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Interview with Judge Robert E. Quinn, July 24th, 1972 - Session 2

Matthew Smith

Providence College

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July 24, 1972

SIDE I
Second Session

Mr. Smith:

McCoy over at least the question of public utilities in Pawtucket, the question of power within the legislature to stop the budget from going through the first time, the need for a special session. The fact that McCoy had Curvin as finance chairman. There's also one thing I got from reading it that we hit upon earlier. It seems that Green dealt openly with the Republicans to get what he wanted through in the face of party opposition at least from some factions of the party. Like the Curry judgeship. I think that the Pawtucket Times talks about Cornelius Moore being a representative of the utility lobby. At the same time Lamarre, Santigiani, McElroy, and Kennelly fight in the senate over a combination public works and utilities commission. The Italians in the party being anxious to put Santigiani in. Again the constitutional convention. I know that was close to your heart-not even a direct primary all those things culminating in a radio war between Green and McCoy. When the Congdon seat became open, at least the Blackstone Valley people wanting Toupin and Green wanting Prince. The fact that we lost a congressman in a special election in August of that year. Was all that wrapped up in that political feud? Just in general would you comment upon that?

Judge Quinn:

Well, of course, I definitely was interested in the consti-

tutional convention because that was my primary objective when I went up there in 1923 as I think I've mentioned in prior discussion with you that s-1 was my bill for the constitutional convention which of course, had the merit of being just a resolution to permit the people-the voters of R.I. to answer the question-shall there be a constitutional convention to revise, alter, or amend our present constitution? And that was what we were driving to get through the legislature. In other words, just the right of the people to say whether they wanted a constitutional convention. Because certainly at that time, in the early 20's-'23 it appeared to me and I think it appeared to perhaps almost everybody that had any knowledge of the state government that it would be impossible for the democrats to ever get a majority of the house and senate at the same time. That's the way we felt about it, and I think that almost every leading democrat in those days felt that it was just a physical impossibility to get control of the legislature. It turned out as things developed in later years, of course, that they get control because of redistricting and so on and so forth. But I was for the constitutional convention whole heartedly and in 1936 I campaigned from one end of the state to the other. I think I went in every city and town, hamlet and village to try to get approval of the resolution that was finally put through as to whether there be a constitutional convention. I campaigned I think every day and night for forty days and forty nights I forget, for the constitutional convention, but, of course it was beaten by I

think 10,000 votes. I don't recall exactly the whole number. I carried the whole brunt of the campaign. I devoted my entire time to trying to get the people to approve the calling of the constitutional convention but it went down to defeat.

Mr. Smith:

What would you attribute to the people's fear to, or why they voted against it. It would seem after, literally from 1843. The coming of the coming of the law and order party and that constitution was accepted when Dorr's party was pushed out that in all justice this should have been really wanted by the people. What turned them against the idea?

Judge Quinn:

Well, I don't know that they turned against it, Matt. But I think the Republican party was absolutely against it. Of course, in other words, it would be a way of undermining the control of the Republican organization in the state of Rhode Island. So they were all against it. As I recall, I think the Journal was pretty well against it and there were parts of the Democratic party that didn't relish the idea of the Constitutional Convention. Even up in the senate when we finally got the resolution through to put it on the ballot. It was very close. The senators from the country towns were inclined to be against it. I think mainly because they were afraid that they might loose the senator from Smithfield, or S. Kingston or Westerly or whatever it might be. In other words, I think there was a reasonable fear perhaps that the cities of the State were going to take over and deprive the small towns of the right to a representative and a senator which they all had at that time. I remember very distinctly that John Gibbons- Sen. from Smithfield at that time, one of the finest legislators that I think that ever sat in the general

