

*make a list like Peter's*

Roger Zion

May 10, 1974

1. "I wanted a good liaison man who would go out and see people in the district who had problems. I got Harry Cooper who had been with Congressman James Harvey--who had just retired (I also got Bob Junk from Harvey to run the Washington office). So the first thing I wanted was an experienced guy. Then I got a uniquely qualified gal to head up the Evansville office. Like Harry Cooper, she was an older woman; and she had a sympathetic ear. Both of them were very good and experienced at casework." I asked him whether Winfield Denton had done casework in the district and he said that Denton had not done it. He said that Denton's district man was the eighth district Democratic chairman and that Denton had put him on the payroll and he didn't do much. But he did not seem certain about that and there was no strong anti-Denton reaction. (I should put somewhere back in this first paragraph that the notion that Harry Cooper had his office in Huntingburg).

"If my family had come to Washington, I would have been homeless--and I would not have been reelected. I only won reelection by two or three percentage points the first time."

*49 weeks*

When I said that I had found out that he had made 42 trips and spent a 165 days in the district, he said that that was probably about right, but he thought he had been home more weekends than 42. "I doubt that I've spent more than 10 weekends away from the district in eight years."

2. "It's a microcosm. It has rural poverty, urban poverty, big business, unions, wealthy farms and poor farmlands. It is a microcosm of the United States. I'm among the Republicans that represent rural America--not like the Congressman from New York or Boston or Philadelphia. If the Congress is divided between urban and rural, I'm rural. I'm probably known better in town than up in Bedford--because of the media. But I'm at home equally in the two places. I'll go to the 4-H picnic up in Booneville and I'm just as much at home as I am going to the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. You might think because of my background that I would be more at home in the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club, but I don't think I am."

4J. Stable population. "It's fairly stable. Warrick is the most rapidly growing county in the state--that's because of Alcoa. Many people are moving out of Evansville to get lower taxes, too, but these are probably the same people."

4L. About parties. He said, "Both parties are growing weaker and independents are getting larger. It's about 16% Republican, 36% Democratic and the rest Independent. It has generally been considered a safe Democratic district." But he said it was certainly safer for him, though not safe.

8. Who voted for you? He had a good bit of trouble with this one. "If you get over 50%, that means you must get a little something from everybody. The labor leaders fight me tooth and nail but I get some votes from the rank and file. I lead the ticket in Democratic counties, but I win much bigger in Republican counties. It would not

be fair to say that I get the conservative counties and lose the liberal counties, because the most conservative counties are Democratic. We took a poll and the one thing that came out of it was that I was not viewed, in my image, as a hawk or a dove, not conservative nor liberal. And that was despite the fact that I was a strong supporter of the war, and that I talk conservatively. The one image they had of me was that I was a hard worker. So I get a broad base of votes. I think I get a lot of votes because of casework. There was a picture in the paper just last week for example--right on the front page of the Evansville paper. A woman had trouble getting her Veteran's Administration check and it was a real tear jerking story. She said she had called her Congressman and he had done nothing. I had so much faith in my staff that I didn't even call them about it. When someone asked me I said I'll bet you a hundred dollars that the story is wrong--I had that much faith in my staff. We looked it up and sure enough, we had told her that we had written to the Veteran's Administration and that she should get in touch with us if she did not hear from them. She never got in touch with us. But the paper will not print a retraction. There was a big feature article and it hurt me when I've been trying to build up a reputation. The newspaper supported me, too, but they don't seem to have any sense of responsibility for printing the truth--just quoting somebody who has a story to tell."

8F. He started by saying that party loyalty was strong in Republican counties. He said national issues were the least influential and he cited the polls to show it. He said he thought that state and

local issues probably were important.

"I'm not identified as a person interested in national problems.

I'm identified for my interest in local problems. This is what we're going to make the theme of our campaign--that people are getting a good return on their federal tax dollar. From the Public Works appropriation alone, the district is getting \$25,477,000 in fiscal 1975."

9. His very strongest supporters. "Conservative, industrial people, doctors, oil people. Those three groups generally raise money for me. Certainly my financial help comes from the business community. Lawyers are poor givers; doctors are not bad. I don't get a large number of contributions and I don't get many large ones. Some people who do the most screaming and hollering for help give me a hundred dollars as a campaign contribution. That's not very much but it's more than most contributions I get."

I asked him who his good workers are. He said the workers "are elderly, long time loyal Republicans. They do the work in the precincts. Some of them are 80 to 85 years old. They're getting pretty elderly; but they are people without whom no Republican would get elected."

