

Ben sees us
disturbed as polarized.
But there is a dominant majority
a dominant minority.

ITINERARY

How do I know
what information you in
terms of physical state?

A congressman's vote are
very broad attitudes
responses yes or no type -
often we want to know their
broad responses - not
specific. Hence to
say he has no
trouble with
he has no
trouble with
broad attitudes
prejudices.
Most times
never get
specific.

Sunday - October 18, 1970

- 2:00 Dedication of Home for Displaced Persons, United Help, Inc.
Kissena II, 137-47th Avenue, Flushing
- 4:00 Installation of Officers, YM-YWHA of Greater Flushing,
45-35 Kissena Boulevard
- 8:00 Trylon Democratic Club Dinner/Dance, Crystal Palace,
31-11 Broadway, Astoria

Monday, - October 19

- 9:30 Walking tour - Downtown Flushing
- 12:30 Queens College, Free University Committee, Open Meeting
- 1:30 Membership Meeting, Women's Division, YM-YWHA of Greater
Flushing, 45-35 Kissena Boulevard
- 3:00 Walking tour - Rego Park
- 4:30 Walking tour - Austin Street and Continental Avenue Subway
- 8:30 Political Rally, Mitchell-Linden Civic Association,
PS 214, Union Street and Bayside Avenue, Whitestone
- 9:30 PTA Meeting - Candidates Night - Central Parkway School
- 10:00 Kaffe Klatsch, Cryder House, Pavello Cove Boulevard, Beechhurst

Tuesday - October 20

- 10:30 Walking tour - Corona
- 2:00 Walking tour, Lefrak City Shopping Center
- 3:30 Walking tour, Bay Terrace Shopping Center
- 8:15 Board of Trustees, 11th District (Queens) Dental Society,
Fresh Meadows
- 9:00 Candidates Night, Parents Association, PS 206, 63-33 98th Place,
Rego Park

Hearts club
by company
this
areas
cases
think through
November

Insurgent

P10

ROSENTHAL TRIP

October 18-21, 1970

Arriving 10 a.m. - Reading Moynihan - Glazer; Conversation leaving the plane:

*feel
different*

"Hello, Rabbi, how are you?" "Fine, I didn't recognize you with the beard. That's more than I have." "Yes, I like it so much I think I'll become a [Hasseedim]" General laughter among bystanders all around me! Hasseedim is very learned old man with long beard.

Mike Goldenthal

Francine Siedlecky

Mike Lucey

His breakdown of district - ^M 55% Jewish, 15% Italian, 15% Irish, 15% Mixed".

✓ First thing he said was that no two districts were exactly the same. He didn't know whether he was handling his fight or not. Tried to find out what others did.

✓ He spoke often of the problem of deterioration in the district. There is an area into which Negroes and Puerto Ricans are moving. A few years ago, he tried to get federal money and found they'd give it only to badly deteriorated sections like Bedford Styvesant--not areas that were on border line, so as to stop deterioration before it was too late. "The great problem is whether we can stop areas like this from growing old and deteriorating. A lot of people don't care. I think you can. But it will take massive infusions of federal money. Scheuer's district is what mine could be 15 years from now--could be, I don't say it will." Any districts like yours? "A lot of the New York City districts are. Podell's district is like mine--maybe a little older." He often talked of districts in terms of their age and stability--

*change
to
stint*

✓ this is a key dimension. I.e. in Jackson Heights to Mike--"This is a pretty stable neighborhood--still good, not much change here."

As we drove from the Kissena dedication to campaign in the Forest Hills Park, he talked about the various developments - a very large part of the conversation centered on when and by whom various apartment complexes were built. "Cordon-Meyer built them. He kept Jews out. Oh, it was a very elite district at ^{me} ~~our~~ time."

"Lefrak offered 50,000 if anyone would run against me in the primary." Later, Birchwood ^{Towers} ~~Tavern~~, near Bay Terrace.

✓ At one point, he made a remark about the people in the apartments. "I send them a newsletter. 'These people are not joiners. Not one in 300 is a member of any organization or group. They are unreachable.'"

✓ "I spent last night in College Point. And it was rewarding. It's a community of retired cops and firemen. They'll vote 500-2 for Buckley. But I'll do well there because I've done favors for lots of them. I won't win with them on the issues and I don't try. But I help them and win that way."

✓ Later he ~~said~~ talked generally about image--after I asked him what people ^{at} thought of him who were YMHA installation. "They think I'm a progressive, hard-working, dedicated Congressman who brings credit to the community. Those people were leadership types. What they want is to be able to have a call on me, to have me present at their functions. And that's far more important than my votes. In a sense, I let myself be used--or my office be used--to give them what they want. It boosts their ego. If you ask which is more important, my votes or my work in the community, the latter is much, much more important. There are some people in the district who are issue-oriented, and I think I'm

not
as to me
in this
district.

