

Interview number A-0090 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) at [A-90]
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This is an interview with Gillis Long of Louisiana.
The interview was conducted by Jack Bass *and Walter DeVries* on January 24, [28]
1974. The interview was transcribed by Susan Hathaway.

J.B.: As you think back over the period of 1948 to 1974, what would be the most significant political changes that have occurred during that period?

Long: I think the fact that the black voter registration is now up to about 22% and it all came about during that period.

J.B.: What are the consequences of that?

Gillis: Well, we have nearly gone in a full circle, I guess, since that time. Politically we went from a moderate pre-occupied or occupied social issues type of a situation which the government ought to have been occupied with starting in about '48 to when we became greatly churned by the racial issue and have moved now back into the other direction. Looking at it particularly from a Congressional point of view to where . . . away from the race issue as being a central point and move back to where the state is primarily concerned with resolving the problems of the state rather than be pre-occupied by this. This was

an overriding consideration, in my opinion, during that particular time, which had many off-shoots and many facets to it and manifested itself in many and varied ways.

W.D.: Do you think there is any chance that you will ever go back to that sort of situation, where politics is based on race?

Long: I really don't believe we will in Louisiana. I think, frankly, it is behind us. I don't think that any major politician representing a large area, certainly insofar as bigger than Congressional Districts are concerned, I am not sure that we will get out of it with respect to Congressional districts, but that larger than Congressional districts, a state-wide office, for example - that I think is going to be a very difficult one to get elected to a state-wide office on a racist type of platform and conversely it is going to be very difficult for them to get elected at all without at least some support from the black community.

W.D.: One of the things that really strikes us is the influence of the Longs' and, at least their legacy today. When you think about that 25 year period, you can't help but look at the impact that Earl Long had on that thing. How do you assess the Long administration in terms of the impact on state politics?

Long: Well, there is a very common state politician in the State of Louisiana that not long ago said that he had been a major factor in breaking up what we call the "Long Machine" in Louisiana well before this period of 1948 to 1974 began, and was bragging about this point, and I gently reminded him that since that time that Earl had been elected Governor twice, that Russell Long had been in the Senate nearly that entire period, that I had been a leading candidate for Governor twice and had been elected to the House of Representatives twice, and that another Long by the name of Dr. George S. Long had served at least three terms in the same seat that I hold and another fellow by the name of Speedy Long had served in this seat for two or three terms and there was no question that the Longs had had an influence. I said that if that was the kind of a breaking up of a political influence, which he was bragging about, then it affects me that I was happy to see it come about. I really think that it has been a major influence. I think it has been true but to a degree. In the beginning it was true because of the historical nature of it moreso than it is today, because of Huey and then, of course, first ran in '48, I guess; when I ran for President of the LSU school body in 1947, the Longs hadn't won an election in Louisiana since 1936. I came back and

being President of the LSU student body is a little bit like a state-wide office in this state. Moreso then than it is now. For example, Russell was President of the student body of LSU and you could name just about who is who in Louisiana and they have been active in LSU politics or have either been President of the student body or have run. This was particularly true at that time up to and including World War II. In '47 when I came back to Louisiana, I really don't know that the fact that my name was Long had too much to do with it. Right after that the fact that I was elected and conducted the campaign as an Independent, spoke my mind, and got elected. Right after that Earl ran for Governor. I supported Earl and he was elected Governor. Right after that Russell ran for the United States Senate and was elected practically within . . . I don't remember the exact time sequence, but within a year and a half period there, all of that occurred. From April of 1947 when I was elected President of the student body and then all of that followed in sequence. I think, to some extent, that this came as a result of the, of what Huey had done. But I think that the fact that Earl Long liked Harry Truman - as years have passed he has come to be a much more appreciated man, a man who really represented the public interest. A man who really

represented the public interest. A man who really had a great belief in the Democratic system. A man who had the political courage and had political leadership and also who wasn't driven by desire to get rich. He wasn't a crook. The desire to be of public interest is exemplified by Earl and by Russell and by myself and has basically come through some storms that might have otherwise seen the . . . because of the passage of time, the falling off of the influence of Huey Long. I think that is where it came from, and I think all of us have got to be frank and admit to some extent when we got started in it during that time, the very fact that our name was Long helped us. I think further than that we have shown this, and I think all of us have shown in.