assembly. Fine democrat. The most honorable man that I think that I ever ran into. Certainly a man that you could be proud of. He liked me very much. But I had a hell of a time persuading him to vote for that resolution. He finally did but I think it was only because of the confidence that he had in me. I think he was afraid that that vote would be the death~~knell~~ of his senatorship in the town of Smithfield. And I think there were other senators and perhaps members of the house that felt the same way. In other words that it was danger of the cities taking control of the state of Rhode Island. I think that was perhaps one of the reasons we had a very, very difficult time getting the resolution through and then secondly to get a majority of the people to vote for it. Of course, you're in an off season. In other words it was from, I think it came on for a vote in March as I recall. I know it was during the winter because I can remember wearing a big heavy woolen coat. I had no driver. I had to drive myself all over the state which was no easy job. Although at that time, of course, I was a fairly young man and so I did it. But every single day and night for 40 days and 40 nights I went out and campaigned for the constitutional convention. I did all I could do. I don't think Gov. Green ever took any particular active part in the campaigning. He was for it and I think as far as what he might say and do; I think he was for it. But I don't think he went out to campaign. He didn't try to carry the ball. That was all left to me and the Lord knows I did everything humanly possible that I could do. But it was defeated. The same thing was true on the direct primary vote. Of course, I was 100% for that, too. As I say I lost votes from men like Lois DePasquale who I had really kept in as state chairman when Green and Geary were trying to get rid of him and who had always professed to be an admirer of primary law voted against it. It's easy to find a way out, you know. In other words, I think the

primary law as introduced provided for the direct primary for all state offices. I think it was limited to state offices. We were trying to avoid complication. I think the reason that Pasquale gave for opposing it was that it didn't apply to cities and towns. It didn't apply to mayors and so forth. If the mayors were in there, then the answer would have been no. I'm not for that because it takes in cities and towns. In other words, we were ship-sored on the part that individuals who should naturally be supporters but who were looking for a way out and of course, they'd take the way out whether it was one way or the other. In other words, Green was, of course opposed to the direct primary and so Eddie Higgins and his followers would do what ever they could do to beat it. It might be in devius ways but nevertheless, they were able to defeat it.

Mr. Smith:

Of course, Green probably in the back of his mind was an open challenge ...would knock him out of senatorship or governorship if he decided to run against it.

Judge Quinn:

Undoubtedly, that played a part. That was too democratic doctrine. I think it was a good thing to have. I was 100% for it and as far as I know McCoy was for it. Condon and McCoy both, I think were for the primary. I know Frank Congdon was. Of course, if there was one fellow in the state of Rhode Island that had nothing to worry about as far as the primary law was concerned it would be Congdon. I think he perhaps was the strongest individual vote-getter that we had. It certainly wasn't his district and I think he would also be in the 2nd district. They were for it, but it was defeated in the senate and I had a good deal of power in the senate. I had a good many friends in the senate but there were times when insidious

influences played a part. Well, I think the instance of De Pasquale was definitely the judgeship. 6th district court judgeship.

Mr. Smith:

I counted that there were some 50 odd jobs given to legislators by the end of that first session. They were all over various questions. It certainly became a power struggle between Green and McCoy faction. Would you care to comment on that? I talked about utilities.

Judge Quinn:

There definitely was a struggle that went on and then the racial issues were brought in. I think Santangini, because Italians should be entitled to a directorship as I remember it. It's a little hazy in my mind but LaMar was suggested as director of business regulation perhaps. I don't remember exactly but one of the main appointments was to be LaMar. The other was to be Santangini and that was based purely on racial grounds. One was French, the other was Italian and that was the reason that the McCoy forces were advancing the theory that they should be represented, definitely should have a Frenchman and an Italian. Of course, that really never appealed very much to me. I think I supported McElroy. I think Charlié McElroy was made director of public works.

Mr. Smith:

McElroy and Kenelley. I think those were the two keepers.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, those were the two positions. LaMar was to get the job that Tom Keneley...they wanted him for that job, their McCoy interests and I'm not sure just where Santangini came from but he was suggested for the job that McElroy got, director of public works and the McCoy forces were supporting those men and I'm quite sure that I went along with the administration on both those votes. I don't know if I had a vote or not but I would be the lieutenant governor at that time. There was a bitter struggle.