Senior
image.

hyper
media

in tune with them. Others don't care at all--they just vote the party line or something. Then, my case worker in the office, Mary Davis, is the best on the Hill." He says he's tried to put all these things together, but that he can't in a systematic way.

I asked if he thought of district as philosophically homogeneous--he asked "old or new?" and I said, "excluding Glendale" and he said, yes, he thought so. That he was "in tune with the district."

"Actually, I know this district (streets, etc.) like the back of my hand--everything within 30 blocks of here. In 1925, we moved to Jackson Heights and I've lived here all my life."

"This is a safe Democratic district, so my only worry would come from a primary. It would take an outstanding, energetic man with \$100,000 to run an even heat with me in a primary; and it would take that man, plus \$200,000 to beat me. It's important to me to show strength to keep the young assembly men and city councilmen away. If they have the feeling that I'm invincible, they won't try. That reputation is very intangible. Your vote margin is part of it [he talked re Dooley in Reid's district] but that's only part of it."

The installation at the Y on Main Street was for Rosenthal the equivalent of the Byron Fair for Conable. It was R's "home." When he was introduced, the Y VP gave an election speech for Ben and lauded him and everyone clapped and joked about getting him to help build the new pool. When B got up, he said, "This is probably the first time you ever had a half-tipsy installation officer." (Cocktail hour came first.) And members of the audience called back to him. Obviously very much at home among the Jewish leaders in North Queens--State Senator Branton plus three Judges. When he spoke of the "Y",

Ben did so with great feeling--saying that the "92nd Street Y" was the most important influence in life. "It gave me goodness and kindness; and whatever goodness or kindness I have brought to others was instilled in me during those years at the 92nd Street ^Y. From 13 to 19, I belonged; these were the most important and happiest times of my youth. Without my knowing it, they gave me great strength and spirit." Told how in a time of great personal trouble--young baby in incubator--he "was drawn to the "Y"--baby and wife in Mt. Sinai Hospital--and saw a plaque in the "Y", Edward M. Warburg; and went back to hospital and told them his baby would be named Edward M. Rosenthal. He told this emotionally and seriously to illustrate depth of his feelings for the "Y". Guy from audience: "It's a good thing you didn't name him 92nd Street Y!" But rapport with audience was total. When he installed the new president, Emil Levin, Levin spent five minutes lauding Ben--and Levin had run vs. Ben in his first primary ("Damn fool nearly beat me. He got 4,000 votes. He's been a community leader all his life and was very popular in Flushing.") Levin said Ben had done better job than he could have done and that after the primary, he had supported Ben 100%. Everyone said, "hear, hear." Ben jousting with Irving Rogers, the Pontiac dealer.

Later in the evening on the ^{way} to dinner, I tried to pin down the idea that these were his closest supporters and he said, "They are close supporters; but my very closest supporters are the issue-oriented people. My strongest support comes from the more sophisticated people. These people you saw today are interested in ^{the Y more than the issues. That's a fine thing, and people interested in the} community are usually the best people. I'd have to say, too, that my strongest support comes from upper income people. But the people in the peace movement are probably the very strongest supporters. Don't forget

Ben
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ambitious

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Irreverent
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(ball team)
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But if
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gets drunk
on peace
bandy

I was one of the first congressmen to come out against the war. And to the peace people, I'm a semi-hero. We went through hard times together when being ^{against} ~~the~~ the war wasn't popular and they worked very hard for me--Women's Strike for Peace. Now, the issue ^{has} ~~here~~ came along and I've been proven right, so that's a help. I guess they're still with me now--but maybe not. They want "more" and there is no "more." There probably aren't more than 100 of them in all; and they are scattered around the district. But 100 activists can do a lot. On Moratorium day, they had 15,000 people marching up Queens Blvd.."

I asked him if his early anti-war stand caused him to think he might lose. He said he really hadn't figured it up that way, but said "I did have a few anxious moments."

On the question whether one vote would kill him, he said, "No, I honestly can't think of any--unless there were a scandal of some kind. If I voted against arms for Israel--well, that's just inconceivable." He wouldn't even contemplate that.

The day's events were as follows. I went with Fran to the Headquarters on Main Street and talked briefly with Ben outside. Met Mike Goldenthal and Mike Lucey (Ben's roommate and FHA Administrator-lawyer). We then got in Ben's car and went to the dedication of Kissena #2, a housing project built partly by State, City and United Help funds--the latter being partly money from German reparations. The apartments were for refugees from Nazi Germany and older Jews generally. A very nicely architected building with gracious walkways, gardens and fountain. Said by the staff to be the nicest thing around. Then we went to a Park in Forest Hills ("Forest Hills is 100% Jewish--no not 100%; they have superintendents and janitors!") where old people were sitting and

he ^{shook}~~shook~~ hands while we handed out leaflets. Then to the "Y" for the installation of officers. Then to Mike's and Ben's apartment for a brief rest-- (Ben and Mike napped and I took notes). Then to Myron Cohn's Trylon Democratic Club for dinner. ("Myron Cohn's affair.") When I asked Ben where we were going (i.e. dinner) he said "we're going to a shitty restaurant to have a shitty meal and have a shitty time with a shitty club." Afterwards, he said, "Did it live up to its advanced billing? I always over-react."