W.D.: But the so-called "Long Machine," if there ever was one, is no longer here, is it? If you were to push a button, what happens?

Long: If I pushed a button of everybody in the State of Louisiana who was basically sympathetic to me, it certainly wouldn't be anything at all that would resemble the old Long organization. It would be a completely new type of a thing, which has a little bit of a core of maybe 5%, or 7% or 8% of those who are in it historically because of those past attachments by their parents or themselves with the old Huey Long -Earl Long organization of many, many years ago. But

frankly, I don't think it is that. I think that it has come as a result of what I outlined before rather than that. We look at people that have been active even in my gubernatorial election last time or in my Congressional race. My Congressional race is perhaps a good indication of it. My principal supporters are not in it because of the fact that my name is Long. The fact is that many of them were anti-Long that are strongly endorsing me today. My committee for re-election of Gillis Long for Congress is headed by the man that I defeated for Congress ten years ago, Harold MacSweeney, which I think is an indication of the extent to which things have come during that period, and I guess that no more bitter of a fight ever occurred in the history of Louisiana politics than the fight for that Congressional primary seat when Earl died between Earl Long and Earl MacSweeney and I came back and beat Harold MacSweeney after that and Harold is now the Chairman of the Committee for the Re-Election of Gillis Long. Harold served in Congress for two terms. No, he served one and then Earl beat him in the primary and then he got the Democratic nomination by action of the Democratic party after Earl died after he had received the nomination and then before the general election he got the nomination and served two terms.

W.D.: So it is no longer meaningful to describe the state politically as Long and anti-Long forces?

Long: Can't say that. Yes, you could say that, but you can no longer say that it is no longer an influence, because when elections are determined by 1%, 2%, 3%, it could become a determining factor. But it is also important from another standpoint of name recognition. I think on ballots it is a plus, but I don't think it is anywhere near saying that you have an organization that comes to you just because of the fact that your name is Long.

W.D.: What about the election of Edwards? The power in the state shifted from the North to the South?

Long: I don't think that this, in itself, is an important point. The Longs always sufficiently bridged the north and the south gap in Louisiana. The Longs never ran the regional type of people. You will recall in my Governor's election. I carried the city of New Orleans, for example. I think there are other factors that are of more importance from this point of view. I do think that the fact that ^{win}Edmund was from South Louisiana and the other man was from Shreveport, and the other man had no authority to bridge this gap became an important point in ^{win}Edmunds winning the election in the run-off against Bennett. But should I have been in the run-off, as an example, I am not

sure that he would have been able to consolidate his position in South Louisiana to the degree that he was able to against Bennett Johnson because of the fact that from Huey Long's day on down, the Longs have been state-wide candidates and perhaps in many areas in the last few years much more acceptable in South Louisiana and supported much more strongly in South Louisiana than in north Louisiana. [Interruption]

J.B.: I want to ask you a question. The run-off in the Governor's race last time, the voting pattern was very closely paralleled in the general election in which Treen carried, at least by majority all of the same parishes that Bennett Johnson carried. Does that represent the growing Republican move in Louisiana or does that represent an anti-Catholic vote?

Long: Probably it reflects a little bit of both in my opinion. You are not going to quote me, are you? I mean, I don't want to be quoted on an anti-Catholic sort of a situation in north Louisiana. I think, frankly, it is not so much an anti-Catholic type of a thing. It is an anti-south Louisiana type of a situation that you find to some extent in north Louisiana, not nearly as much as you used to find it, but I think you find a little bit of it, and I think probably more of it is on the basic division of conservative as against more progressive and that this perhaps adequately represents it more than a move toward

the Republican Democrat. If you look at it in my district, which will pretty well be always state Democratic with Lindy Boggs and Dottie Groves who are all basically all in South Louisiana. Mine now has shifted from the focal point of my district is that I don't have all of parish, for example, all the area around Alexandria. A lot of that is in Auto Passman's district, and this district, while it used to go when I had the seat before and Speedy Long went for it and ~~went for~~ parish, and the thing went north and then Dr. George Long had it, Earl MacSweeney had it and when I had it before it went northwest and now it goes southeast from Alexandria. So my point is that I think it is a combination of factors again. To some extent it was an anti-south Louisiana vote, to perhaps a greater extent it was a little bit of a move towards a more conservative posture on the part of north Louisiana and I think that the Congressional districts also adequately reflect that.

