

Jack Flynt

February 17, 1972

Unhappy about new district. "Only one thing would make me feel worse and that would be to have my \_\_\_\_\_ laid on a stump and be hit with a mallet."

He didn't have much influence on it--but it's not clear why. "My state senator is on the wrong side of the political fence in the legislature. He's probably the most articulate, most intelligent man in the Senate, but he was absolutely no help to me."

"My public reaction was that I always liked every district I ever had and knew I would like every district I ever would have, that I hoped the new people in my district would like me as much as I like them. Privately I said this is just what the Supreme Court opened the door for and the legislature had every right to do what they did. It was an abomination." Confused in last part.

"They took away Southern Tier counties--my area of potential weakness (Bibb County) and four counties of my greatest strength--two of which I always carry by over 90%; one by 94% and one by 90%. I don't ever carry my own county by 90%--only 80-85%."

Then he talked about Clayton, when I asked him if Clayton wasn't really different from the rest of the district. "Against any opponent in that County I will win by 60%-40% at best and split 50%-50% at worst.

The county is split right down the middle--on everything. If they vote for sheriff, the vote will be 52-48. If they have a vote on schools, the vote will be 55-45. If they voted to have it rain gold every Thursday, it would still come out 55%-45% at best. They are split into factions. Most of them haven't lived there for more than ten years. So, no one from Clayton County could beat me by much in his home county, whereas someone who ran against me from one of my rural counties could beat me in his home county." In Fulton County, he described his new area--"welfare-ghetto," "a middle-class black area--20% of the Atlanta police force is black and 80% of them live in my new district." "Bankers and insurance companies." "Conservative middle-class whites."

"The only thing that worries me is a Nixon landslide."

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His reaction to new district in terms of his chances. "In the short run, it's just perfect. No one will run against me from the ~~new~~ <sup>old</sup> part of the district because they will figure I have the old part locked solid. And no one from the new part will run against me because he will figure the incumbent will have an advantage over anyone else in an area where neither is known. But that will only last for two years. <sup>if</sup> I'll never be able to keep everyone in that district happy."

"That woman is as liberal as Shirley Chisholm. But she'll vote for me come hell or high water. Because I'm honest with her. And I've moderated my views. I'm more moderate than I was 15 years ago. And I've admitted in some cases that I was just plain wrong." He mentioned funding arts and humanities council and I guess, the war.

"My constituents have changed too. And I like to think they have changed because I have changed. We've never had (let me knock on wood) any racial strife in my district. We've had racial tension, but never racial strife. I like to think it's because I have stepped in to head it off--on a number of occasions I have done that and the situation has cooled off." I asked for example and he told how he got blacks in Griffin to moderate their demands to city council.

He talked again about his 1966 victory over Republican in Bibb County. How surprised everyone was that they thought he was invulnerable. "He had never lost an election, and everyone thought he was invulnerable. I beat him by about 55-45. But if I had gotten fifty point zero zero zero zero one, it would have been a smashing victory."

Delegates to Democratic National Convention are running from new districts and he doesn't want to test self and possible lose in a new district. So he's not running. "I've never lost an election in my life, not for Congress and not for any lesser jurisdiction. And I'm not about to start now by running in a district I don't know. If I ran, I would win. But it's not worth the chance." He's got great

pride--doesn't want to get beaten. "Any one of a number of colleges in my district could field a candidate that might win election to be as a convention delegate. It's that unpredictable."

"Wilbur Mills is my candidate. When people ask me what chance he has, I say, he has two chances--slim and none."

Adam <sup>Flynt</sup> Claymire(?) travelled in Jack's district. When I asked him if Jack followed or led the district on the war issue; he said.

"Followed. Jack Flynt never led his district on anything. But he's

not too far behind either. It's a placid district, and they don't ask him for much. He once told me that the most letters he had ever received criticizing a vote of his was six. Nobody's leading that kind of district. There just isn't much going on there." But I don't know how you would know a congressman who was leading his district.

He talked about how low unemployment was in the district. Everyone who wants to work can. Twenty jobs for every one applicant-- West Point, Pepperell and J. Stephens and some other mills he said had modernized and were growing and were better off than ever. Some didn't modernize and fell to Japanese competition. I asked what most pressing issue in district was. "Bussing. But it's not an issue. Everyone seems to be in favor of the same thing--the destruction of the public schools. Most of the white people in the district have their children in private schools. I drove by a school the other day during recess and I could only see one white child out of about 200 students. The well-to-do can afford to send their children to private schools. Those who can't afford it pay for it in kind. They do whatever has to be done around the school just so they can keep their children in private schools. The poor are even more adamant about it than the rich." Here is most salient issue and there's no conflict.