The question that worked out best was 9C, which I worded as Can you think of any element in the district whose support you have lost since you have been in Congress? The first thing he said was that the labor leaders in the district were opposed to him, but he then said "the opposition of labor leaders gets me as many votes as I lose."

Then he said, "You could lose a lot of votes--on such issues as gun control, busing, and abortion. If you got on the wrong side of any of those issues you could be in a lot of trouble in Indiana. A couple of weeks ago the Right to Life group came in to talk with me. They said they were going to work for whomever took the strongest position on Right to Life. I said, "Aren't you being a little shortsighted? I have voted with you 90% of the time on the things you believe in." They said that Right to Life was the issue. They are a real hard core group. Anyone who advocated busing, would be wridden out of my district on a rail. My <sup>position on</sup> ~~support for~~ gun control wins me labor votes that go against Birch Bayh because of his position on gun control. Prayer in the schools is another one. One sure way for me to lose votes would be to support the woman who wants to eliminate prayer in the public schools. If I get on the wrong side of any one big emotional issue, I'll lose a whale of a lot of votes. People look at one item and ride it to death."

He did!

When I asked him whether he agreed with people on all of these issues he said, "I sponsored a bill to increase the size of trucks on our highways. It was a good bill; I still think it was a good bill. We could have made things safer; and it would have helped Whirlpool a lot with its shipments. But I got an awful lot of mail on that and it would have lost me a lot of people. There was a cartoon in the paper picturing a big hog eating up the highways. The Triple A was very upset about it. All the highway users thought they were going to be killed

by these huge trucks on the highways. Confidentially, I tell you it was a good bill; and I'm still in favor of it. But because so many people were opposed to it, I decided not to support it. I'm not here to vote my own convictions. I'm here to represent my people. But that is the only time this has happened." He then went on to talk about the story of Wes Bowers, the State Legislator who supported aid to parochial schools or opposed aid to parochial schools. A priest got up and opposed him, even though he was an outstanding person. He would have run against Roger in a primary in the first election. "He probably would have beaten my tail off." That lesson of Bowers was one that Roger remembers well and has mentioned to me before.

"He then talked about his Right to Life position. "People are not aware of the issues but they will get up on one damn thing and raise hell. My personal opinion is that abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctor. It is a medical question and a physical question, not a legal question. But so many people feel so strongly about it that I will support the Right to Life Amendment if it comes to the Floor. I will not sign the discharge petition because I do not think that is the way to do things"

10. I asked him about a primary contest, and whether he could conceive of one. "Not under any normal circumstances. I've never caused any trouble with the party. Larry Williams was always in trouble with his party leaders at home, and a few weeks ago they just went out and beat him. People who don't like me recognize that they don't have the strength to do anything about it. I'm a 100% party man. I work for whomever is in the party leadership. When my county

leader is Jones, I work for Jones, When he is beaten by Smith, I work for Smith. My county leader is mad at me now because I did not support him against the party leader. Some people want my job--but they have no illusions."

19. Trust. "People are impressed by my TV image. I'm not a polished speaker and I haven't tried to become one. I don't enunciate my words carefully or train myself to use perfect diction. I look right into the camera and talk to people like it's over the back fence. My skill--if I have any, and people seem to think I have--is in responding to questions. People trust a guy that will immediately respond to some question and come right out and answer it. I'm much better at doing that than at a prepared speech. The casework is the same thing. I get thousands of letters thanking me for the help we give them. Then, too, we don't get on both sides of a question. Before a vote is taken, we say we will study it, but we don't write one thing to one group and another to another. Also I disagree with people, when I differ with them, and they think that's a honest way to be."

30. Would the Republicans lose the seat if you retired? "The Republicans wouldn't have a ghost of a chance to win it. My strength is the result of the casework and all the visits. I haven't an unusually high visibility. If you go into a hundred districts and ask people to name their congressman, you may get 50%. Mine is much higher than that, I'll bet." I think his figures are probably high in both cases.

*for my  
statement  
of 5/10/74  
L  
The 5  
week*

Have you ever thought of retiring or resigning or seeking another office? "Never. I have very little respect for the Senate. I think we

would be better off without that House of Lords, and I don't think I would improve it any. I am not interested in another office, and I have no current plans to retire. And that's in spite of the fact that thirty some odd people have already retired. Whatever it is that brought them to the House--and nobody I know ran for Congress because he needed a job--whatever it was, it isn't there anymore. There is too much abuse and too much work. I asked Wendell Wyatt why he was retiring. He said, 'The two f's--fatigue and frustration.' Well, I'm not fatigued--I don't get tired. I am frustrated, but I guess I'm competitive. I play much better tennis against a good tennis player than I do against a poor one." At that point I said I would come out and play him in tennis when I was there. He said, "I'll whip your ass." I said, "The hell you will." So I guess I will have to go to Evansville and whip his ass.