J.B.: Now, I am just trying to understand this. Do you see it as more of an ethnic vote than a *anti-south* vote?

Long: I think neither of those as being a major factor. I see it more as a philosophical vote, conservative against progressive rather than Republican versus Democrat, or rather than Catholic against non-Catholic and rather than north against south. If you had to put them all on a scale,

the one that I would put on the scale first is conservative as against progressive.

J.B.: If Treen had been a Catholic instead of a Methodist . . .

Long: His vote would have been a little smaller, but it wouldn't have been much smaller. I think that while that is on the scale of things that make up the scale, I don't think that it is a major part of the scale.

W.D.: *there is a growth in the* Republican party, *in* ~~are~~ most southern states . . . you see the development of the two party system. You see Republicans getting elected. Then you look at Louisiana and practically nothing, and it doesn't look like it is going to be anything. Is there some way that you can explain that? Why is Louisiana different from the other southern states?

Long: That's a good question. I never have really thought of that in quite that form as to why we haven't done it, particularly if you thought it was ever going to happen, you wouldn't have thought that it would have happened when it did with respect to looking at it again as congressional districts. You take that once district that it cuts across there, Jefferson Parish, that they represent. Perhaps historically it is due to the fact that the Republicans in the state have pretty well

kept a closed shop. They have not attempted to broaden the base out. They've really not sought, in my opinion, to develop, strongly develop the two party system in the State of Louisiana. It goes back to the old *economic* class, the Republicans used to be the sugar planters. They always thought they had an exclusive carnival club, and I think most of the Republicans in this state, a lot of them have still felt that it is theirs to do anything they wanted to with it, and I've had a lot of people talk to me that have joined it. My next door neighbor is a Republican and he told me the other day, he said, "I think I am going to quit the Republican party." It is not because of Watergate, it is not because of Nixon, it is not because of the change in philosophy, it is because of the fact that basically they don't get an opportunity to participate. George Hall is a Republican from Alexandria and he used to be President of the State Bar Association. George went and it used to disgust him because he could never get them to be really willing to spread out their base. I think this is so historically engrained in them that it is very difficult to get them to do it. They really don't want to do it.

W.D.: So they are exclusive and the failure to provide leadership to get more people interested.

J.B.: Do you think that it is primarily the failure of leadership that is the key factor?

Long: Yes. I really don't see much change in it occurring. Also, the other thing is that looking at it from the other side is that those *Democrats* that would be more likely, which would be more likely that they could get the strong Republican support have been historically voting with the Republicans and consequently you don't get the motivation from behind to push it in that direction that you might have gotten in some of the other areas. Looking at it again from the Congressional districts which regionalizes it to some degree is to look at the degree to which they have voted in the past with the Republicans. I mean, why do they need to vote Republican when they have got Speedy Long instead of me. For example, in my own, what used to be the old Congressional district where I was, they didn't need to vote Republican, they voted in the Democratic primary and they voted the more conservative in the Democratic primary and consequently they don't really have the motivation. This hasn't necessarily been true in some of the other areas.

J.B.: Do you have any insight as to why the black vote in Louisiana is so rigidly wedded to the Democratic party. I mean, it is typically Democratic throughout the South, but the impression that I have of Louisiana is that

it is even more strong than elsewhere.

Long: I am not sure how deep it is and how long it has been there, to tell you the truth about it. I think it is probably due to Earl Long more than any other single factor, probably Earl Long. Earl Long was always a loyalist Democrat and Earl Long, I am not kidding you, he took his licks. Some of us took licks trying to get representation for blacks, by nobody took them like Earl Long took them. I think that the very fact that Earl did this and they associated and related to Earl as well as they did, and then when he came back from his last gubernatorial election, that the two of us who really got the black support for both national Democrats, Edwards and I, and that it sort of capped the thing off and maybe crystallized it to some degree.