No question about that. The feeling was running high. I would say in those days, of course McCoy had been fired. McCoy was the original budget director as I recall it and more or less everybody was together. It was one big happy family almost we'll say until McCoy began to kick up his heels and then Green fired him as budget director. Then as I recall that's when he appointed DeSesto. From that time on, I would say the feeling was bitter. After all, when you're fired from a job that you've been appointed to by the governor only a month or 2, or 3, or 4 before and after you undoubtedly felt that you had delivered substantially on election day as I recall it perhaps the city of Pawtucket in 1934 had given the democratic party a fairly good majority. I can't recall what the figures were. But I'm sure that they had delivered a fairly sound majority for the democrats on election day. McCoy was the leader and he was appointed budget director and there within a few months was set aside, and thrown to the discards. And that undoubtedly developed a hatred of Governor Green. I haven't any question but at the end of the session there was very bitter feeling between McCoy and Green and that would of course, include Eddie Higgins who was Green's secretary and really his right hand man politically. I'm certain, I think I've said it before and I have to say it again that I think Eddie Higgins worked 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for Theodore Green. And anybody who has crossed Gov. Green was an enemy of Higgins and Higgins was a worker. There's no question about that. A very hard worker. And I guess a 1000 times loyal to Gov. Green in anything that he did. So the feeling developed there ~~was~~ between McCoy and LaMar on one hand and Gov. Green on the other and of course I would say that included Harry Curvin who was the chairman of the finance committee.

Mr. Smith:

He seems to have been McCoy's man.

Judge Quinn:

He definitely was a McCoy supporter. Now he didn't see eye to eye with McCoy in everything. In other words, Curvin told me that he knew O'Hara was a S-O-B of a first-order long before McCoy finally discovered it, but he was loyal to McCoy and he went along with him and stood by him and I guess anything that McCoy wanted in those days, whether Harvey Curvin agree with him or not he went along. In other words, he would support him and did. I think Frank Congdon, of course he and Ed Quinn were on the bench in '35. But I think their sympathies were still with McCoy. They were both termed friends of Tom McCoy and while I think they adhered to their judicial ~~oath~~ and tried to do everything that was fair and honest. If there was any allegiance or any partisanship to show between Green and McCoy, it would go to McCoy very definitely. On the utilities situation I don't know; frankly, I would have to surmise. I have no doubt that Connie Moore was an agent for the public utilities for of the state. He was a lawyer that represented big business. I think the rich men from Newport and probably from Boston and New England- and I haven't any doubt that perhaps if McCoy was charging that he was an influence that was working under cover in behalf of the public utilities in the state. I thing McCoy was right.

Mr. Smith:

I don't want to castigate anybody, but I went through the newspapers almost to a point where I'm up to your governorship but on that particular question seeing that there was some sentiment of municipal^{al} ownership and, of course, I always say that New Englanders have been very unfortunate in what happened with utilities as far as the gas co.- the rates in the sense that that so called discount or high utility rates in general. It seemed from circumstantial evidence anyway, that there was some bickering on the part of war in favor of seeing no charter come out for any town. I think West Warwick I said that had.

Judge Quinn:

My father was an advocator of a public utilities plant for W. Warwick. He was a bit of a Maverick in a sense. He was a good democrat with my Uncle Henry in some things and public utilities would be one of the things which they would part company and McCoy I think was advocating it for Pawtucket and certainly it was worthy of consideration. I think however, that the big law firms and that would include Connie Moore of Newport and I would say, perhaps would all be forking against municipal ownership. They would be working for the Narragansett Electric or for the New England power or whatever it would be. I guess McCoy was definitely sincere in his attempt to split, to explore the possibilities of benefiting the people of Rhode Island by the creation of a municipal power plant.

Mr. Smith:

I do know that at that state convention a nominee replacement for Congdon- this became the major issue. He'd probably denounce Green as being solely as a tool of the interest and certain divisions of the party he mentioned. I think Higgins and one or two of the other individuals who are usually not in the lime light were definitely acting or working for the utility interest and anyway I think at that time, Geary and O'Connell had voted against the so called F.D.R. bill to break hold of the holding companies to break their hold- I forget - a forced bill of some type and I

the convention finally voted that the nominee would endorse, would vote for F.D.R.'s plans. That was probably the only thing that came out of the convention.

Judge Quinn:

In other words, the McCoy forces put through a plan requiring the nominee to support F.D.R.'s plan. Charlie Rish I think was the Republican nominee. Tony Prince I think was the democratic nominee. And of course, Rish won.

Mr. Smith:

McCoy sat on his hands, that's pretty clear. He didn't run a party rally or anything else. He went fishing.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I think it was quite obvious, Matt, at that time. Of course, Gov. Greene's popularity had declined considerably, I think at that time, too. It seems to me that he had definitely gone down in the polls, if there were any, and then the fight with McCoy would definitely have a tendency, of course to probably cause the organizations in Pawtucket and Central Falls to not go all out for Antonio Prince. Prince, of course was from Woonsocket. Charlie Rish was from Lincoln, or Central Falls, right from that neighborhood. I think the democratic organizations in that section of the state, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln and so forth didn't work too hard.