But he said the state of the club and the party depressed him.

"Each club has a character of its own--reflecting the leader. This leader has had a heart attack and he was a bum anyway. But it goes deeper than that. What you saw tonight reflects the state of the Democratic party. It depresses me so that I want to hide in Washington, tend to my legislative duties and forget it. ^{It's a} Political Science problem--it's hard to know what to do. Sometimes I think I should try to reinvigorate the party--but it would take so much time and effort that I'd have to neglect all my Congressional duties. So I do what Jack and Bob Kennedy did--leave it alone. Is it my responsibility? You have to pick your spots and decide where you want to work. But I do think these people can be moved--even these people. Propaganda--McLuhanesque propaganda, could even get these people excited. But Goldberg doesn't excite them."

no local leader

Then he went into a long story re Goldberg. How Rosenthal endorsed Goldberg and told him over and over that he had to lead the party and how when the decision came re. Queens County leader, Golberg went with the tired old incumbent Frank Smith rather than put in a vigorous man. Smith was the guy at the dinner who thought Basil Patterson was running for governor!

Now Smith isn't helping Goldberg--all he did was get a judgeship for his son and Golberg lost 75,000 votes in Queens. "Why should I go out and work for him under those conditions." "He can't make decisions in the party, and that means he won't be able to make them as governor." Great unhappiness with Goldberg as candidate.

Of Trylon Democratic Club--"Ethnically, most of them are with me. But I suppose ^{nted} John Lindsay, and they can't stand that. They're from Brooklyn and the Bronx where party loyalty is everything."

*tenants
within
district.
ethnic vs
political*

A couple of times during the day, he mentioned that party regulars were mad at him for his Lindsay endorsement. Part of the point was that even though they were sore at him for this act, they couldn't find anyone to run against him.

The AD leader's wife, at dinner, spoke of Ben as "a father figure" and "intense" and "honest"--said he wasn't handsome, glamorous or wealthy, but easy to go to for help. Very strong sense that he cared.

Re, papers, the Long Island Press is the key paper--a daily, I guess--and it covers all his district. "Jim Scheuer and Jonathan Bingham drool when I tell them about the press. I have it all to myself and then they have to ^{me} fight/for space in the Times and the Daily News." All this was appropos of fact that if you speak to 100 people and the Press is there, 200,000 people see it the next day.

Daily News has a Queens section in it and there are lots of local weeklies--Elushing Times, etc.

"I have a small but very strong Greek community in Corona. * I'm very

popular there, because I got them all citizenship. It has nothing to do with issues--just naturalization matters and I don't even talk to them about the issues."

✓ ^{At} In Kassaena and the "Y", ^a ~~the~~ self-help, communal spirit shone through everything. A strong sense of togetherness. With few exceptions, all I ^{met} ~~saw~~ this first day were Jews and Jewish groups.

✓ He spoke of large numbers of apartment houses that were not reflected in the census figures--New York Times said his would be a closer race and he said, "I don't mind them saying it. It juices up my operation. But all these buildings here weren't even in the census. There are 100,000 people here and I'll get 75% of them. They are Democrats moving out from the Bronx and Brooklyn, and they'll vote the party line."

People spend a lot of time commuting.

"Long Island Parkway is the zipper that zips up the island." F. S.

"You can't find a place to park in Flushing." M. G.

"The private apartment builders ~~as~~ have built slums." M. G.

Said [?] recent reapportionment had given him Glendale and ~~Rich~~wood and that they were conservative and he wouldn't even campaign there--no sense that they are in his district whatsoever.

✓ "People will vote for you when you attend openings like ^{this one} (that yesterday.) You asked me if one vote could kill me. If you attend all the openings, no vote will matter. I don't want to overstate that, but it's very important. Political scientists miss that. I didn't want to bear ^{an} "openings" kind of congressman ^{but here I am}...." (we were interrupted at that point.)

Days' activities began at headquarters--where we talked a little about

last night's club dinner and how to re-juvenate the clubs-- a lot of talk back and forth. Then Fran, Mike G., Selma Rubenstein, Lynn Cohn and I went to corner of Roosevelt and Main to hand out shoppingbags and buttons.

Back to Queens College for very small (20 students) meeting with Wolff-- (who did all the talk^{ing}) and Ben; lunch; to meeting of Women's Y Group; Ben spoke--speaking of Kennedy's; county doing better--a challenge--cataloguing the problems. Then to shopping tour near Rego Park--Park City--with girls Bea Gold, especially. Then to Forest Hills subway stations at 108th Street and Queens Boulevard for people changing from subway to bus. Then at night to meeting at Mitchell Linden School in Flushing, and coffee klatch at very rich apartment at Bayside near the Throgs Neck Bridge.

