

Processed by: TB  
Date: 7/15/85

PAARLBERG

PAARLBERG, DON (OH-52) 164 pages PRCQ (M)

Department of Agriculture official, 1953-58; Economic Advisor to the President, 1958-61.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1 [part 1; pp. 1-81] Personal background. First meeting with Ezra Taft Benson. Pressures on Agriculture Department personnel. Agricultural issues: price supports, Congressional relations, Food for Peace program, rural development program, finding ground glass in school peanut butter. Transfer to White House staff, October 1958. Extensive comments on President Eisenhower: personality, character, political philosophy, delegation of responsibility, use of Secretary Benson as lightning rod to attract criticism. Lengthy accounts of Cabinet meetings: July 1, 1960 re Food for Peace program and DDE's preoccupation with Federal Wage bill; November 27, 1959 re DDE's concern over balanced budget; January 13, 1961 re transition to Kennedy administration; staff meetings of July 6, 1960 re Cuban sugar quota. U.S. policy toward Cuba and Dominican Republic. Inertia of government bureaucracy. Civilian and military managerial style. DDE's management of White House staff. Joseph McCarthy. Sherman Adams and Wilton Persons. Congressional interest in agriculture: House and Senate committees; William Knowland; Everett Dirksen. Relations between State and Agriculture Departments.

Interview #1 [part 2; pp. 82-164] Relations between State and Agriculture Departments. Agricultural revolution: change from family farms to big business; Congressional awareness of the change; decline of agriculture as a political force. Farm organizations: National Farmer's Union, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Grange. DDE's meetings with farm organization leaders: Herschel Newson of the Grange. Food for Peace program and P.L. 480: disposal of agricultural surpluses abroad. World population explosion and birth control. Sukarno of Indonesia. Price support controversy: DDE veto of price support legislation, 1954; farmer and Congressional pressures on Ezra Benson. Extensive comments on Ezra Taft Benson: friendship with DDE; social and family life; Mormon religion. Rural Development Program: problem of rural poverty and unemployment; migration to cities; aid to rural poor; role of True Morse; Congressional opposition. Farm labor problems: Mexican laborers; positions of Agriculture and Labor departments. Ezra Benson's speeches: preparation; controversy over various speeches; answering public opinion mail; anecdote re sending wrong reply to editor of Harper's Magazine; DDE's promise of full parity in 1952 campaign. Crop and price forecasts: political pressures to alter reports. Expansion of agricultural research. Cotton problems. Soil Bank program. Rural electrification program. Paarlberg's political speeches: avoidance of publicity by White House staff. Control of national forests. Role of White House in mediating interdepartmental disputes. Need for attachés abroad to report through U.S. ambassador. Balance of payments problem. Robert Anderson. Richard

Nixon. Decision to not have DDE actively support Nixon in 1960 campaign. Effect of DDE's heart attack on Department of Agriculture.

A name index is located at the end of the transcript.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by Ed Edwin, 1968]