Mr. Smith:

Prince was connected with the centralist to a degree. Wasn't his brother a priest, or his uncle a priest?

Judge Quinn:

Yes, it was his uncle, a monsignor.

Mr. Smith:

I can remember a few of the democrats. I think it was LaMar who said that the Irish won't vote for him because of what they did with the bishop. Something to this effect. It seemed that there was a great deal of this factionism within the party. A great part of it stemmed from McCoy first in Pawtucket desiring to get his

back in.

Judge Quinn:

I think at that time it was a personal feud between Greene and McCoy. I mean, after all I think that stems largely from the fact that Green fired him and that was a terrible slap in the face to McCoy. I think McCoy undoubtedly regarded himself as a cog in the democratic victory in 1934. They had worked hard and delivered and so forth and that as far as principle was concerned, his democracy was probably better than Green's and then to be thrown into the ash can, made him a bitter enemy of Green's so I think that probably played a greater part than any national fight might of. In other words, there may have been some remains of the fight between the bishop and Monsignor Prince. That was I think in 1921 quite a way back, but I doubt very much whether that would play...I think the fight between Green and McCoy where they just didn't go the front for the democratic nominee would be responsible for the defeat by Charlie Risk although I think Charlie Risk also was personally popular and I think of course, he had pretty good relations with the church. I think his sister was a nun. In any event, everything considered, I think Charlie Risk got the benefit of the defection that there might be but I think that the main reason that we lost that was the feeling between McCoy and Green.

Mr. Smith:

There's no doubt both of them were vindictive. I would say judging from looking at the record of the legislature, Green and Higgins certainly rewarded those that worked with him- acted very strongly against democrats that didn't see eye to eye whether it be McCoy or others.

Judge Quinn:

I think that's right and of course, the story is that Higgins kept a file on everybody during the days in Washington. That every possible opponent had a

file in the nature of what we think the FBI may have on any man of prominence.

He kept a file and any mistake that I might make or you might make or any other person prominent in the life of Rhode Island was in that file ready to be taken out at the proper time. Yes, I think what you say is correct.

Mr. Smith:

That's just the impression I get of looking at, just the newspapers. Actually, there's nothing else to look at. It seems to come through that Green, I wouldn't call him egotistical, but I would think he was definitely interested in promoting Theodore Francis Green for the senate and maintaining himself in politics. Maybe you would call him egotistical but it certainly comes through that he wanted strict party discipline. He wanted allegiance to himself and when he didn't get it, he retaliated with a male fist, even to the extent of working with the republicans to get his program through to the McCoy faction.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I think that's right. Of course, Green was a well educated man. A very capable man, intellectually and he had money in the sense that well, compared to most democrats he was a very rich man. Of course, he wasn't nearly as rich as Gerry, but he had plenty of money at his disposal. And I'm quite sure that the general theory was that Eddie Higgins had whatever funds were necessary to accomplish his objectives, whatever they were. It was always in the interest of Greene and when Eddie needed to spend 5,000 or 10,000 or 15,000, it was his to spend.

Mr. Smith:

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At the same time that deal with Curry and Sullivan of course all of them being Gerry men in Newport and I guess, nominated Gerry a few times, in '30 and '34, I think and Curry being a law partner, it just seemed that there was something there. Both of them going on the bench and the constitutional convention going out the window. I don't mean to condemn them as selling out democratic principle but it seemed for the price of expediency at least that time they did. I don't know if that would be fair.

Judge Quinn:

I think there was a deal on the judgeships. Of course, I supported Mayor

Sullivan.

Judge Quinn:

Curry at that time made some kind of an arrangement with Green and Higgins perhaps to support his candidacy, and he got the job. He made a good judge. He was a fine lawyer and a fine man. I certainly would never want to say anything personally derogatory to Walter Curry because I tried cases before him. He made a good judge. I think he was completely honest but he was definitely 100% Republican and I think there was some kind of arrangement was made to get him on the bench at the time that the Democrats put on Mayor Sullivan. I don't know whether we had complete control in the senate at that time or not. It would be very very close. I guess Green would have to nominate both of those men because at that time the judges of the superior court were nominated by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. So I think Sullivan and Curry were both nominated by the governor and confirmed by the senate. The vote in the senate would be very very close if there was a party division. I don't remember what happened as far as the division on the appointments of Sullivan and Curry.