"The flag vote was my toughest vote. I got the hell kicked out of me by the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It was a painful vote for me--probably too painful for all the good it did. It was a symbolic vote. There was a law in each of the ^{50th} ~~48~~ states against desecrating the flag, so you didn't need it. It was passed in one of these emotional binges and I didn't want to add to it. But Don Edwards and I practically said afterward we wouldn't do it again if we could do it over. And if I had a tough district, I probably wouldn't have done it. I'm not captain's courageous! John Dow voted against the flag bill and I think it helped kill him. The difference is that I have 20 points to play with and he was 50-50--he had no points to play with."

"I voted for the drug bill, because it had some good provisions in it. But it wasn't a good bill--it had a no-knock provision in it and all. But it had more money for local centers. And I said to myself that in this day and age

who can be against any program designed to help with the drug problem. But that was a hard decision ^{for} to me. So was the organized crime bill. There I came down on the other side and voted against it. Even though I have a sophisticated liberal majority of sorts, it isn't Koch's district. ~~The~~ The people are very concerned about law and order. But the New York Times wrote an editorial saying that the 26 who voted against it showed a great deal of courage, so I take some comfort in that."

He said he had his AA prepare a memo on both the drug and crime bills--these and flag were his tough ones--plus the first Viet Name appropriation. They are new liberal-type issues.

Again, at dinner he said "I can't think of any vote that would defeat me. Not a single one. ^{against} Even if I voted ~~we~~ arms for Israel, I'd prepare a defense and say that there weren't enough arms for Israel." He said upstate people told him that gun control could be fatal for them, but nothing like that for him.

"What political scientists have to understand is that an incumbent congress-
man can get reelected by the services he is in a position to do for people. There isn't a meeting I go to but what someone (and usually 2 or 3) doesn't come up and thank me for the services I've performed. Shaking hands this afternoon with people waiting for the bus, there were three people for whom I had done major favors. Within certain limits set by efficiency or neglect, the incumbent can stay in office so long as he gives people service."

When I asked what his opponent could do to defeat him, he said, "Given the fact that he has no money and no chance of success? I can't think of a thing--not a single thing he could do to beat me. In order to get attention,

he would have to attack me, but there's really nothing he could attack me for. If this were a different district, he could call me a radical or he could call me a spender, fiscally irresponsible--the Republican line. But barring ~~the~~ some great emotional issue which comes up, there's no way he can attack me or get much attention."

*Seifer
Republican
issues
w/ agf
beat
him
in many
districts*

I asked if there were any part of the district to which he paid no attention and he said, "The new section; I'm not even going to show my face there."

Everywhere he talked, he spoke in a Kennedy style--that county is rich, has great Constitution and must do better--GNP 1 trillion and yet, schools in New York City 60 years old, subway cars 45 years old. What good is it to isolate a virus in California when you can't get a doctor in Forest Hills. (I explain to my mother, he said re. that last one.) "Educational system doesn't educate, transportation system doesn't transport" from N.Y.T. Blasted Agnew for turning group vs group and focussing on campus riots when real problem is that 20 million people are hungry and medical care delivery is inadequate. Told people they shouldn't be selfish, should take responsibility. Terminate ~~Thieu and Thyeon~~ ^{Thieu and} Ky's lease on Saigon and watch military-industrial complex. "We have Kissena #2--we should have Kissena #202."

*He knows his
district well -
+ talks to them
w/ less responsibility*

When we came out of Bayside coffee klatch, he said, "Those aren't quite my strongest supporters but they are close." He was introduced here as best Congressman in N. Y. "The war touched them most, I noticed, and they were clearly with Ben all the way. He said Selma R. and Lynn Cohen were closer:

^{yet. It's an easy territory;}
"It's now Monday night and I haven't seen hostile territory, though Ben talks hard to them about how bad things are and how they have to help.

He'll spend \$15,000 on the campaign and raised a lot of it at an early cocktail party at La Guardia Airport. Lindsay was guest of honor--they endorsed each other--and there was much speculation about effect of Lindsay's announcement for Goldberg.

Mike G. predicts a vote of 225,000 in the district and a vote of 175,000 for Rosenthal.

On way in to Queens College, he said something he said a couple of other times, "This isn't very important itself, but it's all part of a cumulative process, an image-building process." "You do a little here and a little there."

Fran - re. her work. "It's not a district with terrible problems. There are individual problems I get involved with. But most of the time--except for campaign time--it's very boring. I really want to get something started about drugs. That's the disease of the district."