J.B.: I've also heard that Bennett Johnson, since he got *elected* is much more of a national Democrat that when he was running for Governor. Is that a fair appraisal?

Long: I don't know that it is that. I think Bennett got a good education in the Governor's race and a good education in the Senate race and Washington has showed him some things, some other sides of the problem that didn't, he hadn't had the opportunity to see before. I think Bennett is a very bright boy and he learns a lot and gets and profits by education. Consequently, he has

become more broad with what the problems of the nation are, which makes him not so restrictive as he was before, which necessarily means that he becomes more of a nationalist Democrat.

J.B.: Do you think that part of that includes a greater appreciation of the fact that 22% to 23% of the voters in Louisiana are black.

Long: Not per se on account of that, but just because of the fact that in the general election, in the general election against McKeithan, he needed the support and he got to know them and consequently getting to know them made him again more sympathetic with their problems and more understanding of them rather than just recognizing it as cold hard political factor that they represent 22% of the vote in the state. What motivates him? I don't know, but what motivates anybody? A combination of both, I would think.

J.B.: This idea expressed in the article you wrote on Congress, and the possible trends of the new Democratic Congressmen from the South being much more mainstream national Democrats. Do you think that is a trend that is going to develop more?

Long: A little more, but I think to the extent that it develops the other way, that it is going to be those who

vote with the Republicans going into the Republican column. I think that is the direction it is likely to move. From the standpoint of how it affects national policy, it really is not going to make much difference whether they are Democrats voting as Republicans or Republicans voting as Republicans. I think that you are going to see some of that, some more of that in the South during the next few years. But I think that conversely, you are going to see those who are from the districts like I am, that they will vote more and more towards the support of the national Democratic party. That is the reason that I have come out with the conclusion that the same thing is happening in the South that is happening in the rest of the nation.

J.B.: Where do you see someone like your colleague Mr. Rarick going? Do you see him going to the Republican party? Can he continue to get elected as a Democrat? Will he have to change his positions?

Long: I don't think he will. I think that the leadership of the Republicans in the State of Louisiana has been so poor that people who are used to voting for a Democrat for Congress and Republican for President. I don't think it is going to hurt Rarick at all, the fact that he is under the Democratic column. It is going to

take an unusual situation. The State of Louisiana could go Republican, and I don't think that it would particularly bother me that they would go Republican. I think that the people now have so much started jumping from one side to the other and not only in ticket splitting nationally as they do everywhere else, but I think this is even more true in Louisiana. Everybody participates in the Democratic primary and the person is going to get elected in the Democratic primary and consequently makes it very

running the general election against him. If he could get beat in the Democratic primary and somebody else who is more progressive could get the Democratic nomination, then you might have that type of a situation. But when you get people like John and those who vote as often as they do with the Republicans getting elected in the primary, there is not much chance to beat them as long as they are on the scene.

W.D.: Doesn't your piece seem to suggest that you are getting a different kind of Congressman out of the South? In other words, during the 1960's the number of times that Democrats voted, some Democrats voted Republicans increased throughout that whole decade. During the fifties and sixties if you look at the number of times the Democrats voted with the Republicans, it increases, it doesn't decrease. Now you are saying that the 1972 election was a turning point,

Now what you have are Democrats, southern Democrats tending to vote more with northern Democrats?

Long: Right.

W.D.: Okay. Now, was the 1972 election a turning point with this regard? Is that the way you see that?