Mr. Smith:

Judge, from your own point of view, besides the constitutional convention and the direct primary, were there any other pieces of legislation that you thought, or that you did get through, that you were interested in personally or anything that failed in '35 or '36 actually before you ran for governor? Was there anything spectacular or of personal interest for the state that you had sponsored? I haven't looked at the papers that closely for each bill that was submitted or so forth.

Judge Quinn:

I can't say that there was any. I certainly had no personal interest in anything pending before the legislature in those days.

Mr. Smith:

Excuse me. I didn't mean personal interest, Judge, in the derogatory way. I mean something that you had sponsored- a particular piece of legislation like old age benefits.

Judge Quinn:

No, I don't think so. I can't recall anything along those lines. Perhaps we were relying on the federal government for benefits like that, old age, social security, and so forth. I think, it was just about the time that social security was emerging. I think it was actually enacted in 1937 by the federal congress but undoubtedly we were considering those matters, but I don't recall proposing, of course I wasn't introducing bills. I was then lieutenant governor. I don't recall anything that I could say. I think all my energies were devoted to the constitutional convention and the direct primary. I think those were the major objectives that I had in those days. I certainly put an awful lot of time and effort on the constitutional convention.

Mr. Smith:

I would have to say that that would be the premier issue for the party at that time. Something that for almost a century had slipped.

Judge Quinn:

It seemed to me, of course, at that time I was probably wrong as things evolved. It seemed to me that no matter how strong we were on election day, that we could never carry a majority of the house and senate.

Mr. Smith:

I think, Judge, that you were probably right in the sense that

nobody foresaw the great carryover of the Democrats were in the small towns, as people moved out of the cities. Nobody foresaw that, certainly. It was a democratic principle to open up the rotten burrow ^{crack} system to provide adequate representation of both branches that would reflect the population. Of course a constitution that had the suffrage qualification and that system with the senate and the judge system with tenure.

Those things all came up again in the 60's with our abortive convention.

It was probably the longest sitting one in Western Civilization.

Judge Quinn:

Of course, there was a definite change. And exit from the cities to the suburbs that played a part, but actually, of course Providence gained with the repeal of the property qualification and the redistricting of the senate by amendment in 1921. Providence went from one senator to four and then to five and then Pawtucket of course, also gained an extra senator in the late thirties and early forties. So of course we did make some gains. In other words, the completion of the senate by 1940 had probably at least given the democrats a gain of five which would be a substantial change. The senate when I was in it had 39 members and if we had a good year as we did in '22 if we got 18 or even 19 and then in '34 we finally got a majority- some people say by extraordinary means. But however we did get it. But with the increase in Providence to five and the increase in Pawtucket to 2 we had a little better chance of carrying the senate. Finally, of course, it eventuated. Then I guess as people moved out of Providence into Cranston and Warwick and Pawtucket and so forth, the numbers of senators increased. Now, you have a situation where it's not an impossibility. Actually, it's probably the likely thing to happen. In other words, the state senate as it's now composed in the state of Rhode Island is mainly Democratic.

In other words, the Republicans would probably be in the same position as we were in 40 years ago. In other words, I think that the Republican organization might regard it as almost impossible to get a majority in the state senate in Rhode Island anymore. They're aiming at it or course, naturally, but I would think on the figures now that the chances of the Republicans carrying the state senate today would about equal to what ours were in 1922. The odds have shifted just that much because of the change in composition.

Mr. Smith:

Do you want to talk about the election in 1936. Of course, you went on to run as governor of the state. Did you ever consider the senate as a possibility in '36. You said that at one time you talked to McCoy and others about the possibility. Were you interested in that primarily or in the governorship, first- I don't know what your ambitions were. You certainly were the culmination of the fight that Higgins had made during the turn of the century and Flynn and so forth as far as the Irish establishment. You were the culmination from that time- some 20 odd years.

Judge Quinn:

I guess that the first Irish American would be Governor Higgins. I presume 1907-1908. Governor Garvin I think was a Yankee from Cumberland. Of course, he came up from the senate and was elected governor. The first Irish American would be Governor Higgins in 1907 and then my uncle had run for governor in 1914 but was defeated by Livingston Beaton. I think that was another example of money-million. I never thought in those days that it was as significant as it is today.