Corona; Potash's open air grocery near the Roosevelt-Flushing train to Times Square" overheard; Mike Lisa

Re. his night at College Point (of which Cliff says, "It's a little enclave, whose people get to Manhattan less often than you do.") Ben said, "I met a guy from the postal union. He said I gave them the brush-off when they came to Washington. The trouble is they compare me to Halperin. He wines and dines every little two-bit group that comes down. He spends all his time with them. He doesn't have anything else to do. But I don't have the patience with these guys--or the time. I'm busy over on the floor, doing other things. But Halperin, that's all he does."

Ask Low
Stokes
re Burdick

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time.

chilled a gym

"I dreamt last night that I was defeated. No fooling, I really did. And do you know what bothered me the most? The gym! My wife said to me, you're a distinguished person, you'll get a job, don't worry. I said, yes, I know, but where will I find a gym like that? I don't know what I'd do without the gym."

set humor

"I played paddleball with Podell and ^{he} we won 21-20. Did he play hard-- like a boy from Brooklyn. I don't play that hard. I wish he wouldn't play quite so hard."

set depressed humor

Often a plaintive, little boy, wry note in his conversation. When he sees signs over R.R. tressel for Halpern--"Why can't I have signs like that? Where do you go to get them?" Lots of talk about getting a station wagon so he'd look like he was really running a campaign. Signs on top of car, junk loaded in the back. In Bay Side, he said, "Look at all the signs _____ has up. No ~~notes~~ though!" When Mike G. pointed out where he used to play softball on a farm land across from his house--now filled with high rise apartments. Ben said, "I used to be on a ball team too. Only I didn't get to play much."

set

"If I had a close race and a lot of energy, neither of which I have...I'd...."

Wanted to show me in hands of destiny

Great hilarity on way to Glendale--BR to students, "I'm the Congressman from Glendale and I'm looking ^{for} ~~over~~ my district." Finally, when we got to

great contrast with JF who know every

Glendale, he said, "See, I told you this was Myrtle Avenue and I've only been here once before in my life." After a little walking in front of Bohack's

"What's the matter with Glendale? Who said Glendale was different?" Said he'd get 30% of the vote in this lower middle class area--houses are single or double with fake brick and stone fronts, little lawns, some trees. Reminded me of any city--Somerville, Cambridge. When we stopped to ask the girls

directions, he said, "Is this Glendale or Middle Village?" They said Middle Village and he told story. "I'll tell you how Middle Village got formed. There are a lot of cemeteries out here--some Catholic, some Jewish. But a lot of the Jews from the east⁺side and Brooklyn used to come out here and picnic near the cemeteries. So, some enterprising guy bought the land, and sold it to them and they came and lived here. Now it's a Jewish enclave, and people have stayed here, while others have moved by."

In the morning, we went shopping ^{touring} in Corona, which was, in some ways the most interesting of all. Very ethnic neighborhood--Greeks on the right as we went down Roosevelt Avenue and Italians on the left. But sprinklings of Spanish--not Puerto Rican particularly, but Spanish. We campaigned in front⁺ of Potash's, but picked up a lawyer in the district, Teddy Shulman who walked up the street with us. On way in, Ben spoke of Mike Lisa as one of his strongest leaders "Northside Democratic Club" without any sign for any candidate out front. Just Lisa's name--and a smaller sign on the building Greek American Democratic Club. "Mike has the Italians and Pete — has the *Greeks". There weren't any signs up because this heavily Italian area won't support Golberg-Patterson. "But they won't support Buckley, because they hate the Irish. I hate to put it in such crude ethnic terms, but that's the way it is."

A very interesting story developed there. Sixty-nine homeowners were dispossessed by the city, which took their land for a playground. Naturally, they were upset and wanted Ben to help. He apparently did help behind the scenes and though he almost had a compromise when Batista (?) got involved and led a candlelight march in front⁺ of Gracie Mansion and got the people all heated up.

Then Lindsay "got his back up and wouldn't budge." There was a meeting of the people, at which Ben did not appear and they were upset at him--felt he let them down. Actually, he spent a lot of time on it but not visibly. He felt he'd catch it and he did--from one irate lady and from Teddy Shulman who told him people there were very mad at him.

"They're mad at me for two reasons. For one thing, I supported Lindsay, which meant that I deserted both the Democratic Party and Mario Proccacino. They take their party loyalty very seriously here--and on top of that, my position was interpreted as anti-Italian. Then they are mad at me because of the 69 homeowners losing their homes. I worked harder on that than almost anything else and nearly had a compromise. But when Batista got in to it and got people hysterical and they paraded with candles in front of Gracie Mansion, Lindsay got his back up and everything was lost. I could have demagogued those people, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I could have done better though. I should have gone to the meeting and been more visible. These people are mad! They've lost their homes. I don't blame them. But there was nothing I could do and I wouldn't demagogue. When Batista got in and got them all worked up, I got out. Now I'll just have to suffer. What do these people care about war or new priorities--they've lost their homes. This local thing will cost me 500-1,000 votes, maybe even more--it will cost me more votes than any vote I could ever cast in Congress would cost me. Which brings me right back to what I said yesterday. Local problems are most serious for most people. The upper income groups you saw last night at Cryder House. They don't have economic worries, and they can afford to worry about world problems. If I spoke down here, I wouldn't talk like I did last night--I'd say that Nixon is causing unemployment--the straight Democratic line."

