's nuclear expert and he was

discussing his great frustration in dealing with nuclear industry. How they lied to his committee, etc. Rich was contrasting his emphasis on breadth with Henry's emphasis on depth.

He talked about the Committee on Committee's operation as "like a High School class election." where popularity comes in and no one knows why people vote the way they do.

He said Jackson called PT and said he wanted him on his committee - didn't want another gas state senator like Boren.

He stressed, again, how Paul was going to keep same 4 issues he was always interested in.