Mr. Smith:

What type of organization did you have besides the local units? Personally did you have one or two individuals that were campaigning with you that were handling liaison work with the communities?

Judge Quinn:

You mean mine in 1936? I just had a few friends. I really didn't have any money and I didn't have any organization in the sense of a real organized force. I had a few friends. I think all the men who were up in the senate with me from the outlying towns, Warwick and Smithfield, N. Smithfield, Burrilville, Central Falls, Pawtucket- most of the who were with me in the senate, I think more or less were personal friends. I think most of the people who served with me in the senate from 1932 to 1936 were friends of mine. I think they liked me personally. I think they were rather admirers of mine and so I didn't have to ask them to support me. I think they did it automatically with the exception of one, or two, or three. I think most of the e fellowe really believed in me and did all they could to help me. But I had no headquarters as such, no money to spend on my campaign. I don't think I spent a \$1000 on my campaign in 1946. It's true that Green was running for senator and had certain commitments in the matter of radio time, newspaper ads and so forth, but those were definitely paid for by Green. They were mainly for his interest but I'd naturally get the benefit of them. I really had no campaign fund. I spent very little money. I think the only supporters I had were friends. They believed in me because of my record in the senate as senator and lieutenant governor.

Mr. Smith:

And therefore you went out and spoke at every rally and toured the state again. You did...

Judge Quinn:

Every village and hamlet in the state. I spoke from Burrilville to Newport, Westerly to Woonsocket. Every night I would be out campaigning. Of course, I was a good campaigner. I was a good talker. I didn't have any trouble with my voice. I had a strong voice and I had a good constitution. And I just campai ed from one end of the state to the other.

Mr. Smith:

Who was your opposition?

Judge Quinn:

Charlie Sisson who was formerly attorney general of the state of Rhode Island. We debated up in the Calvary Baptist Church on Broad St. That yellow brick church. We had a debate there. An hour on each side. Packed audience. So we debated the issues.

Mr. Smith:

That would be about the first debate in modern Rhode Island politics between two gubernatorial candidates.

Judge Quinn:

I would think so. Charlie was my opponent. When I ran for lieutenant governor, Henry Boss ran against me. But we didn't have any debate. He was a distinguished lawyer and the head of one of the big firms here in the city of Providence- Boss and Bonfield. Very fine men. They're both dead now. But Charlie Sisson was a big strong powerful campaigner. He played on the football team in Brown. I think most of the blue-bloods in the state were naturally favorable to Charlie Sisson. He was a good man. I think he was an absolutely honest man. He did a good job as attorney general. I think he expected to win, at least he told me he did, but of course, I beat him by a substantial margin in 1936.

Mr. Smith:

Of course, ^{ALF}~~Ralph~~ Landon expected to win there also.

Judge Quinn:

I think they did. It was Roosevelt's big year. In other words the tide was running in the right direction. You had the crash of 1929 and then the election of '32. If Al Smith had been lucky enough to get defeated and hoofed in 1928 and been nominated in for President in 1932, you'd have the first Catholic president of the United States in 1932 because anybody could have been elected. I think Booker T. Washington could have been elected in 1932. They were voting against Herbert Hoover. He had gone down the drain and so anybody could have

been elected. Roosevelt had setablished a New Deal and the ONRA, and prosperity had at least revived. In other words, conditions in 1935 and 1936 were infinitely better than they were in '31 and '32. The first administration impelled Roosevelt into tremendous victory in '36. The only states in which he lost were Maine and Vermont as I recall it. I think that there was a democratic sweep in the country so we couldn't attribute our win in Rhode Island to Green or myself as much as we could have attributed it to Roosevelt. It was a national sweep. Of course, in 1938, when I ran for re-election, the picture was the other way. We had gone into a depression economically and then that plus the O'Hara fight and the Vanderbilt money, I think added up to the fact that I got beat. I don't think that there was any way that I could withstand it. They talked about the O'Hara fight, but I didn't have any O'Hara fight. I would say that the best I could do would be neck and neck. I might have ^{won} one in 1938 if I didn't have the O'Hara defection but it would have been no easy job. In 1940 the pendulum had swung back the other way again. From then on, I think we were riding high, wire, and handsome.