Cliff H. talked of Ben interestingly as a man who has and is developing in views and stance. He was quite an ordinary club man at one point and people who knew him than ask: "What's happened to Ben R? What did Washington do to him?" He's been torn between *pole* of regular clubs and *pole* of reform groups. Not an intellectual--not a man of abstract beliefs. "Irreverent" and tests every idea on its merits. Good judgments, but not a deep thinker--doesn't stay immersed in detail--very sensitive to human beings in any situation--rarely bumbles way into major error. Could do *better* sometimes but never insensitive to situation he is in. *Receptive to new ideas.*

*Wash changed
BR -
also
BC*

We stopped and visited his law firm--which he left last year, thereby costing himself a good deal of income. The office had been recently redecorated--Miami Beach modern. Garish, expensive looking yet cheap. Ben thought it was a mistake to do it. Grass paper on cork walls--red, green, glass desks in rounded shapes--carpets--\$100,000. His law partners are active ACLU types, marched in South for civil rights. Their office is at 60-10 Roosevelt Avenue, in Woodside, a heavily Irish district in Delaney's area. Right on the overhead elevated line. Constant noise overhead with screeching brakes as train stops at station. Delaney voted vs. mass transit! Crazy!

Days' activities. Cliff Hackett came in and he and Fran picked me up in morning--went to District Office--campaigning (shopping bags, cookbooks, etc.) in Corona, to lunch with Ben's former law partners in diner at Roosevelt & 60th to Ben's old office--campaigning at Lefrak City (tales of crime, etc. "Lefrak has built a monster" and talk of how to reach them) 25,000 people in L. C. Then to Glendale, then back to Bay Terrace Shopping Center in Bayside. We got there a bit late and few people were there. The trip to Glendale was debilitating and discouraging for Ben since we saw very few people all told. He was

discouraged and somewhat out of sorts as he left to take a nap. As I write this in the district office, he's gone to rest up. Hope he'll be in better spirits, because I think he went to Glendale for me. And it's a busy night tonight.

A smattering of Blacks are seen almost everywhere, but not very many. East Elmhurst has only concentration of Blacks in district. Not, I gather, a significant group in district.

At dinner with Cliff and Ben at Surrey's. "I'm late, but I'll have to have coffee and a cigar. We can't let the campaign interfere with life. Bobby Kennedy would eat a sandwich in the car. But I can't do that. We may have to give up one of ~~the~~^{tonight's} meetings. You eat better on this campaign than any other."

Re. his nomination in the special election in 1962. "I was the organization candidate--Burt Kohler was President of my club and was also the county leader so he could put the squeeze on some of the other club leaders. I was an unknown. I came from nowhere to get the nomination. It took 12 ballots. I was the lowest at the beginning--3 votes on the first ballot. A lot of men stronger than I were candidates--Sy Thaler was a candidate, Mo Weinstein was a candidate, Emil Levin was a candidate. I won because I was the least hated man in the race. The hates of the others for each other cancelled them out and since no one disliked me, I was the winner. Burt Kohler was a gentleman and believed the organization should put up good candidates. I was not as provocative a person as I am now and so I got organization backing. Also President Kennedy endorsed me and Mayor Wagner. I won by 264 votes, in a 3-way race."

"Even though I have a safe district and never have any trouble in the

early political base in clubs. I was not a leader.

general election, I always have to keep my eye out for a primary contest. I've only had one, a guy named Davis ran against me and we beat him 8-1 or 6-1. But there have always been threats and I have to keep my flanks protected at all times. Seymour Thaler threatened to run against me once but he collapsed. Mo Weinstein, he and I never got along when he was county leader and he was always trying to get some assemblyman or city councilman to run against me. Lefrak offered 50,000 if someone would run against me. Just last year Hary Von Arsdale tried to get councilman Manners to run, but nothing happened. I'd say about half the clubs in the district are against me. But they don't want to be against me too strongly for fear I might go into the primary against them and beat them and take away their jobs. So self preservation wins out. Last year they delayed the endorsements--asking me if I still was a Democrat, since I supported Lindsay. So I went to their meeting and just looked 'em in the eye. And they collapsed and endorsed me. They know they can't beat me. Every two years, about one month before primary endorsements begin to be made, I mail out 200,000 letters to my constituents. I would do it anyway, but the timing is related to the primary, to let everyone know I have the frank and I'm prepared to use it if I have to." Fresh Meadows-- a nice middle class area which he lost in the last redistricting "Quite apart from politics, it gives you a good feeling when you represent homeowners who are stable and not transient and concerned about the community. But you take a Lefrak City, it's so transient, you don't know who you represent."