Long: I see it as a turning point for a couple reasons, but I don't see it really increasing much more from the standpoint of the Democrats attitude and ability, the national Democrats having an ability to pick up many more seats in that regard. They will pick up some. Let's take Louisiana as a case in point. They could very well, the national Democrats could very well, in the next few years, . . . if Auto decided not to run, Auto's seat could very well turn national Democrat. A high percentage of black population, a lot of rural people in it, a lot of poor people in it, many of the characteristics, it is not too dissimilar from mine. Tree's district could go back Democratic. I am sure that there are others over the state, over the South that could move in the same direction. So, I see this trend continuing to grow, but at the same time, you see the trend of those who in the past, that are still staying there, that have voted with the Republicans holding their seats against the Republicans, but let's assume that Joe Wagoner didn't run, for example. Again,

in an usual situation other than Louisiana, in the reasons that I set forth before, I think that be resolved in the Democratic primary, and that everybody would have a very difficult time of beating a successor to Joe. Because the area itself would go in the same direction that it has been going, but in other states where you have Republicans that could move into it, you would find that district maybe very likely turning into a Republican district. That is the reason that I say you have a regionalization occurring, and it is going to continue to occur. I believe *this* is a result of the fact of the increase in the black voting registration, plus the fact that in my opinion that nobody can really run a racist campaign in those areas anymore.

W.D.:

Long: Sure, but it is in the primary. Generally, if it weren't for Louisiana and this unique situation that you mentioned in Louisiana, or maybe you raised the question, about why it may not elect Republicans in Louisiana like they have in the rest of the states in the South is that, what would happen, assuming my friend, that I am correct that we have changed. If something happened to Joe Wagoner, that that district is likely to go Republican, but as long as Joe is there and is as strong a man as Joe is, the control that he has, it is not, even though

Joe might vote most of the time with the Republicans. However, in Mississippi, if a similar situation were to happen, or some of the other states in the South, the vote would very likely turn Republican, and that is the trend that I say is beginning to occur. Otto Passman's district, Otto is so strong and he controls his district so strong, that even though Otto might vote mostly with the Republicans, if something happened to Otto, even if they had a general election, the Democrat would still win in that district, but as it turns out, it would be a Democrat, whether he be conservative or a national Democrat, progressive Democrat, because the lack of the Republican party. It just doesn't have the strength in Louisiana to overcome that kind of a situation.

W.D.: What I think you are saying is, I think, that if you take race out of this equation, as the article does pretty well remove it as an issue, what you then have in the South is more progressive Congressmen?

Long: Surely. I think that it is moving in that direction because of the fact . . . yes, whether they be Democrats or whether they be . . . where there are those that remain that vote with the national party be called Democrats or whether they be called Republicans, the major trend is towards more progressive Congressmen from

the South, yes, more national Democratic Congressmen.

W.D.: Is the South any more important or is it less important in terms of the Congress now than it was when you were first here? Has the southern strength, in terms of committee chairmanships, just overall power, has it increased or decreased during that period?

Long: I think it has probably, I'd have to go back and look at it from when I was here ten years, but I think it has probably increased, but it has probably about reached its apex and is about to start down. Again, using Louisiana as a case in point, we weren't as strong ten years ago. ^{Hebert} ~~Abair~~ wasn't Chairman of the Armed Services, Russell Long wasn't Chairman of Finance, Eleandor was, I guess, Chairman of Agriculture but wasn't Chairman of Appropriations, Hale Boggs . . . it was here in the last year and a half or two years, insofar as Louisiana was concerned, we've about reached the top of it. In the seniority system, which is, insofar as at least having power in Congress is concerned, has served us so well for so many years in building up all of these powerful people, now in the last year we have lost Hale Boggs, who got into his position of ranking man on Ways and Means and consequently as part of his position in leadership as a part of the seniority system. Just the

fact that he was here for a good while, twenty some odd years. Eleandor's situation, Eleandor, we've lost both of them and a lot of the people who have gained their senior positions are now getting old.

W.D.: How about the rest of the South?

Long: I think the same is true. Look at John Sparkman in Alabama, look at McLellan in Arkansas, look at Polk in Texas of Agriculture, Mahan in Texas on the House side.

W.D.: It is at the peak now and it has to decline.

Long: If you look at it overall, that is a broad generalization. In Louisiana, the peak was reached two years ago, but I would probably say that just within a year, one year, two years, all over the South is reaching its maximum.

J.B.: A lot of people ranking second and third on these committees are not southerners?

