

STEVE BELL  
& HOLLINGS SPEECH  
February 10, 1982

Waiting for Bell, Bob Fulton came in and I asked him if they'll get reconciliation through. He said "A better question is whether we'll get a budget resolution. My guess is that they'll get the number down so that they look good on paper and put off all the tough decisions till after the election. Maybe they could get a reconciliation through after the election, in a lame duck session."

I finally got to see Steve Bell. In his office is a pen that Reagan used to sign reconiliation and a framed copy of the reconciliation bill with a note from Pete beside it.

I said "Let me tell you what I'm doing." He said "Writing a book" and I said "Yes, that will come out in 1982." He said "I may be out of all this by then." I said, "Me, too, the book may be published posthumously. I'd like to be able to come talk to you every now and then. I need all the help I can get." He said "I'm suspicious." I said "I know you are." He said "After the Greider thing." I said "I think Greider misused his trust." He said "I think Stockman was trying to use him; but he wanted it to come out now and not when it did." I said, "Maybe." He said, "I'm not paranoid like some people around here. Maybe I'm too much the other way."

Then, he opened up a little. He said "The next few weeks are a crucial period of decision for Domenici. Last year at this time, we had a resolution ready and we had Hollings locked in. We had done all the preliminary work in the period between the election to January. And we had made our contribution to it. This year, the President announced his program; but Domenici did not have a part in producing that program. The things he suggested were not

accepted. When that budget came down, everybody went into shock. It's exactly the same thing that happens to turkeys in a thuder and lightening storm. They all run to huddle in one corner of the yard. They trample over each other and kill each other. When the storm is over they leave the corner, leave their dead behind and strat running all over the place as their electrical systems start up again. Domenici is just waiting. At 10:30 Hollings is going to make a very important speech on the floor. He will be the first Democrat to respond to the President. My analysis of Hollings is that heneeds attention. He was a war hero at 22, a member of the S.C. legislature at 27, then lieutenant governor, governor at 37, then senator. All of a sudden a terrible thing happened. He was put in the minority. We got him to join us early last year. That bothered some of the other Democrats. I asked myself recently, 'What does he need.' I got an internal memo saying 'this is what he needs.' So I said, 'Let's give him what he needs--attention. Let's get him out front.' I think I had a big hand in telling Baker, 'Let him get out front. It will make our job much easier.' The President has a plan; Hollings has a plan. We'll be in the middle. The President wants cuts; we'll give him a little less. The President wants entitlements cut; we'll cut a little 'em more. The President's wants defense; we'll give him a little less. To have Hollings, a super hawk attacking the defense budget is helpful. Nixon could go to China; Hollings can criticize defense. The press will be there today. Baker will see that he gets the press. Then after the speech, Baker will congratulate him and tell him what a constructive interesting idea he has."

I got one other question in--re whether he could do his job as well if he didn't know as well as he does." No. I would worry about my instincts. I'd wonder whether I knew what the people at home were thinking. As it is, I trust my instincts on that. There are two parts of a Senator's job--he has to help people back home that's what they hired him for. And he has to help the

nation. They hired him for that too..." The phone rang and the interview ended.

I walked over to the floor with Steve and Andy. Steve explained to Andy how he had helped set up this Hollings speech. Then they talked hockey till they left me. I have no idea whether Bell will or will not talk to me in the future. We'll have to see.

When I get to gallery someone is finishing his statement. They have a slow quorum call to wait for Baker. There are 20 reporters when Baker comes in and Hollings begins. By mid speech, there are 36 reporters in the gallery. Very large group includes, Petti, Jones, Hume, McNeil, Tolchin. Baker takes seat and listens to whole speech. There are 8 Hollings staffers (personal and budget & Copps on the couches and another 6 in the gallery.

Baker gets up in middle of Hollings speech to make sure Hollings will have enough time, but asks that his interruption not appear in the middle of the speech.

Reporters keep up running commentary during speech. They chuckle at Hollings figures of speech. Hollings says, this is "not the time to scatter like fish under the bridge" and everyone laughs.

Biden asks Hollings to yield, but Baker gets up and praises speech before Hollings can recognize Biden.

Johnston, Biden, Gorton, Baker, Kasten, speak and praise it.

Bells ring ending morning business, reporters stream out of gallery and head for radio and television gallery. I follow the crowd. One guy says "What's causing the mass migration?" Someone says "Hollings is coming to the gallery." The little room with the Congressional Records and CQ's in the background is full of cameras and reporters. I watch from outside the window and listen on a speaker outside.

Hollings says re budget process "The process is at trial. It's in a dickens of a fix. It's nothing that affects people out there, though." They are worried about interest rates.

"The President says 'put up or shut up'. I'm putting up."

Says he's talked with Boschwatz and Kasten. But about Domenici "He can speak for himself. But from working with him I think I can say he's leaning in this direction. His stock in trade is honesty. He's going to have to come out on this side of the ledger."

"There's no thunder in the budget. No one ever got elected using the budget as an issue. It hurt but it never helped. Anyone who thinks otherwise is wrong."

Talked about how he talked about slowing social security on the C Spann call-in program. "I waited for the blast. There wasn't any blast."

Re country's economic plight. Lots of employment in services "We're taking in each other's laundry. Nobody's producing anything."

"The budget problem will stay with us. If some one else has another balloon, I'll follow it."

"Unless you get a composite and get everyone in on it, it will go in all directions. And you won't get my vote for parts of it."

To Tom Pettit's opinionated question of some sort. "As the President says, you've got to get 50 miles outside of Washington. If you went 50 miles outside of Washington, you wouldn't ask that question... If I can get on enough of your programs I can sell it."