Mr. Smith:

Now as far as you won in 1936, you get inaugurated as governor. What plans- of course, you didn't foresee the O'Hara fight. I know the complexion of the senate. I think there still was a democratic majority.

Judge Quinn:

Oh no, we were down again to about 28:15, I think. Something like that. We had lost the majority; in fact, we organized the senate because they didn't put up any opposition. So we elected John McGrane, clerk of the senate again. But Harry Bodwell who was a republican leader had decided that because of the third really in succession, that they were going to let things by the board. But they had a definite majority.

Mr. Smith:

I was a little mixed up.

Mr. Smith:

Were there any particular things that you were going to try to do?

Of course, the income tax.

Judge Quinn:

I definitely was going to try to put through the income tax. That was one of the major problems, but I didn't have unanimous support from the democratic party as far as the income tax was concerned.

Mr. Smith:

Where did the opposition come from, Judge?

Judge Quinn:

Well, I would say the Gerry forces would be against it.

I think the Green forces were against it. My own lieutenant governor, Ray Jordan who was a very good friend of mine was against it. I would say Connie Moore from Newport, definitely would be against it, strongly against it and all his cohorts and so forth all of Newport county would be definitely against it. I think as a matter of fact, in the election of 1938 my advocacy of the income tax probably hurt me just as much as my fight with Walter O'Hara.

Mr. Smith:

Where did you get the idea, Judge? We, of course understand how equitable that would have been and how it would have transformed the state finances into a much sounder system. Of course, it finally came through the back door in the last few years. If you don't mind me saying so, your career is built primarily on principle, the constitutional convention, direct primary - your entire years during the twenties and thirties but again, this was a matter again of democracy, I guess. What would you call it? What was fair and equitable and just for all the citizens? I don't want to sound laudatory,

but I think that it would be an adequate way of describing what you wanted to

Judge Quinn:

Well, of course, Woodrow Wilson when he came in advocating the income tax as the fairest type of tax for the nation and so it was adopted. I think it first took effect in 1913 under Woodrow Wilson and then, of course, the great senators of that era, you know, George W. Norris of Nebraska, Albert Cummings of Kansas, Door and Carter Glass- he was Secretary of the Treasury under Wilson. A lot of the very prominent figures in the country, whom I admired, Albert Beveridge of Indiana- they all were proponents of the income tax. Of course, it started here in the nation in I think in 1913 was the first year that we collected it. It was very successful and I think regarded by most authorities on taxation the fairest form of taxation that could be devised. That the burden was supposed to be put on the rich men and taken away from the shoulders of the poor. I think it was because of my admiration for these men in the nation that led me to believe that it was the soundest thing for me to do in the state. And then again, well, because the Republican party was certainly in the hands of the rich and I was really fighting the Republican party and my theory was that you had to have, the state institutions were in a terrible mess, the way people were handled down there in the day of Fred Peck were like cattle, you know. Unbelievable conditions. I knew something had to be done along those lines and I knew we had to have the money to pay for it. You never could get it voluntarily from the rich so my theory was that to put on an income tax to take the money from the rich and the powerful and bend it for the benefit of the poor and helpless. That was basically my theory. I still think I was right. I still think today that it's the only solution. But there are an awful lot of people who fear that you are taking the money out of their pocketbooks. Men who work in the factories and the mills today are against the income tax because they can see that four dollars coming out of their pay check. They can't see the six dollars that they're spending at the grocery store to pay for the sales tax.

Mr. Smith:

Exactly, the nickel and dime stuff. The sales tax- really you don't feel it. The people don't feel it.

Judge Quinn:

In other words, you can't see it, where as the income tax you see it. That four dollars, they're taking that away from me so I'm against it and you hear them talk in the streets and so Chaffee got beat by advocating the income tax, where it was probably the most sound thing he ever advocated.

Mr. Smith:

The chickens came home to roost. They crucified Eddie Gallogly.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, they sure did. Of all the sad things in the '64 election, I'll never forget that.

Mr. Smith:

It's the one thing that I've never been able to understand. No man ever had a better time to run for governor than Eddie Gallogly. I mean he had the Johnson tremendous landslide. He had Pastore carrying the state by an unheard of margin. He had John Fogarty carry the district by something that's never been done before and never will be done again. It was up around 75,000 votes.

