

Seattle Center
June 22/67

Press Conference Transcription

Gov I have two announcements, one comment and one announcement.

Q First I am happy to announce as my replacement for Walter Howe, my former legal assistant, who is now the Director of the Central Budget Agency, the appointment of Mr. Richard Hemstad, who is now associated with the firm of Little, Gandy, Stephan, Palmer & Slemmons. I have known Dick Hemstad for a long time. He is a man of considerable background in the legal field. Gov He is a graduate with honors from not only college but law school and served as caucus attorney for the Republican Caucus for the House of Representatives at the last session.

Gov Well, I don't really know very much about that because it was an action taken Secondly, I have read with interest the message to the Seattle City Council and to the citizens of Seattle and Seattle Mayor Dorm Braman. I was particularly interested in the references he made to the cooperation and efforts made by the last session of the legislature but I was most intrigued by his discussion of a change in thinking and a change in planning with relationship to the R. H. Thompson Expressway. I thoroughly and enthusiastically endorse the idea he has brought forward. I believe it represents the kind of total planning concept which is needed in all of our cities here in the State of Washington and I can assure him personally, I will bend every effort through our Highway Commission and Highway Department to insure that we cooperate with the Mayor and with the City of Seattle, in attempting to make out of the original plan of the R. H. Thompson Expressway, a true parkway and avenue for rapid transit which will represent the transportation concept I have advocated so long rather than just a highway concept. I think that it was interesting to note that in at least a dozen spots in that speech, reference was made to the new areas of cooperation and new areas of advancement now available to cities as a result of the actions of the last session of the legislature. I look forward to the next two years as a time in which we can collectively prepare for even greater steps forward that are badly needed in the next session of the legislature and beyond, so that the cities of Washington have some real chance of escaping the blight and the pollution that other cities in the nation have too long suffered.

Q Governor, what is your reaction to the Association of Washington Cities? They say they are considering asking the next session of the legislature for 5% of the state sales tax.

Gov I recognize that the appropriation of this session of the legislature is not one that is permanent in nature. There is no complete assurance that it will be continued. I am sure that during the next year and a half we will be looking at ways in which to solidify and make more permanent the money or the financial aid that is necessary for our cities. One of the best ways, of course, in which to do this is to insure a stable financial base on a continuing basis for state government, and of course the loss of tax reform makes that job that much more difficult. I hope that the Association in considering asking for a specified and long-range share will also consider the endorsement of solidifying the state's tax base so that we can do this job.

Q Would you come out in favor or oppose this proposal at this time?

- Gov No, but I would work very closely with these cities and in my speech this noon will deal directly with that subject on how we can work together during the next few years in an attempt to prepare for the next legislative session to do a job that will solidify the gains made this session and take the next step beyond that. As I say, our ability to do anything at the state level depends on almost entirely on the solid nature of the state's tax rate.
- Q Governor, do you anticipate that this latest action of the Young Republicans is going to afford some new wells or are you going to put your segments back together or widen the cleft between the conservatives and liberals?
- Gov I am not sure what latest action you are referring to - things change so fast.
- Q The loss or lack of credentials that were issued at the National Convention?
- Gov Well, I don't really know very much about that because it was an action taken by the national body of Young Republicans. I have not had a report given to me directly. I am afraid that I could not comment with real accuracy as to what did happen there. I will have to wait until I get a full report, until the people return from Omaha and let me know what happened.
- Q Governor, you know what former Governor Rosellini thinks at the beginning of this campaign for some office, would you think that you would favor running against former Governor Rosellini over say Senator Kurkan or Attorney General O'Connell?
- Gov I think it makes little difference to me what happens on the other side of the aisle. We will try to do a job in a positive nature, try to accomplish things for the state, and run on the record that we have created. So I think that it makes little difference to me who runs on the the other side.
- Q Governor, getting back to the city financing, it was mentioned that they have a resolution comming up to get 5% of the sales tax. You have not looked too favorably or you have not at times in the past, on earmarking portions of the sales tax for cities. 5% is less than has been asked by #226. Would this be acceptable to you? Do you have an alternative in mind?
- Gov I think that my concern in the past was that with no other source of revenue, no other way for the state itself to go, we would merely be shifting problems from one level of government to the other, - to take a large percentage of state revenue and shift it to local government. I think what we must do - what we attempted to do during the last two years was to look at the total financial need of our state and that includes the needs of local governments and then decide how we can best meet those needs. That comes down pretty much to what we do at the state level to insure a continuing and responsible source of taxation. Otherwise we have no chance of accomplishing these needs and these requests of local units of government. I think at the same time we have got to take a very close look of how we organize local government - how we organize state government to most efficiently meet the needs of our citizens. I think in many respect today we are fractionalized. We have duplicating agencies, many of them of too small a size to do an efficient job and citizens are not getting the support they expect out of government. They are paying too much in the way of taxes. They are crying about the lack on the one hand and the money they are paying on the other. They are, frankly, not getting their money's worth, and I think all of us in government have the responsibility of insuring that we do our job as well as we can.

Q Yesterday, Joe Davis of the State Labor Council said that although the Puget Sound area is enjoying an economic boom, the rest of the state is in an economic recession. Do you agree with that?