Long: That's right, that's correct. Because of the fact that if you get a senior guy on it, you only get one man from your state or one man from your area and consequently the next guys who go on it, they tend to build up more of a national image. Frankly, I like this. I think the seniority system, while it might have served the South well from the standpoint of gaining power, I am not sure that overall it serves the South well, but at least it did

from the standpoint of gaining power under the committee system and under the seniority system. I am happy to see it go.

J.B.: Getting back to that other question. Am I correct that you are saying that future Democrats elected to Congress from the South are more likely to be progressive?

Long: That's right.

J.B.: But you are not necessarily going to have as many Democrats elected?

Long: That's right.

J.B.: It is likely the Republicans who are going to get elected and will be more reflective of the traditional conservative Democratic Congress.

Long: That's right. That well states my position on it.

W.D.: One of the first things that struck Jack was that the first day that we were down in Louisiana we went to the television station and ran into Jimmy Fitzmorris . . . [Interruption] . . . during that course of time I've never gone to jail. He said, "Now if you are in office that long, ordinarily you should have gone to jail two or three times" which we thought was a kind of a peculiar way to start talking about politics in Louisiana. Then we find out that everybody down here seems to think that corruption plays a major factor in the state government, and the level of

tolerance is higher for corruption and that sort of thing. Do you have any comments on that?

Long: Well, I think that here is where you get . . . the degree depends upon its natural resources, which the state of Louisiana has. West Virginia is the case in point. The extraction of those resources is dependent upon political approval in order to extract them, who extracts them and what rate they extract them, what taxes they pay for extracting them. This tends to give an undue amount of power to the politician with respect to controlling the economy, and that this necessarily becomes to some degree a Banana Republic type of a situation. I think this has happened to a lot of states, and I think that the very fact that so much of our wealth was in oil, that we have gone through an awful lot of political corruption in the State of Louisiana. The degree of tolerance that people have of it always seemed to me to be varying with individuals, I am speaking of individual candidates. People basically knew, for example, that Earl Long liked to play the horses, and Earl Long needed a lot of money to run his political organization because he was dealing with poor people. He had to have money to form his organizations and get them to go out to vote, but they also knew that having a lot of money and getting

rich and being a crook wasn't Earl Long. Consequently, the level of tolerance that Earl Long could get away with was high because the people basically had a great trust for Earl Long. They had a great trust built in that he was really looking out for their interests and consequently they had put up a lot of things up with respect to his conduct, whatever form that it might take, than they would have with a lot of other people that were active in politics. I do think that we have had more than our share of corruption. I think also it is directly related to the level of education and the level of literacy that we have. The fact that we are probably first in illiteracy or second in illiteracy in the union. The fact that we have as many poor people as we do relates to the level of political corruption. I am not trying to excuse it by saying this, but I am saying that these are factors that are often related to political corruption, all three of these are, and all three of them are apparent in the State of Louisiana and that they caused it and that we do have more than our share of them. I think that it is very unfortunate.

J.B.: Compared with the rest of the South, Louisiana has probably done more in the way of social programs sponsored by the state than any other state, probably far more. The result of that has not been reflected in

any substantial increase and relative position in regards to literacy, some improvement there, but certainly not in terms of per capita income and other such *indices*. How do you account for that, and how would you react to the contention that some who maintain that these programs and what is perceived at least has a relatively high level of political corruption and also what is perceived to be a substantial influence in state government and organized labor all tend to scare off industry resulting in Louisiana falling behind, relatively, the rest of the South in increased job opportunities and economic opportunities?

Long: Well, it is sort of a here and there type of a proposition. You don't know which breed is which, and which comes first. I don't argue with the contention that we have spent more of our income and have been more progressive in social programs than perhaps any state in the South. I mean, we had the first charity hospital systems, the first public school book system, first free hot lunch programs, you go right on down the line with them. Nearly all of which, by the way, were put in by either Huey or Earl Long. Nor do I argue that we haven't really gotten our money's worth out of that. The standpoint of improving our status as you point out in our educational level. We have just not been able to do it. But it is a little bit like the fellow that is sick. He is sick and takes some medicine and you say, "Well,