Judge Quinn:

Unbelievable. But Eddie justsome how or other. I just don't know how to explain it. It's the one election where it seems to me that you can't have one theory to explain it. I just don't know how to explain that. Now I can understand getting beat but to get beat by 85,000 votes at a time when Pastore and Johnson, and Fogarty were sweeping this territory is just something I don't understand.

Mr. Smith:

It's almost beyond reality. I still don't. I'll never forget that night

as long as I live. I was working hard for him. I just sat there in utter amazement. I think he only carried Woonsocket. I don't think we carried Eddie's own street. His own district up there off Broad.

Judge Quinn:

That's right, and we lost West Warwick which was an unheard of thing. But as I say, I don't know what the explanation was. Till this day, I've felt around and asked here. I just can't- now John Chaffee was a popular figure. There was no question that he was elected by Democratic votes. He had to be and the women undoubtedly went for John Chaffee. I can see that right around my own neighborhood. They were voting for John Chaffee even though they were Democratic. But I can't understand why they should vote against Eddie Gallobly. I never saw anything the matter with the man. When he worked for me, he was a good employee, intellegent, able, conscientious, hard worker. I always thought a fairly attractive young man, a good family man. It's hard to just explain why he would lose so many votes.

Mr. Smith:

I always thought that around that time Rt. 95 opened. It certainly wasn't a Chaffee product. It came under his 4 years in office. He certainly was a fresh face. He came out of nowhere and he had that homespun - personally I thought he was Calvin Coolidge in sheeps clothing myself, but you couldn't tell anybody that; oh no, he was the nicest fellow that ever came down the pike and I don't think that there was as much dislike for Eddie as there was a like for him.

Judge Quinn:

I think maybe that's right. Chaffee was very attractive.

Mr. Smith:

I know my father, mother were traditional democrats right from the twenties. They said they were going to vote for Chaffee. I said I know Eddie Gallogly. They said they couldn't, they just wanted Chaffee.

Judge Quinn:

It's a remarkable thing. It's been very hard for me to understand. I just can't quite put the pieces together as far as that election was concerned. If you were in an election where the presidential campaign was going against you or some other factor, but here Johnson landslided; Pastore landslided; Fogarty landslided, unbelievable the vote for those, and yet Eddie goes down the drain. I just don't know. I can't get a solution. I can see why he was going to be beaten. I can understand that. But how he was beaten by 85,000 votes, I can't understand that.

Mr. Smith:

I could tell almost that day, even in South Providence, you could tell by people's feet, going from one side to the other. I must have been a lot of people to go from there over and back.

Judge Quinn:

Apparently, but why it should be so. I can see why people liked John Chaffee. He was an attractive fellow, honest, hardworker, a credit to the state and all that, but I would say the same thing about Eddie Gallogly. I never knew anything wrong about him. As I say when he worked for me, he was a fine, intelligent, industrious man. A fine family man, a boy you can be proud of. In other words, it's hard to see why good Democrats would force him off.

Mr. Smith:

I still have a little bit, if you would tell me a little bit more say about the income tax as it stood in 1936, actually 1937, when you went into office and how you tried to sell it, and the opposition besides the democrats. I can very well understand the Republican opposition.

Judge Quinn:

But all the financier forces in the state were against it. There is no question about that. In other words, the money powers were

definitely against the income tax and they are a powerful force. As I said to you a little while ago, I think money is a much more powerful force than I ever thought it was in my day in the political field. I had come to the conclusion that you could talk about the powers of money, but the people believe the truth. When I tell them the truth they're going to be with me. I actually got to the point where I thought I would beat money. The longer I live the more I'm convinced that it's far more powerful force than I ever thought it used to be. One example, definitely, of course, is Peter Gerry who came here from N.Y. In other words, he wasn't a Rhode Islander; he was a New Yorker. He was a very likable young man. He was honest as the day is long. I don't think you'd ever question his motives, but he came here to buy the election to Congress and to the Senate of the U. S. and he did. He had nothing except really his money. He couldn't talk. I don't think he was a mental giant either intellectually.

Mr. Smith:

I don't think he ever initiated anything to get momentum by any means.

Judge Quinn:

Definitely not. He was anti-Roosevelt from the time he was in there. In other words, he was running against the tide, but the money saved him. An awful lot of our good friends would maybe deny that, but they nevertheless went along with him and were glad to applaud and support him when they I think realized that he certainly was no giant as far as the Congress of the United States.