"My district was gerrymandered in 1962; and it was made better for me. They did it to save Halpern and I got the Democratic districts. So I was the beneficiary. The last time the district was made worse for me, as I lost some of

my strongest areas. Next time, it could get much worse or it could get better. I'll have to keep a much closer eye on it than I did the last time."

He thinks he'll get 65% of the vote--Cliff says 68%--Ben says he got 69% the last time. [He got 63%]

Did constituency constrain him? "I'm very free. Why one of the first votes I cast was against the UnAmerican Activities Committee. That was considered heresy. My predecessor had never done it. They even convened a special meeting so that I could explain my vote. The leader of my club was Burt Kohler and his support saved me. He took the attitude that if Ben says his vote was right, it must be right. And he had the political wherewithal to make it stick. What really saved me was that Burt himself had been under attack by some group at the time; and I said if committees can do this to Burt, they can do this to others and we've got to stop it. That got me off the hook. I even talked to my predecessor Lester Holtzman about it. He said he wished he had done as I did; that it was right but that he didn't have the freedom to do it or the political muscle to survive." I've helped some of the others in Queens. Addabo comes to me now to talk about voting and he votes freer than he used to." B. liked Holtzman.

"Since Halpern, Addabo and Delaney are all running unopposed, there is no excitement this year. I have to work to create interest and there is very little."

Lots of talk at dinner about using the office to campaign--Patsy Mink told him about the recipe books and he didn't know about that before. Phil Burton has a computerized operation that takes poll results and sends letters to disgruntled people. Tom Rees is more computerized--Californians are more

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technologically oriented than we are here. Koch sends out lots of newsletters on everything. "Koch said to me one day, I'm not a Congressman, I'm a printer. And he stands at the subway every night handing out his latest piece of paper." Patsy Mink sends out 6-8 press releases every day. "I couldn't do that. Besides, I think you can burn yourself out that way; like Ryan did. You have to learn to pace yourself, and come along slowly-- like John Brademas. And he has a tough district." "What was important here I think was effort at self-improvement." "I'm always asking others how they do it to see if I can improve. I'd be interested to learn what you find out about how others do it. What's the best way--I don't know." "Culver has 6 people in his district office, sending out babybooks and everything else."

"What I'm building up to is the thesis that you can't beat an incumbent; ^{having} a catastrophic event." Another discussion on how much it would take, plus the candidate, "a young Jewish lawyer."

BR talked a little about comparing his district and Stokes--and pointed out that his, too, was safe and that I'd have to find a close district to be able to make comparisons. Cliff suggested that Ben had built his strength and was "defending a fortress" whereas Stokes was still creating his strength.

There's something about Ben that makes everyone want to criticize his campaigning, his speeches, etc. He is very self-critical. He asked all of us how he did after the Lefrak City speech on crime in the streets. And everyone pitched in. Then at ^{the} ~~en~~ Central Parkway School where we ended up in the cafeteria, Herb and Mike kidded about Ben going to the table where there were the fewest people. "Now he's sitting by himself." As if he was the bumbling campaigner. His ~~speech~~ speech is rarely smooth and glib. It's more intense, rough,

not polished and redundant but in a sense trying to teach them. But the point about the criticism is that it is given in good humor and out of great respect for the congressman. His staff thinks the world of him as a person. (love to think)

The retinue of hangers-on--Mike Lucey. Said Ben, "He looks forward to these two weeks." As if Ben really wanted to put some fun in Mike's life. Herb Freidman, Mike's partner who is with Ben each night--Fran--tonight Ben's brother-in-law was along, as I guess he was at College Point the night before I came.

Ben's self deprecation came out at dinner when he talked about someone and said, "I don't have the personality that he has."

He has some ^{quite} ~~great~~ reactions that are anti-business, anti-Republican--he repeats clichés that Republicans are interested "in business, in profits, in things and not people." Doesn't like doctors and his speech to the dentists was not really easy. He told them to do something/better care or government will do it for the. They protested a lot. And it was clear he was not their hero.

(given leader, not organizational leader I think)

He does see himself as a leader in Queens--especially as the old organizations crumble. He really has a lot of contempt for old organizations now, and though he talks about reviving them, he really seems to work around them. Still his contempt is mitigated by ^{some} ~~same~~ necessity to work with them.

Was decision to move family to Washington hard? "Yes. It removes me from the district. But I can relax and have a more normal family life and tend to legislation in Washington. But it increases the distance between me and my constituents and I feel all the more strongly that I have to come back and be seen. I came back at least once a week. I'd do more of it if I had a tight district. I don't really like it that much, and I'm glad I don't have to be a congressman in the streets." It's almost inevitable now that congress-

men live in Washington. Carey just bought a house, and Scheuer. We're working 11 months a year."