did the medicine help you?" He said, "Well, I don't know. At least I didn't die." We've had so many poor people, so many illiterate that had we not had these programs we might have been in much worse shape than we are today. I'm not at all sure that that is not the answer. That these programs have kept many people alive. They have given people jobs, the Charity Hospitals have kept them alive. The lunch programs have kept them alive. I don't think that the political corruption has kept industry, to some degree, away from the State of Louisiana. We've not really made an effort to attract industry that employs people. This goes back, in my opinion, to something that is more basic, that is, we've had all these rich natural resources, and that we have been dependent so much upon those that we have not made the efforts that the other Southern states have to attract industry and to be competitive with respect to vocational schools and doing things like this that would give a labor supply and move it in the direction of having an adequate labor supply. Huey Long's belief that everybody ought to have an opportunity to get a college education, ~~is probably~~ . Everybody gets directed towards that type of an education rather than an education of making a living. The very fact that we were so rich in oil and so rich in natural gas is that we have attracted

industry and we measure industry that comes into the state and have been for the last twelve years, ten years, eight years under McKeithan and I guess we are still doing it, I am not sure we are. We quit measuring it in numbers of jobs created by industry coming and we've started measuring it in terms of dollars of capital investment because they were mostly automated industry. They do not pay their fair share of taxes, that did not create for a per dollar capital investment as many jobs. Then, in addition to that, our old program that we started to induce industry in the state was based upon allowing them a tax exempt status. So they end up not even paying basically a property tax and not even creating the jobs for which they are given the property tax exemption. This, to a great extent, has occurred during the last ten, eleven, or twelve years. At the beginning of the McKeithan administration it occurred and then under the Jimmy Davis administration it occurred and to some extent under the Earl Long administration, but mostly under the McKeithan administration when we had the great economic growth and really had an opportunity to attract industries that employed a lot of people, we didn't do it. We attracted industries that came in and made big, forty, fifty, two hundred million dollar capital investments and employed practically no people at all. To use an example, when I was running for Governor, of a plant

that had a two million dollar capital investment of which they paid absolutely no property tax and employed a total of people in the State of Louisiana of zero. It was run by a computer in Houston, Texas. I think this is more of the reason for it than anything else. It goes back to the fact that natural resources in the abundance that we have had them in Louisiana, insofar as stability and clean political government and also from the standpoint of resourceful people sometimes tends to spoil us.

W.D.: Well, doesn't that mean that in the future you are going to run into real trouble with taxation because your property tax is frozen in the Constitution?

Long: It's just horrible.

W.D.: That's what the convention did two weeks ago. There is no room there at all.

Long: It is absolutely frightening, and when recently they increased this tax which I would have done, the severance tax, which I would have done. As you know, when I was talking about running for Governor, we were talking about a major vocational educational program to train people for jobs. What we would have done, I would have done that, but I wouldn't have taken the taxes off that it took off and given them tax relief. What I would have done, I would have put all of that money into a major vocational educational program. This is what I tried to run for Governor ten years

ago on, I think it is even more important today than it was when I ran three years ago, and I think it is even more important today. They have moved to some degree in that direction, Edwin has, and I applaud his move. The only thing that I think should have been done ten years ago when McKeithan was first elected.

J.B.: I'd really like your insights on something that I find of interest and that is the historical prospective of Huey Long's great "Share our Wealth Program." Russell Long, his son, is in the Senate and finally you get down to the "Family Assistance Program," which, to some extent would have been the nearest thing to an implementation of the "Share the Wealth Program," and Russell Long plays the lead role in opposing it. How do you explain that?

Long: I think that the reason that Russell did that is because Russell is really not so much against the program as he was against the fact that he couldn't get the Nixon administration to support the work requirement in the program to the degree that he wanted a work requirement in the program. That ought to be the major thrust towards it. I think that had they had that in there, my guess is that Russell Long would have supported that. I read an interesting article the other day, and I have forgotten where I read it, it was an interview with Russell. They asked him, "Well,

when you look back at it now, how do you feel about your daddy's "Share the Wealth Program?" He said, "You know, I am not so sure it is as appropriate today, but if they had it before the Senate and they rang that bell, I'd vote for it." That is the way I think it is, if they had had the work requirement in it, I think Russell would have supported the bill.

End interview with Gillis Long.