I asked him whether being at home so much kept him from doing anything he wanted to do around Washington, and he answered in terms of office work primarily. "I could work 8 hours a day in either my district office or my office here. I don't do it. Others do it for me. I am the worst easeworker around; the best work is done when I stay completely out of it. I certainly could be busy--I could read all those questionnaires over there or I could read and dictate mail. But I don't like that. I'm not a good desk man. I maintain at least as active a part in the committee as anyone else. The Committee doesn't meet on Monday's and Friday's, so I don't miss any Committee meetings by going home."



On second thought, I'm not sure. He doesn't feel that way. He has an immediate maybe there's the problem.

Roger, it seems to me, is a perfect (or at least the closest I have seen to a perfect) "delegate". He will do what his constituents want him to do. Usually they don't tell him what they want, but when they do, he will respond. My guess is that all the people who are conservative on the social issues that he mentioned reenforce one another, so that he really doesn't have a problem of a coalition of minorities. But his statement that he was not there to vote his own convictions, plus his terrific emphasis on casework and district goodies, strikes me as classic delegate behavior. But I don't think just because you can find one case of the delegate that that necessarily means that the idea of delegate can be applied across the board, or any other categorization of roles can be applied across the board. Just because one person is a delegate, and that job orientation helps you to understand what he does does not mean that every other congressman can be understood in terms of his or her job orientation. In other words, I have found a delegate, but that does not mean that I want to classify everybody as delegate trustee or politico. Thus, the classification may be useful, but not in all cases. My guess is that fewer delegates and fewer trustees are useful types, but that politicians present problems.

Also, he is a delegate in a marginal district. But idea that he vacillates on all issues is not correct. Very strong anti-bus labor. Delegate still must pin down his core support -- in this case, Ch. of Commerce, businessmen types. But that comes naturally to RZ, since he is a businessman. ID is here.

On May 23rd, I had a brief conversation with Roger after I listened to him talk on the telephone to one of the schools in his district. Later, we went to lunch with his campaign advisor. But during that day he said a couple of things which I want to record here.

When I walked in, he said "I'm making enemies right and left. Whirlpool is on strike right now, and it's the biggest strike in the country. I'm saying that if there was a secret ballot, they would return to work. I have been attacking George Meany. He sent his political expert, Al Barkan, into the district and I called him a bag man for George Meany." When Roger's campaign advisor heard him say this again, at lunch, he said that Barkan was one of the smartest political people in the country and was quite upset that Roger had taken him on in such a belligerent way. Bill Lowe said that it was alright to attack labor but it wasn't necessary to put himself, Zion, at the very top of labor's list.

Roger also talked in the same fairly belligerent manner about his designation as one of the dirty dozen--those most opposed to the environment. "This is the third straight year I've been named to the Dirty Dozen. If I win one more time, I get to keep the trophy!" He went on to show again that many of the votes used by the dirty dozen are not environmental votes at all. And he showed me two editorials from newspapers in his district attacking the people who put out the Dirty Dozen for their oversimplification. The editorials were quite supportive of Roger and he was pleased.

"I've been very successful in getting things for the district and that's what the campaign will be about. We got one million dollars in above the budget for a dam in the district and that will enable them to get going early. I think it was the only item in the bill above the budget. I've also gotten some money in for river bank erosion

projects--the only two new ones in the bill. I get along well personally with the people on the Committee. As a special favor to me, two subcommittees met to hear the people from Neuburgh and then to recommend these projects. The Corps will try these two demonstration projects in my district."

I think it was interesting that the thing he spent the most time on in that first conversation was the extent to which he was getting projects for his district. He clearly looks upon his "Public Works membership in this light".

The only other impression I had was one of RZ as 1st little boy in over his head when he sat listening to & talking to Bill Lowe. I don't think he looked intimidated or "frightened" by big city PZ man. He seemed far less confident in this situation than he normally seems to be. Maybe all politicians felt scared and non-confident when the campaign professional campaign managers were in. But Roger seemed uncomfortable with Lowe and almost as if he were waiting for Lowe to save him. Maybe he was leaning on Lowe and keeping his own counsel-- which was a severely ~~error~~ held a most of Rogers opinion-- which was my impression was calculated. But I guess it was the contrast between his normal <sup>dominated</sup> self-assurance and this picture of him sitting there listening to advice and not saying much that struck me. He may have been in total control of the interaction, but it didn't seem so to me.