Said he would use the prestige of his office to help citizens. Didn't feel like that at first, now he does. "Why shouldn't I use the office of Congressman to kick the police captain at Lefrak City in the ass if it will help?" Spoke along these lines at other times, too. He was very impressed by the frightened woman we met on street this afternoon at Lefrak City. Addicts accosting people in elevators and halls. Women splitting up their money so holdup men wouldn't get too much--some in their purse, license, shoes, and bra.

He thinks of himself as a politician in the Kennedy image. In every speech he mentioned John and Bobby and "We can do better" theme. He often spoke of when Bobby was in the district and they were taking him around. How he got out and played football in Flushing, ate a sandwich in the car.

He spoke of his Senate campaign. "We had a Senate campaign going for about a month. We ate very well, discovered the best restaurant in Buffalo and ate at Hyde Park in New York. It cost \$10,000 and we never could get it off the ground."

He doesn't really like himself enough to be a Senator.

A personal comment: Ben seems to have considerable appeal but as a man of the people. Yet he does not have charisma, does not really relish the handshaking and the close contact with the voters. He's interested in legislating and he attracts people on the issues. He also relies on regular Democratic loyalty. People like him--yet he is somewhat aloof. But his aloofness in no sense comes across as snobishness. His very manner of speech, halting, earnest, almost humbling keeps him from being seen as arrogant or snobby.

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At one point in the car, he said, "Maybe I'm an effecte snob." He said it in jest as if no one could possibly think of him that way, yet thinking himself that there might be something to it. He has a fine sense of humor, quick and light, good at reparte--delighted at being topped by Mike Goldenthal who spars with him constantly. He is, (as Cliff says,) irreverent and insouciant. At end of dentists' speech, he said, "I'll answer a couple of questions. I don't want to, but I will. What I really want to do is leave." In speeches to middle-class Jews, he would say, "I want to be reelected because I like the job. It's a good job." Ben is, I think, in tune with parts of his district--stable, Jewish middle class--much of the ethnic area he wins as a Democrat. But he doesn't go into the streets. Criticized ^{Assembly man} Stavisky ^{Ben} as a demagogue and said he did give service to his people, but that he, Ben was not a "Congressman in the streets" type. He thinks maybe he should, but his heart isn't in it. Ben does, I think, pace himself and does not "run scared"--certainly there was nothing frantic or high pressure that I could see. People were always at loose ends. (Jewish word for it "Frashadnek" or something like that.) He saves himself ^{for} big issues-- ^{minimum leader, not organization leader} and he does see himself as a leader of district. War, is best example; but he ^{is Jewish-} often said--to dentists and in Cryder House and at the "Y"--"What we have to do, you and I, as the leaders of the community is...." "Our responsibility--yours and mine--is to...." The world is full of problems the way Ben sees it and he feels an obligation to find ways to deal with them. After our campaigning in Lefrak City, he was "terribly upset" about the crime problem, and he talked about crime, but I thought he came to it almost reluctantly--as if that was really the local politicos problem and that people should hound their local officials. The same thing with the 69 homeowners. He wasn't as "visible" as

he could have been. "I couldn't have helped them, but I should have been more "visible." He likes to keep "some distance" (his word) between himself and his constituents I think. Not good at telling his constituents what they want to hear. Lots of inner strength, I think.

After three glorious, coatless, sunny days of campaigning, I left N. Y. in a drizzle.

He spoke about the people who had run against him in past campaigns and didn't display any respect for any of them. One, Breveti (?) was vigorous and was getting ready to conduct a tough campaign when they got an anonymous note that he had been suspended from the Bar or something in a legal action. They looked up the case, found it and on the night of their first TV debate, Ben carried the law book under his arm and put it down beside him. Breveti saw it and "collapsed." "He mumbled his way through the debate and that's all we ever heard of him. He knew we knew about it. We never mentioned it, but he knew we could. And he completely collapsed."

Cliff pointed out that Queens was not incorporated till the 1880's or 1890's. That it was, till then, a collection of quite separate little towns-- and that it still retains something of that character. People say they are from Flushing or Corona or Forest Hills or College Point, not Queens.

Since the way Ben divided his areas seemed to be stable and economic, maybe a four-fold table would work. Stable and low economy = Corona; unstable and low economy = East Elmhurst; stable and higher economy = Forest Hills; unstable and higher economy = Lefrak City. This analysis leaves out philosophy, however.

Another sign of spirit -- his use of the bull horn - riding along beeping the bull horn -- stopping at the garage of the head of the VFW or Legion who gave him a hand time as his Un American Activities to "give him a shot," giving Teddy Shulman "a shot" and beeping it in the Restaurant diner. Also, hopping out to shake hands with a few ladies in the street -- which Fran said was most unusual.