Gov If the rest of the state is in an economic recession, I think the advances in the Puget Sound basin are obviously larger, and faster than they are in other parts of the state. The picture varies depending on where you go. Last year, for instance, our agricultural economy was at a new all-time high in terms of total dollar volume. I think that that record will be broken again this year. In some areas of the state, we are seeing expansion with specific new industries coming in but with others I would agree that cities that areas are not keeping up with this enormous boom here in the Puget Sound Basin. One of the reasons for continued trips and efforts on our part to seek new industry from other parts of the nation, our expansion of industry into the State of Washington.

Q Governor, the State Liquor Control Board has been seeking opinions on the the liquor rule changes with various legislators. Has your opinion been sought?

Gov Well, I have been in contact obviously with members of the Liquor Control Board. I have not expressed any definitive word to the Liquor Control Board. This is a decision that obviously is theirs to make, but it is one that I know they are not going to make until they have had full expression from everyone they can get it from.

Q Are you at all concerned, that their decision might be tied to your election?

Gov I don't know but I am willing to - I have some confidence in the Liquor Control and I am sure that I will be able to live with what decision they make. I think I will have to anyhow.

Q The incident at the Renton Eagles Club seems to have opened the door to a lot of criticism of private clubs and their practices. Is there some suggestions that the State Board Against Discrimination investigate or would you like to see this?

Gov The State Board Against Discrimination has been asked to investigate this particular incident and under law they are required to do so. These are difficult problems and I know not only has the Board Against Discrimination been asked to step in but the Liquor Control Board is taking a close look not just at this one club but the practices of many private clubs that may indicate an expansion beyond reason of their individual liquor licenses, and the essential opening up of private clubs to organizations that go beyond their original intent. I think that in this case it is up to members of these private clubs to see if they can't do a better job in insuring that the requirements for members do not hinge on the background or race of a particular individual.

Q If such an agency as the Liquor Control Board were able to encourage non-discrimination by withholding licenses - if this were possible, would you like to see government agencies in the state take this type of action?

Gov I don't believe that by law we can or should for instance, through the Liquor Control Board withhold liquor licenses on the basis of alleged discrimination by a private club. Their function is to insure that the license that is given for a private club's purpose is used for that purpose and not

Gov used for essentially a public purpose. On the other hand, the Board Against Discrimination again must work with the statutes that we have. They relate pretty much to the availability of places of public accommodation to people of all races, colors, or creeds. When you get into the particular problems of private organizations, and what they accomplish within their own membership, our state agencies have no jurisdiction in that field and probably should not.

Q How would you evaluate the people of the state from what you have gathered since the Liquor Board hearing. Would you say that from the questions that have come into your office, people that you have talked with, that the people are in favor of some change in Sunday liquor rules?

Gov It is pretty difficult to really say. The one thing about this issue is not very much "no opinion" when you ask the question. Everyone has an opinion and usually a pretty definite opinion and I would say it is split pretty close to down the middle. It doesn't seem to be any great overwhelming opinion down one side or the other side of this issue. Unfortunately it is not a simple question of yes or no. There are all sorts of shadings in between. Some people say "open 'til 2 p.m. on Saturday night". Others say "open all day Sunday". Others say, "Close everything down." So there are lots of different opinions.

Q Are you going to continue to push for basically the same tax reform program of the '67 legislature and if so, are you going to ask the cities today, in some specific manner, to help get that program through?

Gov First, no. The direction that I think ought to be taken is to reconstitute the Tax Advisory Council - to have them work with as many citizen groups with individual people throughout the state, to find out what people in this state are willing to do; what kind of state they want to have; express as clearly as possible the needs and how we can accomplish some of these needs. And instead of spending the entire biennium doing another detailed study of our tax system, I think much of their operation will be in terms of seeking out information, of seeking out desires and willingness to come up with a practical plan that can achieve not only citizen support, but legislative support.

Q What role can the cities play in providing a stable income basis you spoke of?

Gov I would hope that cities in this process will play a leading role and that the leaders of cities will play an important role in expressing first the needs of local communities. After all, within the next ten years, nine out of ten of our citizens will live in urban communities which means small cities and large cities. If they can express those needs as accurately and as wisely as possible, this will add to the needs expressed by others and from that total need, we can get a better picture of what is needed for financing. I would hope that after expressing the needs they would be willing to suggest and help support ways in which to meet those needs. I will ask them to work with me, yes. I am today going to express the mechanism that I hope can be successful in at least getting the public awareness and ultimately some goals and some interim plans in major fields of state and local government involvement, all leading up to the next session of the legislature.

Q Governor, if you will look at the national political picture for a moment, Seemingly, Governor Romney is laying an egg according to some of the national publications in his unannounced campaign. Could you give any reasons for this or do you think he started too soon? Is the convention going to be wide opened?

Gov I think, first, that the convention is going to be wide open, yes. I don't think there is any clear and overwhelming favorite at this time. I'm not sure that I would agree that Governor Romney has necessarily laid an egg. Perhaps he is hoping that someday it will hatch. I think that he did start early. It is a long time before the convention and before the election but things can change rapidly and I think that one of the most significant events will be the primary in New Hampshire and the primaries that follow it. They will pretty clearly indicate I think the relative vote-getting strength of some of our major candidates and could very well put one or the other into a position of leadership for the convention. I think that the primaries this time, could be of great importance in one or the other of our leading candidate's efforts to win the nomination.

Q Thank you very much, Governor.